Earthly Wisdom vs Heavenly Wisdom

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[0:00] How good is the Lord? I'll just make sure. Is my mic all good? Excellent. I did a good job. I had to do it blind. It was behind me. I'm so thankful to be with you again, and we're going to be reading your word in a moment. We're still in the letter of James, so if you can open up to the third chapter. We'll be reading from verse 13 to 18 today, and we're going to be comparing what is the wisdom that comes from the Lord versus the wisdom that the world has. So if you all are getting there in your own time, we'll be reading from verse 13 to 18.

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct, let him show his work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom which comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and bearing good fruits, impartial and sincere. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. This is a good word from the Lord, and I just want you to remember where we are in this letter. We've just learned about the destruction and the pain that our tongues can bring, that although they are so small and so little, they have this power to destroy, to tear down. And we're going to hear actually in a moment about how should we think and live our lives and what should we say. We should not boast that we will do this or that later on in chapter 4, but we should rather trust in the Lord. So here right in the middle,
James is returning to this question of wisdom, which is so important. See, this letter was probably the first one written that we have in our New Testament, the first letter written to this new community of Christians. The first people who have ever believed in the name of the Lord, heard the good news that they can be saved by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. But now people who hear that open call, anyone can come, all can have it, no matter what station you are, no matter what your past says, when all those people get into one room, saved by the grace of the Lord, the issue that still remains is that there is still sin in their lives. There is still conflict and mistakes. There are people who would speak badly. And I don't want you to be shocked that the church should be a place that had sinners in it, just as Jesus should have sat and cared for sinners, because that is who the good news is for. Jesus said, you know, a doctor does not go to the healthy, but to the sick, the same way the church ministers to those who are far off from God and cause them in. So when James writes this very first letter, the first thing that Christians need to learn, and he wants them to become mature in their faith, to become perfect in the love of Christ, to be like Jesus in this community, he wants to warn about what breaks this community, what can cause division, what can destroy, what can tear down, and how do we deal with it? So it's not just simply our external tongues, our speech, our practice, our thoughts, but in fact it is all a question of wisdom. We need wisdom to be able to live in the way that God wants us to live, and to be in this community in love and in peace and in the unity of his spirit. Now wisdom is a difficult thing to understand, and everyone has their own definition, and hopefully by the end of today you'll have a better picture of what God calls wisdom. But I often think, if I was to give an analogy, most people would think wisdom is something like, you know when you go to the train station? Now I'll admit something to you, we don't use trains a lot in
South Africa, where I grew up, but in the last few weeks I have become a train expert. I've taken trains down here, I was down in Southampton and I was taking trains to Portsmouth and Winchester and all over the place, into London, out of London, I'm suddenly a train person. I have all the apps on my phone. I open them up and there's the fancy map with all the color coding, and it tells me where every train is and what's happening. I think lots of people think that is what wisdom is, that if God gives us wisdom, we get the whole picture, we understand everything, nothing will

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ever surprise us, that we know A, B, C, all the way to Z, we have this perfect picture. But I don't think that's the kind of wisdom that scripture teaches that God wants us to have. It's not omniscience. Only God knows all things. Only God is never surprised by what happens in life. Rather, I think true wisdom, biblical wisdom, is closer to when you learn how to drive a car. I don't know if you've ever learned, you can't prepare for every situation. You're not familiar with every road you will ever drive on, but rather you're taught some principles. Keep two car lengths distance between you and the car in front, so if they suddenly have to stop, you don't go straight into them. You're told them, when should you wait? When should you be cautious? If someone stopped on the side of the road, how do you judge and decide whether you go around them or you wait for the oncoming traffic to come? Do you see its principles and practices that prepare you for any situation? So you don't have to know everything and every outcome and how it's all going to work out, but rather you're equipped with whatever chaos the world throws at you. Whatever car comes around in the wrong lane of the roundabout or whatever car pulls out too quickly, you know what to do. You're prepared to slam on the brakes or to move out to the side.
See, that is biblical wisdom, principles and practices that prepare us for any situation, and it's because we need to trust in God. Any great knowledge that we could have, it would very quickly become a knowledge that we want. Remember Adam and Eve, the first thing they wanted was knowledge of good and evil. If we want all of the answers, we want all of the pictures, what we're really asking for is independence from God. But the wisdom that comes from above comes from above, not within.
[6:18] So as we go into this passage, I want you to think about how do we seek wisdom? The Bible cares much about wisdom. There's multiple books in the Old Testament that are devoted exactly to this question of how should we live wisely? In fact, even the ancient world and our world today is obsessed with wisdom, but one of the mistakes we make is today we equate wisdom with knowledge. We say simply a knowledge of facts equals a wisdom in practice, but that's not the way that Scripture teaches it.

