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**Hate – James 4:1-12**

**I heard a story this week. During one of our wars a military unit hired a local boy to cook and clean for them.** Being a bunch of jokesters and not liking the boy much, they quickly took advantage of the boy's seeming naiveté. They smeared Vaseline on the stove handles so it would get all over his hands. They put buckets of water over the door so he'd get soaked when he opened it. They even nailed his shoes to the floor during the night. **Day after day the young boy took the brunt of their practical jokes without saying anything.** Finally the men felt guilty about what they were doing, so they met with him and said, "Look, we know these pranks aren't funny for you, and we're sorry. We're never going to take advantage of you again."

The boy smiled and then asked, "No more sticky stuff on stove?" The guys responded, "Nope." "No more water on the door?" They answered, "No more water on the door." "No more nailing shoes to floor?" "Nope, we'll stop that, too." **"Okay" the boy said with a wide grin, "I won't spit in your soup anymore."**

**Galatians 5 lists "hatred" as the next sin on the list.**

**The word "hate" just has an edge to it.** It points to a deep deep disgust with something that gets out heart pumping and our emotions boiling.

**There is a physical response to anger and hate.** At the same time your heart rate accelerates, your blood pressure rises, and your rate of breathing increases. Your face may flush as increased blood flow enters your limbs and extremities in preparation for physical action. Your attention narrows and becomes locked onto the target of your anger. Soon you can pay attention to nothing else. In quick succession, additional brain neurotransmitters and hormones are released which trigger a lasting state of arousal. You're now ready to fight.

**The word "hate" appears in the Bible quite a lot and in a bunch of different ways.** So it is really quite an adventure figuring out not only what "hate" is, but what we are to do with it.

**Sometimes “hate” is really just preferential.** For instance, Jesus says that we are to hate our mother and father, but what he means is that our love for God is to be so great that it is as if we hate our mother and father. He does not literally mean that we are to have deep disgust for our parents.

**Most of the time the word “hate” is used to refer to how people feel about God or God’s followers.** And then also as how we are to treat bad things like evil, wickedness or idol worship. We are to hate these things or have deep disgust for them.

The passage we are going to focus on regarding hatred this morning comes from the book of James. James 4:1-12.

So let's just begin by reading this passage.

**Read James 4:1-12.**

The same word that appears in Galatians 5 appears here in James 4:4, “here it says, **“You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”**

Another translation of this word, “hatred” is “enmity.” Here in James the reference is **to “hatred toward God.”** In Galatians we just have the word, “hatred.” **Then there are 4 other uses of this work in the New Testament.**

**The first use is in the Gospel of Luke where it says that Herod and Pilate became friends, even though they were at one time at enmity between themselves (there were enemies).** (Luke 23:12)

**The next use is in Romans where it says that the “sinful mind is hostile to God.”** (Romans 8:7)

**The other uses of hatred underscore the separation of God's chosen people and Gentiles before Christ** (Ephesians 2:15-16) and how God put to death that separation through Jesus Christ.

**There are a few other Hebrew and Greek words that are translated as “hate” or “hatred” in the Bible.**

And hate is used in a whole host of different ways.

I chose for us to take a look at this passage from James because I think it picks up some of the emotions of hatred.

The part of the passage I really want us to hone in on starts in verse 4. This is one of the most powerful calls to repentance in the whole New Testament. **James gets really pumped in a sense . . .** and begins with **“you adulterous people.”** If you have read the book of James, you would have noticed that usually he begins with “brothers,” which is obviously a friendly greeting and implies that they are in it together. Later on verse 11, is a good example. **“Brothers (which is really meant as brothers and sisters), do not slander one another.”**

**But here in verse 4, he gets aggressive, “you adulterous people.”**

**Throughout the Bible and especially with the prophets in the Old Testament, God's relationship with his people is compared to a marriage relationship.** And when God's people choose to worship other gods or to leave the one true God, they are called adulterous because of their unfaithfulness. Here for James, by entering into a friendship with the world, they are, in effect, committing spiritual adultery.

James says in verse 4, **“you adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God.?”** The biblical understanding of friendship is not just friending them on Facebook. We speak casually of friendship in our world today. In the biblical world within which James is writing, though, friendship involved sharing all things in a unity both spiritual and physical.

