

1	<p style="text-align: center;">JAMES 4:13-17; Matthew 21:1-5 Palm Sunday vs Presumption?</p>
3-4	<p>Today we have an odd Palm Sunday passage in James 4</p> <p>13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are <i>just</i> a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, <i>you ought</i> to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows <i>the</i> right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.</p>
	<p>It's odd because it is NOT set in a context of Palm Sunday and because it seems to go against the example of Jesus.</p>
6	<p>Matt 21</p>
7	<p>"Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied <i>there</i> and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." 4 <u>This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:</u></p>
	<p>5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.' "</p>
	<p>I don't mean to be irreverent in any way, but I'll point out what some of you may be thinking: "Jesus seems to be doing what James says we shouldn't do." He is making plans He seems to be boasting in a certain way. At least he is setting up a scenario where He is going to be acclaimed with the cry of Hosanna. If Jesus can do that, why can't we?</p>
	<p>A couple of points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We're not Jesus 2. Jesus knew that even His earthly life was a vapor that would quickly pass. He was well aware of what would be His fate as He rode in Jerusalem. 3. He perfectly lived out "If the Lord wills", even when it the painful and shameful death on a cross.
9	<p>The triumphal entry of Palm Sunday is the theological flip-side of what James is warning US about.</p> <p>Jesus did not orchestrate the Triumphal Entry out of presumption, but out of Prophecy.</p> <p>The actions of Jesus in his entry into Jerusalem were born out of his humility as our Savior. He left heaven in obedience to the Father's will and humbled himself to the point of death, even death on the cross.</p> <p>Our attempts at a 'triumphal entry' to accomplish our goals are presumptuous and boastful because we are pursuing our own agenda.</p> <p>It should not surprise us that James presents this sin of presumption as a sin of speech – we are talking to ourselves and others in a boastful presumptuous way.</p> <p>BOASTING DEFINED:</p>

11	<p>Arrogant boasting is an insolent assurance that trusts in its own resources, insights, or wisdom and an empty presumption that trusts in the reliability of worldly things. Johnny Long</p>
13	<p>The result is that we can lose sight of God and his glory and begin seeking our own glory.</p>
14	<p>BOASTING ISa "RED FLAG" that our flesh is hard at work, that we are not resting in the righteousness of Christ to "make us beautiful," that we feel inadequate and need to somehow "inflate ourselves" in the eyes of God or others. ...a "false gospel"— something we use to make ourselves feel "right" or "righteous" —something other than Jesus. To boast is to stop preaching the Gospel in order to preach ourselves—<i>"the Good News of me."</i> (compare 2 Cor. 4:5)</p>
	<p>The path toward the End of Boasting follows The Gospel, which is the-cure for self-love, boasting and our thirst for glory. We walk that path by filling our hearts with the Person and work of Christ.</p> <p>Since we're not Jesus and we don't have knowledge about how our future will play out, how do we guard against the sin of Presumptuous Boasting?</p>
16	<p>RECOGNIZE: Our ignorance - v. 14-15 <i>"You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow."</i> The builders of the Tower of Babel thought they were making a name for themselves. Experienced generals thought Picket's charge at Gettysburg was a good idea. Those who built the Titanic expressed confidence that it was basically unsinkable. Napoleon and Hitler thought it was a great idea to invade Russia Even while making great plans, we all have an "I didn't see that coming" event.</p> <p>2020 was a big exclamation point to verse 14. On March 10, 2020 our Walker Cty Chamber leadership class was a Prater Floors in Rossville. We were standing at the edge of the basketball floor that was going to be used for the Final Four weekend in Atlanta just a few weeks away. Life was normal and March Madness was coming. A few days later it was all shut down. Some states are now on day 377 of 15 days to flatten the curve.</p>
18	<p>Our Frailty V. 14 <i>"You are a vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes."</i> This echoes the wisdom book of Ecclesiastes - "Vanity of vanities, all it vanity" - "hevel" - our life is a mist, a vapor.</p>
19	<p>While we may be unsure of the contents of tomorrow - v. 14; the BIG question is one of OUR EXISTENCE tomorrow.</p> <p>Again, 2020 exposed how frail our lives are. We should know ABOUT FRAILTY because there are other factors that killed more people in 2020 than Covid- heart disease and cancer. Those issues are leading causes of death EVERY year and we still have a hard time facing the reality that our lives are a vapor. No matter how good our medical services are in these modern times, the death rate remains 1 to 1, the same as it was when James wrote this letter. https://usafacts.org/articles/top-causes-death-united-states-heart-disease-cancer-and-covid-19/</p>
21	<p>Our dependence <i>"You ought to say, 'if the Lord wills'"</i> Does this mean that our conversations must be punctuated with "If the Lord wills"? There is no biblical precedent of that or historical record of that. Christian jargon can be weird enough without adding that in</p>