Scripture teaches wisdom as being able to live the right good life in front of God. Not having infinite knowledge, not having degrees after your name, all sorts of certificates and certifications, that is understanding, that's skill. Actually, James makes this distinction in his question, who is wise? And then he says, who has understanding? So he goes from this general Sophia, this knowledge that is wisdom. It's a way of living life to then understanding which is particular important knowledge, the knowledge that a teacher would need, like we have heard earlier his warning against teachers. So how do we seek it? Well, the good thing is James has already told us in his letter how we seek it from God. He says, if any of you desires wisdom in chapter one, let him seek God and ask. But let's look here for a moment. I want to look at the origin of earthly and heavenly wisdom. I want to look at the nature of earthly and heavenly wisdom, and then I want to look at the result of it, so we can contrast and compare. And I'm hoping at the end of this, your heart will be a light and a desire to have God's wisdom, to have a wisdom from above rather than one that comes from the self, because the one that comes from the self does not result in the things that we want, not unity, love, peace, and a righteous life. But in fact, it breaks and descends and brings death, just like Adam and Eve's desire for their own knowledge did that. So let's look here for a moment at the contrast of origins between the earthly wisdom and the heavenly wisdom. See, the earthly wisdom does not come from above. There are three words that are used to describe it. It is earthly, unspiritual, or sensual, some of your translations might say that, and then it is demonic. And I hope you can see the escalation in the language that James is using here. He starts with just saying, well, it's earthly, it's not concerned with God, it's just focused in this world, in this place. It looks only at the natural, not the supernatural. Then whether unspiritual, unsensual, it's not related to the Spirit of God, it's not related to the truth of what God wants to do in this world, it doesn't show him reverence. And then it goes even more to demonic, right? It actually says that this kind of wisdom is the wisdom that the devil and his demons have, where they think themselves equal with God, when they think their plans are greater than God's plans, when they act in rebellion against God. See, it's nasty and terrible. Its origin does not come from anything good. In fact, it appeals to just our basic senses of the world. It appeals to our most warped desires. Remember, the heart, above all things, is wicked and deceitful. So to have an earthly, unspiritual wisdom is going to really appeal to your selfish ambition and your conceit.

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And then ultimately, it's demonic. It's a tool in which is used to put us in opposition to God, in rebellion to God, to go away from Him. In earthly wisdom, we turn away from God, we turn towards ourselves and any idol we can make. And that's simply just anything that you put up above in a place of worship in your life. Anything that you love more than you should love God, whether that be money, or status, or knowledge, or anything like that can be an idol for yourself. But the wisdom that comes from above is different. It doesn't arise out of the self, or out of the senses, or out of your feelings.

Rather, it has to come from God, and it comes through means of prayer. That's why James has told us already in chapter 1 to pray and to seek wisdom from God, that He must do it. And if we ask Him rightly, He will give us every good gift, and He will equip us for every good work. But I want to focus here on this word from above. And sometimes it's difficult to think, how can we get this wisdom from above? What does it look like? How does it actually come into our minds? How does it transform us?

[10:29] If you go back to the stories of Jesus, and when He's interacting with the Pharisees, there's one famous story, John chapter 3, a man by the name of Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees, one of the rulers, he comes to Jesus in the night, and he's trying to figure out what is Jesus preaching? What is He proclaiming?