**So when James refers to friendship with the world, he is talking about a deep involvement with it.** And this deep involvement contrasts involvement with God. Their friendship with the world makes them “an enemy of God.” It puts enmity or hatred between us and God. **If we primarily love the world, then we “hate” God.**

**It is a really interesting contrast. We hate by loving the wrong things.**

**Hatred is primarily about our need or desire to see others not as people created with us in the image of God, but as something “other.”** Something more broken, something more evil, something less than.

**Hatred makes the other person out to be less than a human being.** This is really why hate is so much more prevalent on the internet. **It is impersonal.** Have you ever noticed how much more aggressive and mean people are on blogs than they would be with people sitting in a room together? Or how much meaner someone is via email than they would in speaking in person or even over the phone? We all have that temptation . . . if we have something really mean and hateful to say . . . it is easier to email them than to say it to their face.

**There is a website called the hatebook** where people can just post whatever they hate. It is a place to vent and on one level it seems like a nice outlet for anger, but as you read through the pages it is really quite sad. The posts are stories of people that are obsessed and confined by their hatred. The passions and anger run so deep that they are exploding from within with rage.

**This week the new movie Toy Story 3 has been getting a lot of press.** Up until this week, on the website Rotten Tomatoes, which is a website that compiles movie reviews, Toy Story 3 had received 100% positive reviews, which is virtually unheard of. Well after 150 positive reviews, this week two professional reviewers decided to give the movie a negative report. And man did the hate come out for these two guys. The comments after their posts were unbelievable.

**Hate is all around us in one form or another.** It is not disagreement or even accusations of wrong doing . . . hate is much deeper and more significant . . . it strikes at the core worth of the individual. It is one thing to say that someone is wrong or even sinful . . . we should do this, it is another thing to question their validity as a human being.

**The use of “hatred” in the context of the list of the “acts of the sinful nature” in Galatians 5 is primarily about our relationships with one another.** “Hatred” for another has no place in the heart and mind of someone that has the Spirit of God within them.

**In our passage, James helps us to understand where this “hatred” comes from.** We generally think it originates in the other and what they have done to us, but this is not the case. James 4:1-2 says, **“What**

**causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want.”**

**Our hatred or our enmity towards God and each other comes from desires that battle within us. Hatred is selfish and prideful.** In fact, The Message translation translated “hatred” in Galatians 5 as **“paranoid loneliness.”** At first, it doesn't seem to make sense at all, but when you really think about it it points out a deeper truth about hatred. **Hatred comes from our fear.**

**Ultimately, we choose to hate someone because we fear that loving them is too dangerous.** And the truth is that . . . it is dangerous to love someone that we have worldly reason to hate. We risk being stomped on, and taken advantage of, and abused . . . **but again, isn't that what Jesus endured for the sake of love?**

**During the E100 Bible Reading Plan we read a story, which is a good example of hate.** In Genesis 37, Joseph has a dream and in his dream all of his brothers are bowing down to him. Add on top of that Joseph was already their father's favorite son. The text says that the brothers hated Joseph and eventually sold him into slavery.

**Now when we really dig deep into the motivations of Joseph's brothers,** we can't help but realize that the primary reason for their hate is that they felt threatened by Joseph's favored position by their father and by the dreams he was having. **Their self-worth and their role in the family was threatened by their brother and their reaction was thus to hate.**

**In the end though, it was Joseph that saved them from hunger when the famine came. Ironically the brothers' own pride and hate nearly killed their path to survival.**

**We find fear repeatedly is the motivation for the hate of others. It is the fundamental belief that love is not sufficient.**

In Jesus' sermon on the mount he makes what we are to do very clear. **“You have heard that it was said, “You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your**

**enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”**

Then he goes on to point out that it is not hard to love those that love you. Anyone can and does that. **The challenge and the call of the Christian life is to love even those that hate you.**

**These are the types of passages where the Bible gets extraordinarily radical and we are forced to wrestle with whether we think it is a nice book with some good stories and important lessons, or whether we believe it is truly the Word of God, which we must wholeheartedly embrace and live according to.** Do not hate your enemies as they hate you . . . love them. That is crazy talk.

