

Worship on September 13, 2020

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude
- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination (or song)
- Scripture James 4:1-10
- Sermon: Who do you stay close?

We Respond

- Prayer for the people
- Offering –

We Serve

- Benediction
- Postlude

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us through this video. This worship is for Sunday, September 13, 2020. Unfortunately, I am still here recording this worship video. We were trying our best to reopen our church building today, but we needed more preparation. Please be patient, the session and I will work hard to open our in-person worship.

. To meet and talk to me, Please email me or phone me to make an appointment to arrange the time. revsoonghuh@hotmail.com / 647-208-5381.

. Thank you for your offerings. Remembering God is not easy and giving to the Lord is not easy in this difficult time. May God be with you and lead your lives.

As we come into the presence of God, let us calm down our hearts and minds and focus on our Lord.

Call To Worship

1 John 4:18 declares this. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." Our Heavenly Father God loves us with perfect love. As we worship him, in his presence, may all of us experience his love and overcome fear with his love. (Let us pray.)

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

God of love and grace, thank you for loving us. Thank you for calling us as your children. Thank you for calling us here today in your presence to be connected to you once again. We know that you are almighty God and you are powerful God and you are beyond everything we could ever imagine or think of. You are Holy. We trust you and we worship you.

In our daily lives, we enjoy your abundant blessings. You are everywhere in our lives. You are holding our hands and you are walking with us. However, we turn away from you because of our sinful desires. Even though we know your perfect love and unending grace, we were not aware of the value of your love and grace. Because it was always there for us, we thought we deserved it. We humble ourselves before you and come to you with repentance. Forgive our ignorance. Forgive our selfishness. Forgive our ungrateful hearts. Because you still love us with the same love, no no, with MORE love, we come to you. We put our hopes on you once more. Please accept our sincere worship and restore our brokenness through this worship.

This time, we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God is faithful and just and loving and full of grace. If we confess our sins, he will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Friends, God is with you. God's love is with you. Be confident and be BOLD! Let us glorify God through our lives.

Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the illumination of the Lord.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of wisdom, we stand before your words with humble hearts. Open our hearts and ears and eyes, teach us your words. Holy Spirit, come into our hearts and stir our hearts with your words. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: James 4:1-10

1 Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?

2 You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

5 Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, "God yearns jealously for the

spirit that he has made to dwell in us?"

6 But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection.

10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

This is the Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Title: Who do you stay close?

Today's title is "who do you stay close?" Today's passage starts with a question asking the source of our conflicts and disputes. It continually urges us to look and search our hearts through the whole passage.

Craving, war, murder, covet, dispute, conflicts... these are the words filling up our passage today.

These are the examples of human selfishness, but James does not make any judgment upon human being for these selfishness. Rather, he points out that these cause the conflicts. And these break the peace. James does not support these human selfishness, but he does not deny the selfish human nature. He becomes honest with our reality. He just admits who we are, plainly.

The core of the problem is in *vs. 4. "Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."*

The lives driven by cravings, selfish and fleshly desires filled our lives. The friend with the world is enmity with God. So, we are what? We are the enemy of God.

I don't think we cannot point out the specific incidents in our lives. Maybe we don't even know how much we follow the desires of our own fleshly cravings. To know our current state, we need to search our inner selves. We need to come before God with sincere and honest hearts. We don't even know where our hearts are laid.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, where do we put our hearts? Are we becoming the friends of God OR are we craving to become the friends of the world? Are our hearts filled with God-pleasing desires or self-pleasing desires? We might think that we are a faithful woman of God, a faithful man of God, but our hearts are filled with fleshly cravings and selfish desires. We think we are the best friends of God, but our hearts are filled with conflicts and hatred!? Don't say that we don't know such person, I have seen many. They say that they love God and they are the faithful servants of God, but when I see them, they are just filled with their own selfishness and desires for the power, pleasure, and money. I see many pastors falling down because of their desires. I am saying

that we cannot be sure of what we are and where our hearts are.

Becoming the friend of God Or becoming the friend of the world? How do we know? The boundary of these concepts might be very vague. It's like flipping a coin. Our hearts are skipping this side to the other side a hundred times a day. One moment, we love God with our whole hearts, but few seconds later, we become the enemy of God. Without our hearts realizing what they are doing, our hearts are back and forth like a reed. Because of our weakness, this is our reality.

In v. 5, this is how God sees this. "Do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, 'God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?'" God wants our hearts. God desires for us. He cares where we put our hearts. The grace of God was poured upon us, but we forget what we have received and we turn back from the grace of God. We chase the worldly cravings and desires. When God sees this, he cannot endure! We are his loved ones, we breathe with his breath. God, with jealousy, longs for us. He yearns for us.