And he asks him about it, and Jesus says, unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God. Now, Nicodemus doesn't get it. He says, am I meant to crawl back into my mother's womb, and somehow be born again? That doesn't make sense. And Jesus catches Nicodemus' mistake, that he doesn't understand. He says, how are you a teacher of Israel? How are you one that is teaching when you lack this understanding? See, you must be born of the Spirit and of water. He talks about a natural birth, and then a supernatural born again, right? And that's what we proclaim. We proclaim that we must be made new. But in fact, that word again, the reason why Nicodemus is confused, is in the Greek, that could actually mean from above, that we must be born from above. Not just again, in a natural sense, and we must start life all over and go back to zero. But in fact, we must find our life, its origin in God and in His work. So when you think of the wisdom, it must be the same as you think about the new life that you can have in Jesus. That when we believe in God, He transforms our spirit. He brings life into us. He raises us from the dead. Just like Lazarus called out of a tomb,

He brings us something new. It's completely foreign from us. It's His divine life put in us. In the same way, the wisdom from above is like that new birth. It must be done supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. It must come from Him. It must be a renewing of our minds, right? Paul talks about that in Romans chapter 12. And the only means for us to have that supernatural work that James provides for us in chapter 1, verses 5 to 8, is that we pray and we seek and we look to God. So what I'm hoping is, as we walk through this passage and we look at this kind of wisdom, that your heart is convicted to ask yourself, is the characteristics of this wisdom from above true of you? Is it actually something you exemplify in your life? Is it something that you've asked God to bring about in you? Just like the fruit of the Spirit is not just becoming a better person, but trusting God to make you more like Jesus. And live it out. It's here with this wisdom, we must trust and seek God. So as we go through the nature of these two things and we look at the results, I ask you, pray for this.

Pray for these characteristics. Pray that God would make them true in you, in your life. Because that's the only answer. It can't come from you. It can't come from effort. Remember, James does say that faith without works is dead, but there is no good works without faith. It is impossible to please God without faith. That's what we're told in Hebrews. In the same way is it impossible to be truly wise unless it comes from faith in God and what he does. So we looked at the contrast of origins. One comes from ourselves and it's earthly and unspiritual and demonic. It is going to bring brokenness and pain, as we'll see later. The other comes from above. It requires a newness and a renewing of our mind.

Let us now contrast the two natures. What is this wisdom of the earth like and what is the wisdom of God God like? See, it says that earthly wisdom, verse 14 and 16 speak to this, is full of bitter envy. [13:53] It is self-seeking. It's the root of the conflict that James seems to be seeing in the early church. Remember, James talks about the conflict caused by our tongues. He talks about conflict caused by partiality, showing favor to some people, the ones that look like they have money and wealth and power, and rejecting others that look like they are more trouble than they can bring worth. This is the problem that James is dealing in the whole letter. How does it look like for us to be

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built up as one people, as one church, looking like Jesus, being the true representation of the kingdom on earth? See, this bitter envy and this selfish ambition is the root of conflict in the church. I don't know how long you've been in church, but if you've been here long enough, I promise you, Christians are sinners too.

