

Let Us Draw Near to God

Song: "I Am Thine, O Lord"

Introduction

1. **James 4:8 exhorts us to: "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.."**

A. The chorus of the song that we just sang says:

Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died,
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord,
To thy precious bleeding side.

2. **We sing about how we long to be drawn nearer to God, but how is it that we can draw ourselves nearer to God?**

3. **The answer to that question can be found in James 4:4-10.**

James 4:4-10

A. Let's observe 6 things in which James teaches that we should do to draw near to God.

Divorce Ourselves from the World

- 1. Verse 4 lays the ground work that we must understand before we can ever hope to draw near to God.**

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that **friendship with the world is enmity with God**? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- A. James stated the very thing that Jesus said earlier in Matthew.**

Matthew 6:24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**

- 1) John and Paul wrote concerning these things also.**
1 John 2:15-17
2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1
- 2. James calls those Christians who love the world “adulterers.”**
 - A. A spiritual application is made of the literal meaning of the word “adultery.”**
 - 1) Adultery is committed when a married person is unfaithful to his mate, becoming involved with another. The Christian is married to Christ; he is the “bride” of Christ.**
Ephesians 5:22-33

3. James continues in verse 5 by saying:

James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us **yearns jealously**?"

- A. The Lord is a jealous God who will not tolerate his bride flirting with the world. He is likened to a jealous husband who takes offense when his bride is with another man.**

2 Corinthians 11:2 For **I am jealous for you with godly jealousy**. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

- 1) God wants the spirit of man, which He created, to only have fellowship in Him.**

Exalted Through Humility

- 1. The second thing necessary to draw near to God is to be humble. James and Solomon wrote basically the same thing:**

James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but **gives grace to the humble.**"

Proverbs 3:34 Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble.

- A. Man's arrogance and pride will drive him away, not near to God. Man will never be near to God when he is conceited and arrogant. Pretending doesn't work!**

Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means freedom from thinking about yourself one way or the other at all. (William Temple)

2. When we become humble then we will be exalted.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

A. Honor can only be had, after one displays a spirit of humility.

Proverbs 15:33.....before honor is humility.

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.

B. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God AFTER he had given his life a ransom for us.

- 1) **It will come the same way for us. We will only be exalted AFTER we have served others.**

Matthew 20:26-28

Submit to God

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God....

1. **To “submit” means to “put oneself under.” Troops who surrender voluntarily submit to those whom they surrender to.**

A. We must surrender ourselves to God. Let God instruct us on what to do.

Power can't force submission.

Love can earn submission.

- 2. Have we truly submitted to God's will in your life?**
 - A. Have we submitted to the Plan of Salvation?**
 - 1) Without obedience to the gospel, we have not submitted.**
 - B. Have we submitted to the Law of God?**
 - 1) The appearance of being near to God, while disobeying His Law is not submitting to God (Denominations/Liberals).**
 - C. Have we submitted to His Providence?**
 - 1) Have we accepted those things in life that have come our way and continue to trust in God? If not, then we have not submitted.**
 - 2) Paul accepted His thorn in the flesh (2 Cor 12:7-10).**

Resist the Devil

- 1. The Christian must also be set to "resist the Devil."**

James 4:7 ...Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

- A. We can never draw near to God if we are not prepared to resist Satan's many devices or temptations.**
 - 1) Satan is real. When we accept that, we can then start to deal with it. He attempts to destroy our soul. How does he do it?**

1 Peter 5:8our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- B. God has given each Christian the resources necessary to resist the Devil's temptations. (Eph 6:10-18).**
- 1) The escape is always available - but have we really looked for it?**

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation **will also make the way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it.

Cleanse Your Hands and Purify Your Hearts

- 1. We can get a little closer to God when we follow the instructions of James in verse 8:**

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. **Cleanse your hands**, you sinners; and **purify your hearts**, you double-minded.

- A. Being familiar with the Levitical priests who washed their hands in the brazen laver before they entered the holy place of the Temple to draw near to God, James uses these figures to instruct us of our need to purify ourselves in order to draw near to God.**
- B. The cleansing of hands is a figurative way to emphasize the purity of life.**
- 1) Sin MUST be put away.**
- C. We can only be purified in our heart when we obey the truth.**

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have **purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

- 1) **And in order to keep our heart pure, we must think on clean things:**
Philippians 4:8
 - 2) **We cannot draw near to God with a heart that continues to be filled with moral filth!**
2. **This verse also points out that we cannot draw near to God when we are double-minded.**
- 1) **A double-minded person is one that goes back and forth in their service to God and sin; trying to maintain a friendship with both the world and God at the same time - this CANNOT be done (James 4:4; Matthew 6:24).**

Be Afflicted, Mourn and Weep

1. **As we continue to draw near to God we can learn more about what we are to do in verse 9:**

James 4:9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

- A. **James is not saying that Christians should go through life dejected and depressed - even though some Christians appear to believe so!**
- B. **The kind of mourning James is talking about is the same kind that Jesus talked about.**
 - 1) **As Christ came to preach repentance, to induce men to mourn over their sins and to forsake them, it is most likely this is what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 5:4**

Matthew 5:4 **Blessed are those who mourn**, for they shall be comforted.

- 1) The mourning is the mourning over sin - not death, financial disaster, or other disappointment.**
- 2) James is pointing out that one cannot draw near to God without a godly sorrow for sin (2 Cor 7:10).**
 - a) James no doubt points to the sins that he had specified in the previous part of the fourth chapter, which he had spoken about as being so evil in their nature.**
 - 1) They were to feel distressed and sad on account of their transgressions.**
 - b) A disposition that laughs at sin must be broken.**

Conclusion

- 1. In order to draw near to God, one must do the things in which James taught.**
- 2. Do we wish to be near to God?**
- 3. Or will we be content in pretended piety which pleases proud men?**
- 4. We can only draw near to God, when we become determined to do so!**
 - A. We are going to sing the same song that we sang before the lesson. This time, maybe the words will mean just a little more to us.**

