James 3:13-18

“Wisdom!”

I. INTRO:
   A. If you did a cross section of Solomon’s life it would reveal he was: an author, poet, songwriter, artist, king, diplomat, theologian, teacher, zoologist, psychologist, philosopher, financier, engineer, & architect.
      1. How could Solomon’s success grow to such unparalleled heights?
         a) Read 1 Chron.1:6-10
         b) Solomon asked for 2 things: wisdom & knowledge.
            (1) Not the theoretical kind of knowledge that could grasp abstract matters, but the ability to apply divine truth to daily life!
            (2) Although Solomon was an intelligent well-educated king, he recognized that he lacked the wisdom which only God could provide. (11,12)
   2. A 1000 years later James is writing on this same subject. He counseled his listeners, follow Solomon’s lead...Ask for it! (1:5)
   B. Remember from vs.1 there are 2 basic tools all “teachers” use to communicate...their tongue & their lives!
      1. Last week we dealt with the tongue see Slides #2-5.
      2. This week we deal with Wisdom Slide #6.
         a) Wisdom in the life of the teacher: not human but divine wisdom.

II. WISDOM!
   A. As is true of all valuable possessions, wisdom has its counterfeits.
      1. Genuine vs.13; Counterfeit vs.14a
   B. GENUINE - DIVINE WISDOM! (13)
   C. 2 specific tests to see if someone is wise:
      1. Good Conduct/Behavior - to return or turn back. (root idea to change, return to the truth)
         a) A wise person is someone whose life is changing in accordance with the truth of God’s word.
      2. Works done in meekness/Gentle deeds - Gentleness, not like some see that word today (i.e. jellyfish, spineless, spiritless).
         a) In James day it meant “bringing a high-spirited horse under control. The spirit & strength of the horse weren’t lost, simply harnessed.”
b) Gentleness also referred to a brilliant teacher who could debate others w/o getting angry. It also referred to a soothing medicine that brought comfort to a painful wound.

3. Wisdom so far then doesn’t mean a high I.Q.; or your ability to pack away facts; or your impressive eloquence.
   a) The test of wisdom is a life that is patterned after the truth & is under control!¹

D. The story often goes w/new believers...that they immediately try to set the world straight.
   1. Often 1st stop is home - where they declare spiritual martial law & billy-club family members w/Bible verses whenever they step out of line.
   2. Then they wonder why they are standing in line to get saved like you!
      a) What’s lacking? Wisdom (i.e. A balance of gentleness & control that Paul described to Timothy, and a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition)

E. COUNTERFEIT - HUMAN WISDOM! (14a)

F. 2 specific tests to see if someone is unwise: bitter envy & self-seeking/selfish ambition.

G. Note: In your heart - 2 motives deeply embedded in the unwise heart.
   1. Envy - most confuse w/jealousy.
      a) Envy begins w/empty hands & mourns for what it does not have; Jealousy begins w/full hands but is threatened by the thought of losing what it possesses.
      b) So James is saying an unwise person is one who tends to be suspicious, resistant, & given to rivalry.
   2. Self-seeking(selfish ambition) - is the desire to be seen, quoted, & respected.

H. CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE WISDOM! (14b-15)
   1. So if these things are deep inside your heart, root em out, don’t just act like they’re not.
      1. Boast/arrogant - The 1st ugly face of false wisdom is arrogance.
         a) Rationalizing or even boasting that the end justifies the means; or the bad done wasn’t that bad; or everybody's doin it!
      2. Lie against the truth - How do we as Christians justify our arrogance? By lying against the truth, or dodging it, or trying to ignore it.
         a) The result self-deception! It’s like if you built something, & your measurements were off. But instead of admitting the mistake, you design a new ruler to fit the inaccurate measurements. Then the whole thing ends up a crooked disaster.

¹ Charles Swindoll; James.
3. **Earthly** - false wisdom has an *earthly origin*.
   a) It views everything from a strictly horizontal perspective: earthly success, earthly standards, earthly motives, earthly attitudes, earthly methods, earthly everything!

4. **Sensual/natural** - “soulish, fleshly, not related to the Spirit of God”.
   a) A wisdom whose vision is limited to things *temporal*, not eternal.

5. **Demonic** - the mindset is characteristic of demons.
   a) **Demons are brilliant by the way.** They know a great deal, even about God! But there is no change, no obedience, & no yielding of self to God.
   b) Thats how it is demonic - & yours is the same if it fits in this category.

J. **RESULTS OF FALSE WISDOM!** (16)

K. Here the **roots** of false wisdom(already mentioned in vs.14) leads to the **fruit** here.
   1. **Confusion/disorder** - So not just *confusion* but “disorder, disharmony, antagonism, the absence of unity & stability.”
   2. **Every evil thing** - when human wisdom is taught it lifts the lid on all sorts of worthless, petty, evil things.
      a) Like *Pandora’s Box* the human heart is home to a haunting array of sinful thoughts.
         (1) Pandora was according to Greek mythology the 1st woman on earth. She was given a jar/box that she was ordered not to open under any circumstances. Despite this warning, overcome by curiosity Pandora opened the jar. Upon doing so, the evils contained within escaped into the world. Scared, Pandora immediately closed the jar, only to trap *Hope* inside, as was Zeus' will.