You will be hurt by people in church. You will find conflict. Some of you might have, if you've been around long enough, seen churches divide and split, see families broken apart by this ambition and selfishness of one or two people getting a group around them saying, I'm a wise teacher, follow me. Go against him. He's not right. He's wrong. He doesn't know the Bible as well as me. Trust me. Let's do it. We're going to be our own thing. I've seen far too many churches break up like that. I've seen far too many families split over this selfish ambition. See, the wisdom of this world by nature, it's identified by power or by position or by privilege and prestige. These are things that James has already spoken about that we must not show partiality. We must not think simply because someone has a title in their name that somehow they deserve to lead or they have some godly character. Even if you look at the qualifications that God puts for the leaders of his church, for elders in his church, for deacons in his church, they are not so much what they're good at. It's about who they are that is important. It's character before calling, right? It's character before gifting in all things. Because Paul says, you know, even if I speak in the tongue of angels, I prophesy like anyone else, but I lack love, I'm a noisy gong. I'm useless to the church. See, the wisdom from this world is like that. It prioritizes the gifting. It prioritizes the skill. It prioritizes the title. And it creates these little subdivisions and breaking up in the group. It's a kind of wisdom that Satan would have had when he rebelled against God. A kind of wisdom that the demons would have had when they said, well, we're spiritual too. We have power too. We can do something. We can cause trouble. We can get a little piece of God's creation for ourselves. We can steal it from him. It's the kind of arrogant earthly wisdom that caused the disciples to fight over who could sit at Jesus's right hand, who could have this great privilege. And Jesus rebukes them so quickly when he says, if you want to sit here, you get my punishment, my death, my suffering. It is not going to get you money, wealth, and all these great things that people promise you'll get if you follow God. No, no. It gets you life and joy eternal, and that has nothing to do with money and wealth and earthly possessions. It has to do with the joy of
[17:04] God in heaven. See, it's that kind of a conflict. It causes conflict in our churches. It causes conflict and our families. That is the nature of the wisdom of this world, is it is selfish and bitter. But then James goes on. He's told us just a little bit about what it looks like to have this sinful wisdom of the world that wants to break up. He then expounds for a long time about the good attributes. It's almost, to me, like James's little version of the gifts of the Spirit that Paul speaks about in Galatians.

He talks about this is what it looks like to be a Christian. Here is James's little list of what it looks like to have heavenly wisdom. See, first he says it's pure, and actually at the end he says it is without hypocrisy or sincere. Do you notice those are two internal characteristics. They're not actually to do with your relation to someone else or the way in which you contact yourself with another person. Rather, the pureness is, remember James's command, do not be double-minded. Do not think you can serve God 70% and the world 30% because, as he'll say just after this passage, to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy with God. See, it's pure in its moral purity. It seeks to do good and to do right.
We're never perfect, but that's what it seeks. But it's most importantly pure in its devotion to God. That's an inward orientation of our hearts. And then this sincere, this without hypocrisy, is about saying, well, if you have a conviction, you should live that out faithfully in your life.
These are internal ways. Now, in between this is then these characteristics of how should Christians relate to each other in wisdom. Remember, James has said, if you say you are wise, show it to me in the way you live. I will know you by your fruits. Earlier on he said, you know, a fresh water cannot produce salt water. A fig tree can't make strawberries. I will know by your fruits the life that you have in Christ. It says this. It says, pure, without hypocrisy. Then in the middle, it's peaceable. Right? Now, remember, it says, blessed are those who make peace. They'll be called sons of God. That's what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount. And that's a hard command. If you'll allow me, I'll tell you a story for myself of how this verse had to minister to me. I had had a bit of conflict in my family and it had been hurting me for a while. And it just blew up one week. And we had booked a time where I was going to meet with this person in my family and we're going to meet in the afternoon on a Friday and we're going to talk this problem out because it needed to be

