

The Master of My Fate

A bible study during the national COVID-19 crisis, in which we learn who is the true master of our fate.

James 4:13-17

Intro – If there is a poem that perfectly captures the American spirit, a spirit in which Americans take great pride, it is Henley's Invictus. The last two lines of the poem read, *"I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul."*

James addresses this level of arrogance in **James 4:13-17**. In this passage we see;

1. The Problem of Arrogance.

In **verse 13**, he rebukes those who arrogantly proclaim;

- When they will go
- Where they will go
- How long they will go
- What/Why they will go
- The result/outcome of their going

They confidently proclaiming such without a regard for the Lord's will and His divine providence.

This attitude/mindset can be;

- A. Personal – Luke 12:15-21**
- B. National – Isaiah 47:7-11**

And...this attitude/mindset is EVIL. **James 4:16**

2. The Price of Humility

In **verse 14**, He rebukes their pride by asking how can a people such as you, be so full of pride.

- A. He makes a statement regarding their ignorance.** How can you be so arrogant/confident, when you are ignorant of what tomorrow will bring.
- B. He asks a question revealing the brevity and fragile nature of one's life.** How can you be so arrogant/confident when your life is so transient and fragile?

How dare we be prideful, we who live in ignorance and in such a brief and fragile state?

We can guarantee ourselves nothing!

***Proverbs 27:1 *Psalms 39:4-6**

The price of humility...the price tag on this godly and wise perspective, that is seeing ourselves as we truly are, is often a humbling crisis. A crisis on both a personal and national level, where in mere days all that we have boasted in, gloried in and taken security in, is gone.

In the last week, we have seen;

- a virus we cannot control
- an inadequate healthcare system
- a tanking economy
- a fragile workforce
- a bending supply chain
- inadequate savings
- limited freedoms

How quickly it can all be gone!

But there is wisdom in learning this. The point James is making here, is not just to rebuke our arrogance but to point us to a humble understanding of Gods providence and submission to His will.

The right attitude is found in **verse 15**. ***“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”***

3. The promise of Sovereignty

Now, I fully understand to some this is not a promise but bondage. These are the evil. **(Verse 16)**

But, to the humble, it is comforting, as we understand that our fragile life is on the Lord's hands. ***Romans 8:28**

The humble take comfort in His will. Both His secret decrees **(Isaiah 46:9-10)** and His revealed will **(Micah 6:8)**.

We should live with a mental focus upon his will. And thus we see;

4. The point of submission

Verse 17 begins, **“Therefore”**...based on all of this we live humbly submissive to the Lord's will, performing His revealed will and trusting His secret decrees. When we can't see or understand His will, we can trust His character.

We may not understand His decrees but we know His revealed will. We must obey His will, and to not is sin.

So we ask, what is His will in this crisis? I'll give you three, perhaps you can come up with more.

- A. Submission to governing authorities. Romans 13:1-4**
- B. Loving your neighbor. Matthew 26:36-40, Galatians 6:2**
- C. Be a source of wisdom and truth. Proverbs 18:13, 21:28, 8:1,6,7**

Conclusion – We must not be those who arrogantly go through life without being mindful of the Lord's will. We must allow this crisis to put us in the right place of humility before God. We must trust His secret will and we must follow His revealed will.