**Think of those that you might say you hate. Osama Bin Laden. Rush Limbaugh. President Obama. Your neighbor or boss. Thieves and robbers.** And allow yourself to feel the emotions that are aroused at the sound of their name. Sit there . . . you may already be justifying your feelings with so-called facts. You may even attach theological language and claim they are unbiblical and evil . . .

Amidst your hate, hear again Jesus words. This time from the Gospel of Luke, **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”**

**And then as you have that mental image of those that you hate . . .** allow Jesus to walk into the picture. Look into their eyes. Try to see them as created in the “image of God.” Think about Jesus’ willingness to die for them. Think about how Jesus came so that they might have life, and have it to the full too.

**Radical. And when we hear language like this it sounds and feels so wimpy.** Are you kidding me? We have been taught by our world that the most effective way to oppose those that hate us is to hate them harder.

You cannot share the Gospel with someone that you hate. Fear and hate actually prevent us from participating fully in God’s radical mission. **1 John 2:9 seems to make this clear. “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.”**

**Let me give you an example of how radical Jesus love can look towards people you hate.**

**A few months ago I met Salim Munayer, a Palestinian living in Israel.** Salim started a ministry in Israel called Musalaha, which means “reconciliation” in Arabic. He is a Christian and lives amidst the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. This is how he describes their mission on the ministry’s website.

**“It is our belief that Christ’s death and resurrection are the foundation of reconciliation, and that forgiveness and healing can only come through following His example and obeying His word. We hope to emulate and teach Christ’s model of forgiveness, mercy, and love, breaking down the walls of enmity that so easily embitter and ensnare.**

**The challenge lies in the practical application of such Biblical teaching and truths. Palestinian and Israeli believers, who share a common faith and desire to honor the Word of God, often continue to be separated by cultural misperceptions, language barriers, and resentment. The years of conflict between nations have allowed a process of dehumanization and demonization of the “other.” How can people groups, whose images, opinions, and attitudes are so defined by a history of conflict, be reconciled?”**

This is how Musalaha answers that question. **Salim says that first, enemies must meet each other.** They must meet face to face and look into each other’s eyes.

**It seems so simple and inconsequential, but it what gives life to our enemies.** When we look deeply into the eyes of someone we hate, we can’t help but see their humanness, their brokenness, and perhaps glimpses that despite all of our difference, they too were created in the “image of God.”

**We find this in the way that Jesus interacted with people.** The most notable are perhaps two different times that Jesus interacted with a Samaritan. **In Jesus’ day the Samaritans were the low of the low. The Samaritan was not only seen as “other” and an outside, but incapable of performing any act of kindness. They were all together despicable people.**

**Yet Jesus engages the Samaritan woman at the well who has been in lots of marriages.** He engages her in conversation and shares water with her. And in the famous story where it is the Samaritan that helps a man alongside the road, **the Samaritan is portrayed by Jesus as the model of one who integrates love of**

**God and love of neighbor. The Samaritan is not only not hated by Jesus, but lifted up as the model that believers are to emulate.**

**It is true that our hate often reveals more about ourselves and the condition of our spirit than it does about the person we are hating.**

**Musalaha developed a program called Desert Encounter where they take Israeli and Palestinian youth, young adults and leaders into the desert.** Often they put two people on each camel, one Israeli and one Palestinian. And they go off into the desert together. The desert is a uniquely neutral atmosphere, where everyone is in the same position, working together to negotiate the hardships of the desert sun or a stubborn camel. The challenges of survival and cooperation provide an excellent occasion for relationships and open communication.

**Martin Luther King, Jr. was someone who knew his Bible and the face of hate. He said a few powerful things about its destructive power.** “Let no man pull you low enough to hate him.” “Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” “Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man’s sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.

**In Romans, God tells us that vengeance is His.**

Hatred of others is not consistent with the Christian life. In Ephesians, Paul tell us clearly, **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**

**We are to desire and yearn and love for each other’s best . . . even for the best of our enemies . . . and to the extent they do not repent of sinfulness, God has the right to deal with them.**

Sources consulted:

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