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solved.
[19:36] It was recurring and painful and hurting at all times. And it was hurt both ways. And I was so angry. So, so angry. In fact, after this meeting, I had been clenching my jaw so much during the week in anger that I actually had to go to a physio and get my face like sorted out because I had locked jaw from the pain that I was holding. This absolute anger that I had gone through. And in the midst of this anger during the week, what does the Lord do? Does not allow me to be angry. Points me a scripture.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they'll be called sons of God. He said, that's what you want to be. You want to be a son of God. You want to be someone who represents me well. Peacemaker. That's the word. And I said it to myself probably a hundred times that week.
Every time I would get so angry or I'd be mad or I'm grinding my teeth. I would just, and it wasn't said nicely. It wasn't said in a holy way. Blessed are the peacemakers. They'll be called sons of God. I was fighting with God over this. I said, I'm not doing it. It's enough now. I've forgiven multiple times. I will not forgive again. But that's not the way it works. God has forgiven me infinitely and he calls me to do the same. So the end of the week, we had that meeting and it wasn't great and not the perfect words were said and no one was coming in here crawling and bowing so sorry for what they had done to me. But I had accepted that to be a son of God, to be faithful to what God had done for me was to have peace. And that pain left my heart and my body and that relationship is restored. But imagine if I had held on to it, if just a week of it had caused such pain in my jaw that I could barely eat or talk to people. Imagine how that would have festered in my soul. And this is why James starts here with making peace. There's no promise that you will not be hurt in church. There is no promise that we will not say things that are ignorant and stupid and terrible. But to make peace is to free yourself from that burning pain of sin that I had felt. I was just so angry and so hurt. But once we had moved on, God brought restoration. So, so, so hurt, but so, so freed by being a peacemaker, by living out that truth, that now I can say it with joy. Blessed are the peacemakers. They will be called sons of God. That is a hope for me. See, it is not a kind of peacemaking that got rid of the truth. We still had to speak about this. I still had to say, what you had said to me was wrong. What you've done to me has hurt me. There needs to be reconciliation.
It wasn't a cheap kind of peacemaking of, I'll just do it. I've heard husbands that have tried to give me advice since I've only been married a few years, where they say, just tell your wife she's always right. If you get mad, just go on a walk. And I said, well, if I had to go to walk every time I get angry, I'm never going to come back home. I get angry all the time. I'm a person who can have that kind of temper. That's not right. It's not as cheap kind of peace that sacrifices truth.
[22:42] If I've hurt my wife, there must be repentance. She has hurt me. There must be repentance. In the same way there was repentance, but there was an open arm to say, come, let us be together again.

Let us make peace. The next is it's gentle. And this is an interesting word because we've already heard about meekness of wisdom. And now meekness is not weakness. It is a strength that's under control. That same word could actually be used of a powerful horse which had been trained so it could be ridden. You know when you break a horse, you don't get rid of its power and its strength, but you put it under control and you use it well. The same way this meekness would lead to a gentleness which is, yes, you can react. You can get angry. You can speak harshly, but instead you choose not to react. You choose to be stable and gentle and speak life rather than being harsh. Another one was this open to reason or willing to yield. That's a hard one. It's hard to say that I'm not going to let my emotions get in the way of this, that actually if someone can reasonably tell me why I must change, why my idea is not going to work, I'm going to do it. Right, very famous, Abraham Lincoln, one of the most famous presidents in the U.S. during the Civil War, great war between the North and the South in America, he was appeasing one of his generals who said, I need all these troops, please send them to me. And he didn't want to cause conflict. So he said, okay, cool, I'm going to send a dispatch to Staten, who was his secretary of the military, and I'm going to tell him to move all of these troops to this general, so he's happy. Staten was not as, how should we say, diplomatic as
Lincoln was in his work. When he was given the order and he received it, he said, wow, this man is an idiot. He's a waste of time, I'm never going to do that. Go tell him, he's stupid, and I'm not doing it. And he sent the message back to the president of his country.

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That was a very sure, scared little postal boy came and said, here's the message from Staten. He says, you're an idiot, and he's not going to do it. Abraham Lincoln, being a man open to reason and generals, he said, well, if Staten says that I'm being an idiot, I probably am. He's right more often than not. So he went and met him, and he said, why did you say this? And he said, well, if we do this, it's going to open up this big hole, and they're going to come through. I know that they're stationed here. You didn't know it. See, Lincoln was open to reason. Even when someone came to him in a way that it wasn't good, it wasn't kind, it wasn't the most diplomatic way to do it, he said, I'm going to be open to what you say, because there might be truth to it, and I want to adjust to it. So the great Abraham Lincoln, he changed his plan, he rescinded his order, he said, I was wrong. That's what it means to be open to reason. That's what it means to seek peace. And we should be open to reason in matters of opinion or liberty. If you read in Romans chapter 14, Paul talks about it, he says, some people want to venerate one day, others another. Some people will eat meat, some won't. That's fine. Those are matters of opinion and liberty. We're not compromising truth, but we are trying to say, I will fellowship with you as long as it doesn't break these things that are true. I want to actually have community with you, even if we disagree, and we have conflict.
We need that in church. We will disagree. We will interpret passages differently. We will seek wisdom in a situation differently. You might offer someone great advice and they don't take it, but we should be open to good reason. We should be open to matters of opinion and liberty.
[26:17] The next one would be full of mercy, and mercy is amazing because it's good to be compassionate. It's good to care about people suffering, but mercy is different. It is compassion put into action. It's actually a compassion that moves you to do something good for the person. In our church, there's so many opportunities for mercy. Someone's just had a child and they need food provided to them. Someone's just gone through a surgery and they need someone to take them out for the day.