God, in his own way, he loves us in his special way. He loves us who are weak and who are filled with all kinds of selfish and fleshly desires. Vs. 6 says, "HE GIVES ALL THE MORE GRACE. He gives us more grace. He gives us great grace. He treats us with greater kindness. First, when we were hopeless, he poured his grace upon us and gave us life. When we had the life from God, we turned back from God. To us, who left him, God gives more grace! How great is his grace and love and patience!

Vs. 6 continues, "God opposes the proud." This pride means becoming the enemy of God. It is falling far away from God who is the truth. It is to deny the wills of God and plans of God for us. No matter how much God pours his grace upon us, we are determined to reject his grace for us.

Vs. 7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." It is to accept the will of God. We are to admit the plans of God for us. We are to stop being stubborn with our determinations and wills. God urges us to accept the love of God, the heart of God, the truth of God, the plans of God, and the wisdom of God. We need to accept God and we need to learn from him.

Vs. 8, declares this, very strongly. "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." We have two minds in our hearts. We become the friends of the world, but we believe that we are the friends of God. So, God pleads us to come back to him. God begs us to look at him. We need to face our reality that we are double-minded. Know that and come back. Stop being so faithful to our own selfishly desires, and mourn for our weakness and selfishness that we cannot help it. Pound our hearts and cry for help to God. Stop pursuing the happiness from the world, but crave and long for God.

Like the title of today's message, "who do you stay close," I hope and pray that all who are worshipping with us today come close to God. May all of us put down our own desires and cravings and accept God's grace and love and turn back to him. When we are turning away from God, he is so gracious and full of love, he is pouring out more grace upon us. Let all us, our families, and our church stay close with God.

Let us pray.

God, you are always with us. You always stay close to us. Thank you so much for being with us, for taking care of us, and for watching over us always. Now, it's our turn to stay close to you. It is our prayer and desire to be with you. Our lives are filled with our own selfish desires. What do we do, God! How can we restore your image in us! How do we turn back to you! We need you. We are desperate for you. Come to us and hold our hands. Your grace upon grace is with us. Let us remember your grace pouring down upon us and help us stay close to you through the week. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

Let us continue to pray for the people of God.

Prayer for the people

Gracious and loving Father God, you are awesome. You are great! We cannot express how good you are. Because of your goodness and your love for us, we can come and depend on you. As we lay down our needs, listen to our prayers and grant us in your time. Give us faith and patience.

We pray for school, students and teachers. They are going back to school next week. It should be glad and excited, but it's already tiring and somewhat fearful because of COVID 19. We pray for the safety. Protect them under your wings and give them discernment and honesty to follow all the safety rules. We also pray for two different learning system. Some are going to school in person, and the other are staying home and studying online. Give them wisdom and patience. Learning process will not be easy, give them dreams and hopes. Fill their hearts with your perfect plans, so they are getting ready for their lives to fulfill your plans for them. Open their eyes and let them know where they are going. There will be challenges, give them power to overcome and stay close to you.

We pray for our church. We are preparing the reopening. The worship service will be short and there won't be singing. It would be different from before Coronavirus. This changed many things. Help us not only prepare the reopening, but also prepare for the post-COVID church. Because we don't know what it's like, we don't even know what and how to prepare. Help us stay close to you and walk step by step with you. It has been a long time since we had our fellowship with each other. Staying connected is important. Help us pray and think of each other continually and fill our hearts with hope that we are coming back to fellowship one day. Also, we are preparing for elder election. I believe that everyone has received the materials. With the list of our members, help us pray for them. Give wisdom upon us so we may elect suitable elders to build your church stronger and healthier.

19 years ago, this week, the world was in shock. We remember 9/11. We pray for peace. We pray for safety. We pray for justice. We pray for saving lives. Loving Father God, like a children song, "he's got the whole world in his hands," we believe that you are holding the whole world and you are caring each person according to their needs. Show your love and pour out more grace upon us every day. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: I want to express my grateful heart for those who continually give to the Lord. It helps our church's operation. I hope and pray that your giving to the Lord be used in God's perfect plans for us. Let us offer up our gifts to the Lord.

Offering – song and prayer (Paul's music)

Offering prayer: Merciful God, we come to you with thankful hearts. We give you all our praises and worship for who you are! You are so faithful that you provide shelter when we need you and you become our strong fortress when we are vulnerable. And you become our power and source when we are weak and poor. Out of our grateful hearts, we are coming to you with our offerings for you. Accept our gifts to you and accept us and make us the people that you want us to be. In Christ's name, Amen.

Now, it's time to go to the world. Friends become alike. Who do you want to stay close? Be the friends of God, and be like him.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

1. Who is my best friend and why do I stay close to my friend?
2. Who do I want to become alike, the world or God?
3. Who does God want to stay close and why?