L. **Inventory:** What are the fruits of your life? Do people see good behavior & gentleness, or disorder & every evil thing?

M. After reading about Solomon’s request & how God reacted to what he choose...What do you think is God’s main purpose for you? (touching others? generosity?)
   1. Remember He gives wisdom to all who ask & He gives it liberally!

N. **Intro to next section:**
   1. **Explain:** Driving through the Negev, or the “wilderness” in Jordan. Dry, parched, arid, nothing but sand; then all of a sudden a little town all green. How? A commodity very unnatural to the desert had to be piped in...water!
   2. For divine wisdom to take root in our lives something very unnatural to our hearts must be piped in by faith...the living water of the H.S.
      a) Under the Holy Spirit’s *supervision*, our lives can blossom w/a divine wisdom we could never produce on our own.
O. CHARACTERISTICS OF DIVINE WISDOM! (17)

P. When the seeds of good conduct & works done in meekness are sown they produce a unnatural, even supernatural **bumper crop**.

Q. Check out at least 7 fruits of divine wisdom on display: [Fruit Inspection time]

1. **Pure - First pure** (not just 1st in a list but 1st in importance!)  
   a) The primary fruit of divine wisdom is **purity**.
   b) Which means **freedom from defilement, w/o contamination, clean**.
   c) Not only **moral** cleanliness, but also purity of **motive**.
   d) Jesus said, Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God!  
      (1) He meant, the pure in heart will **so intimately know God** that they will see Him come to their rescue when tempted or see Him come alongside as their closet friend when facing trials.  
      (2) Purity then clears our vision to see him at work in everything we do!!!

2. **Peaceable** - when wisdom from above fill sour hearts a peaceable nature blossoms, one that helps heal relationships rather than tear them apart.  
   a) Some will say, *I’m not by nature a calm & peaceable person!* That’s the point! None of us are by nature. We are like that desert. But when God’s wisdom rains gently upon that desert, a peaceable attitude springs to life!!!

3. **Gentle** - Tolerant would be a good word here.  
   a) Slide 7: William Barclay explained it, “The man who is epieikes is the man who knows when it is actually wrong to apply the strict letter of the law. He knows how to forgive when strict justice gives him a perfect right to condemn. He knows how to make allowances, when not to stand upon his rights, how to temper injustice with mercy, always remembers that there are greater things in the world than rules and regulations.”

4. **Willing to yield/reasonable** - speaks to those who are under someone else’s authority  
   a) So Gentle & willing to yield go together like 2 puzzle pieces: Gentle = for those in places of authority over others; willing to yield = for those under authority.  
   b) It is someone who is open, conciliatory, easy to work with.  
   c) Abraham showed this with Lot - Abraham took the initiative to create a compromise: “the land can’t sustain us both, you choose, I’ll take the other.”  
      (1) Now that’s reasonable/willing to yield.  
   d) Does this describe you? Can you give a serious thought to an opinion that differs from yours w/o feeling threatened or getting angry?
5. **Full of mercy & good fruits** - wisdom from above helps us show *mercy* which is a compassionate attitude & *good fruits* which are actions that naturally flow from mercy.

   a) Often *Mercy* was used to be shown toward someone who had *suffered unjustly*; in NT often used to describe an attitude towards those who *suffer due to problems they have caused themselves.* (so even if you think someone who is homeless, or in prison, or down & out brought this on themselves...so what!)

   b) Barclay, We can never say that we have truly *pitied* anyone until we have *helped* him.


   a) They adhere to the principles in *God’s Word* regardless of the circumstances.

   b) Others might say, “When in Rome, do as the Romans.” But we live under the precept, “When in Rome, do as the believer should do.”

7. **W/o hypocrisy** - from the Greek theaters, those who played multiple roles by just switching masks for each character.

   a) Today we use it, anyone who *wears masks*, who is a *pretender*, a *poser*.

   b) True wisdom is not 2-faced.

R. We are finished w/our *fruit inspection*. We move to the results.

S. **RESULTS OF DIVINE WISDOM!** (18)

T. In James *peace* means *being rightly related to one another* (not *vertical* peace w/God; but *horizontal* peace between human beings)

1. Disturb this peace & you will not enjoy a righteous lifestyle before God.

U. As God brings life to the desert, so He can cultivate a garden of divine wisdom I us through the living water of His Holy Spirit.

1. *Francis Assisi* gave us this prayer maybe you grew up with: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon: where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope where there is darkness, light where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.