This kind of mercy is good because it builds a bond of unity in the church. Last two would be this question of producing good fruit. Now, you must think here of the fruit of the spirit, and you must think again of James's command that we must not just hear the truth of God's word, but we must practice. We must live it out. See, the good fruit of wisdom is this life in which we can judge what does it look like. We're going to talk about that in a moment when we look at the contrast of the fruits or the results. And the final one is without partiality. James has already condemned the church for showing partiality, but see, earthly wisdom does not look at the surface.
Because remember, what does God say? It says, man looks at the outward, but God looks at the heart. Well, heavenly wisdom is one that is concerned with the heart, one that seeks to see people the way the Lord sees them, not the way that the world sees them. It does not look for titles or power or privilege. It looks for someone who was made in the image of God, worthy of respect and in need of salvation. The church should be open like that. You can wear your Sunday best, look as good as you want on there, and someone else can stumble in, no bath, a little bit smelly. Both are beautiful images of God. Both need the good news of that cross. And that's what the church looks like.
In its good fruit, it does not show partiality. And we've already spoken about hypocrisy. I think you can see already that the wisdom that God has is a lot better than the wisdom that the world offers. Not just even in its results, but in its own nature. See, God's truth is beautiful when we look upon it. It moves our heart to say that we desire it, that we need it, that we must seek it for Him. But now let's look at the results, because this is important. Because if you build your Christian life on the wisdom of the world, if you build this church on the wisdom of the world, this is what it results, and it results in confusion, in every evil thing, in dissent and brokenness. This is what James is most worried about. He's like, we have this new movement. Jews, Gentiles, all sorts of people have been put together in the church. Will we actually stand in the unity that Christ prayed for in the garden of Yosemite? Or just before He died, He prayed in His high priestly prayer that they might be one, that they might have unity in the same way as the Father and the Son have unity. James says, if we follow in earthly wisdom, we create little pockets of cliques and power, and we fight, and we struggle, and we hurt, and we don't forgive. It brings absolute breakingness. And it happens all the time. Not just in our lives, it happens in the church. I've heard stories of churches that break up over the color of the carpet that they want to have. One wants red, one wants green, and one says, you're an idiot, and so on. It goes off, and it just falls apart. Think back to my story.

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If I had not sought to be a peacemaker, there you go. I lose that person, and I lose everyone associated with them in my family. I live with a hole in the community that God has given me. [29:55] The family He put me in, and I didn't get to choose it, but God placed me there for a purpose, and how sad would that have been? How sad would it have been to not only lose that relationship, but lose all of the relationships that were built around it? How hard would it have been for my family around me to know me and this person will never go to dinner together? We'll never be together. We can't ever have Christmas together because we won't reconcile. Don't let the church be like that. Don't say, I'm only coming in the evening because I know that person doesn't.