	<p>every time we make plans to do something. Perhaps you've seen writings or letters where at the end were the letters D.V.. That stands for Deo Volente – Latin for God willing. That should be the posture of our hearts, not the punctuation of our sentences.</p> <p>Motyer - To be sure the words 'If the Lord wills' can be a protective superstition; but they can also be the sweetest and most comfortable reassurance to a humble and trustful spirit.</p>
23	<p>OUR PROBLEM: Motyer – "...presumption is the unrecognized claim of our hearts. We speak to ourselves as if life were our right, as if our choice were the only deciding factor, as if we had in ourselves all that is needed to make a success of things, as if getting on, making money, and doing well were life's sole objective."</p> <p>The sin of presumption didn't start in the day of James; it started in the Garden of Eden:</p>
25	<p>4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."</p>
26	<p>6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.</p> <p>THE DESIRE TO BE LIKE God is the height of Presumption. Deuteronomy 17 has several warning against presumption regarding disobedience to God's law and speaking false "prophecy" or speaking for another 'God'. FYI: the penalty was death. Deut 18</p>
28	<p>The Psalmist was aware of the danger of presumption...</p> <p>Psalm 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. 13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me;</p>
29	<p>Paul shows the root and the result of human presumption: Romans 1</p> <p>18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,... 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.</p>
	<p>Serving the creature is the essence of the mindset of the world – "Man, the measure of all things." That phrase is attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras (450BC). It became a very influential philosophy during the Renaissance Humanist period beginning around 1400 AC.</p> <p>How does it play itself out? It begins to look like the period of the Judges – "Every man does that which is right in his own eyes." It is manifested in our desire to be God, to determine right and wrong or to say that there are no such absolute moral values; to define when life begins or which lives don't have value so they can be enslaved, aborted, or exterminated; to define ourselves or self-identify outside of the divine image bearing categories of female and male. Those are all examples of how presumption plays out in this rebellious world.</p>
31	<p>While James is focusing on what would seem to be the routine aspects of life, the principle is the same. The little routine things of life are the bread and butter of the life of faith. The pattern of faithfulness in the little things reveals a lot about our character and spiritual life. The little things do matter, as Jesus tells us...LUKE 16</p> <p>10 "The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.</p>

I dare say, it also applies to presumption... The one who is presumptuous in a very little thing is also presumptuous in much;

JAMES indicates how this shows up in the routine aspects of life – doing business, our buying and selling, our planning for the future. They seem so ordinary, yet they can reveal an underlying bass note of arrogant boasting, which is EVIL. That is not a word to be taken lightly.

Again, James points out that this is more serious than we think. That theme is found throughout the book of James. If we're listening, we should get the point that EVERY moment is a God moment.

In our trials, in our need for wisdom, in temptation, in receiving the Word, in our speech, in our works of faith, in our relationships, and in the affections of our hearts, God should be central.

All of life is to be lived by faith before the face of God.

The OT wisdom approach of James reflects the basic principle that God gave Israel in Deut 6.

Deut 6

4"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

James is saying to his Jewish and gentile Christian audience, "The person and ways of God are to be on our hearts and minds all during the day."

James and the bible do not banish planning from our lives. They banish a self-sufficient "godless" attitude that keeps God at arm's length on Monday to Saturday but seeks to give him a nod for a couple of hours on Sunday.

BY CONTRAST, Jesus is the perfect example of One who followed the Father's will. He understood that the fine print of life was in the Sovereign hands of God. That is what James is calling us to remember.

Jesus is the example of one who made all of His choices with a view of glorifying the Father and advancing His kingdom. He did not live a presumptuous life in terms of his time and choices; he lived an obedient life.

How do we avoid arrogant presumption in our lives?

Lean into the reason for the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

He came to be acclaimed as King, as the one who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Lean into the truths of the Gospel Narrative.

I really like the way that Ben Shive summarizes the role and significance of Jesus and His entry into Jerusalem. He describes it in his song, "Remember Me"

<https://rabbitroom.com/2018/04/behind-the-song-remember-me/>

Lord, remember me // when, You come// into Your kingdom

*Who can ascend the hill of the Lord? The one who utters no untrue word (Ps 15)
Whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure// Who can ascend that hill?*

*There is none righteous, no not one We are prodigal daughters and wayward sons (Rom 3:10)
We don't know the half of the hurt we've done //The countless we have killed*

*Our priests are cheats, our prophets are liars, We know what the law requires (Matt 23:13ff)
But we pile our sins up higher and higher// Who can ascend that hill?*

41	<i>And I am a sheep who has gone astray, I have turned aside to my own way (Is 53) Have mercy on me, // Son of David Lord, remember me// when You come// into Your kingdom</i>
42	<i>Now hear the voice of the Word made man / The spotless sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29) "A body You gave me, here I am, I have come to do Your will" (John 6:38)</i>
43	<i>And no one takes my life, you see, I lay it down now willingly (John 10:18) And I will draw all men to me When I ascend that hill (John 12:32)</i>
44	<i>On Sunday You came as a King On Monday washed the temple clean On Tuesday You told of what will be On Wednesday You waited patiently</i>
45	<i>On Thursday You said it is time I'll drink this cup 'cause it is mine On Friday, Lord, // You poured the wine</i>
46	<i>Like a thief on the cross, as He hung there dying (Luke 23) For crimes, there were no use denying While the righteous Judge hung right beside// him How could I not recognize You? How could I not recognize You? How could I not recognize... my Lord?</i>
47	Speaking of the final verses, Andrew Peterson, who recorded the song, said, <i>"This, whatever you've been told about Christianity, is where the whole story of creation is headed. We will always be with the Lord."</i>
48	<i>And we've heard this story all our lives, Still, we feel the pain of the crucified And the end still comes as a surprise</i>
49	<i>But before the breath there in the tomb, Before our joy sprang from the womb You saw a day that's coming soon (Luke 9)</i>
50	<i>When the Son will stand on the mount again, With an army of angels at His command And the earth will split like the hull of a seed, Wherever Jesus plants His feet (Rev 19)</i>
51	<i>And up from the earth, the dead will rise (1 Thess 4) Like spring trees robed in petals of white Singing the song of the radiant bride And we will always be, always be, always be with the Lord (John 14)</i>
	<i>God'S Kingdom WILL WIN AND We will always be, always be, always be with the Lord</i> There are two things you can plan on without being presumptuous: Death You will always be with the Lord, if you know Christ (and you will always be separated from the Lord if you don't know Him.) THE TABLE is a great reminder of how and why we can be assured that we will always be with the Lord.

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