That is not what the people of God, that's not what it's meant to be. That's not what it looks like to be of one spirit with one Savior, one Lord, one confession, one baptism. See, the oneness is so important. But see, heavenly wisdom seeks peace by making peace, which results in what fruit? Righteousness. Right? Now, we already know we get righteousness from God. We trust in Him, and He makes us right standing before Him. But we need to live out that righteousness in our lives. The analogy I like is one from C.S. Lewis. He says that there's a type of good pretending to the Christian life. See, a bad pretending is like a con artist. They pretend to be someone they aren't and they never will be. But the good pretending of the Christian life is like your child when you walk in one day and he's putting on your suit jacket, or your daughter's putting on your high heels for the first time. See, they are not that yet. They're not big yet. Or kids playing house, or playing, you know, husband, wife, and little kids. They're not those things yet, but they will grow into it. There's an observation made in the screw tape letters by a fictional story about demons that C.S. Lewis wrote, where he said that people often become what they pretend to be.
Now, the good news of the gospel is we already are the righteousness of Christ. We already are all the things that God wants us to be. But as we begin to live to that identity, it becomes more and more true of us, this side of eternity. It will be completed by Christ, but the good news of works working out and being complete in Christ is that we grow into the shoes that God has given us. We grow into the jacket of righteousness he's clothed us with. So my hope for you is that you would seek a heavenly wisdom, that you would seek God earnestly, that you would go through that list and say, is it true that I am pure in my devotion? Is it true that I am gentle with people? I know that one convicts me the most. Sometimes I'm not gentle and I speak way too quickly. Do I yield to good reason or do I stubbornly hold on like a dog with a bone? Seek that, look at that. But let me give you the very, very good news. It's all already yours in Christ. See, we're told that Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. And is that not good news? That wisdom has come down, it has put on flesh, it has declared to us what God wants us to do, how he wants us to live. Christ has made that there.
[32:52] But he's also the power of God because he is the one that can make it true. In the same way as Lazarus couldn't walk out that grave without Jesus bringing new life into him, you cannot have wisdom from above without the character of Jesus being made true in you, without your mind being renewed, without trusting in God for it. So my hope as we close and I close in prayer is that we will seek Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God, that we will be made one together, that we would live in peace, that we would live out the faith which has made us alive again, that just as we are born again, born from above, we might seek a wisdom from above. If you'd bow your heads with me, I'd like to pray.

God, when we read what you expect for us, what it looks like to be your people, what it looks like to live out this gospel truth of being made new in Christ, when we read the letter of James, it just can feel like a bunch of knives going into us, knives of failures and this, can lie to us the way the devil says, and you'll never be that. But I'm so thankful that Christ is your wisdom, that Christ is your power, that it is you who we seek from. It is not a wisdom that comes from us, not some of us are born with it and others not, but instead all of us are open to seek it, Lord, to seek it from you, to trust that you have promised it and every good gift comes from you and you will make it true, God. So I pray that throughout this week you would remind us of these characteristics of wisdom and that you would call us to be peacemakers when we must be peacemakers, to be open to reason when we must be open to reason, to not be hypocrites in the way in which we act with one person and another, but that you would begin to renew our minds, you would begin to fill us with your wisdom and that through that we might be better lights and witnesses in this world calling people into a relationship with you, into this church, this messy body of people who choose love over everything else. Let that be true of us, Lord. Amen.

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Thank you, Grant. Let's stand and sing as we close. Be thou my vision, O Lord, thou my heart. Lord, be all else to me, save that thou art.
Thou my best love, my day or my night. Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
Be thou my wisdom, thou my true word. I ever with you.
[36:16] Thou with me, Lord, thou my great Father. Thou with me, Lord, thou my great Father. I thy true Son. Thou with me, dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my great Father. Be thou my battle, shall I for the fight. Be thou my dignity, of my delight. Thou my soul, thou my soul, shall I for the fight. Thou my soul, shall I for the fight. Thou my white Father. Praise thou me, heavenward, O power, my power.
Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise The mine inheritance, thou and thou ways Thou and thou only, first in thy heart I, King of heaven, I treasure thou art I, King of heaven, after victory won May I reach heaven's choice of bright and sun And, O my own heart, whatever he falls Still be my vision, O ruler of God
I hope this blessing encourages you The Lord bless you and keep you The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you The Lord lift up his consonants upon you and give you peace Think on that Thank you Thank you

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