**Your New Years Resolution for 2020,**

Sermon-Sunday 5.01.2020

***Introduction Prayer***

*Father give us a peace this morning, a place of understanding, settle our minds.*

*Father give me the words this morning through the power of Your Holy Spirit.*

*Father, All week you have spoken to me of these things.*

*Open ears, hearts and minds this morning*

*Amen*

**Lets get Spiritual this year.**

*Here’s a little History lesson to start the year.*

*Jesus was born. This was for-told many hundreds of years before.*

*He started His short ministry in His 30’s.*

*Jesus was crucified.*

*Jesus rose from the dead (As prophesied) and appeared to His disciples*

*He spoke with them and*

*He said.*

**Luke 24:49-53 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**49**Listen carefully: I am sending the Promise of My Father [the Holy Spirit] upon you; but you are to remain in the city [of Jerusalem] until you are clothed (fully equipped) with power from on high.”

**He Ascended**

**50**Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up His hands and blessed them.

**51**While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.

**52**And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy [fully understanding that He lives and that He is the Son of God];

**53**and they were continually in the temple blessing *and* praising God.

*So - one that day of Pentecost there was an infilling of the Holy Spirit, on all those in the room.*

*The* ***Holy Spirit*** *fell upon them and they spoke in* ***“new tongues”****, a spiritual language.*

*They spoke to God, and also prophesied, they went out onto the street.*

*Many of the public listening to them* ***understood them*** *in* ***their own tongue****, what they were saying.*

### *Sometime after this, they obeyed their instructions from Jesus as was spoken of in*

**Matthew 28:18-20 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**18**Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority (all power of absolute rule) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

**19**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations [help the people to learn of Me, believe in Me, and obey My words], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**20**teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always [remaining with you perpetually—regardless of circumstance, and on every occasion], even to the end of the age.”

All spiritual growth starts with this truth.

Until you grasp what it means, you are still in **spiritual kindergarten**

*I know I keep repeating these things, and I always will. So that its totally in your spirit.*

*Remember. Be transformed, by the renewing of your what…. MIND!*

The First Rule of the Spiritual Life:

Listen - **He’s God and we’re not**

***Here’s a thought*** - If pride is the **first sin**, then humility is the **first virtue**.

Would you like to know God better? **Humble yourself!**

Would you like to receive God’s approval? **Humble yourself!**

Would you like to break through to victory? **Humble yourself!**

Would you like a closer walk with God in 2020?

Pay attention to this passage because it will help you **jumpstart** your **spiritual life.**

**James 4:6-10** **AMP**

**6**But He gives us more and more grace [through the power of the Holy Spirit to defy sin and live an obedient life that reflects both our faith and our gratitude for our salvation]. Therefore, it says, “God is opposed to the proud *and* haughty, but [continually] gives [the gift of] grace to the humble [who turn away from self-righteousness].”

**7**So submit to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you.

**8**Come close to God [with a contrite heart] and He will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; and purify your [unfaithful] hearts, you double-minded [people].

**9**Be miserable and grieve and weep [over your sin]. Let your [foolish] laughter be turned to mourning and your [reckless] joy to gloom.

**10**Humble yourselves [with an attitude of repentance and insignificance] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up, He will give you purpose].

What does it means to humble yourself in the eyes of the Lord.

In this passage we discover **six steps** that unlock the path of **God’s blessing** for his children

**# 1: Take a Knee**

“He gives more grace”. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ Submit yourselves therefore to God” **(vv. 6-7a).**

Humility doesn’t come naturally to most of us.

It’s the virtue which, if you think you have it, you probably don’t.

It has been said ---

**“Lord, make me humble, but don’t let me know it.”**

No one likes being told what to do. We would rather be in charge of our own affairs, and that’s why the whole notion of surrendering our pride to the Lord sounds strange at first.

But there is no other way to get better.

There is no other way to be healed. There is no other way to be forgiven.

There is no other way to find a new life.

We can fight the Lord, or we can surrender everything to his control.

When we fight, **we lose.**

When we surrender in faith, **we win.**

**When we fight, we lose**.

You aren’t God, you never were, and you never will be.

**Start there**, and you’ll be on the **right path.**

***Humility grows*** *best in the rich soil of* ***God’s grace***.

Don’t pray for more humility; pray for **more grace**.

Pray that God will pour out his grace in your heart so that you will only boast in the Lord.

**Humility grows best in the rich soil of God’s grace**

A proud man must constantly remind people how great he is.

He brags because he wants everyone to praise him

A braggart brags because he’s trying to convince people (and himself) of how great he is.

*The humble man doesn’t brag because the truth speaks for itself.*

He leaves his reputation in the Lord’s hands because it doesn’t matter to him what others think.

He wants **God’s reputation** to become great in the land.

What happens to him doesn’t matter as long as the **Lord’s cause goes forward**.

Walking in **humility** means you confess your sins, you forgive your enemies, you admit your mistakes, and you don’t brag about how great you are.

It also means you **serve others** with a **smile**, not with a frown.

“God **opposes** the proud.”

Don’t let that happen to you!

“But He gives **grace** to the humble.”

So pray for the grace you need.

Take a knee.

You’ll be glad you did.

**# 2: Fight Back**

**“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”** (v. 7b).

This is both a **command** and a **promise.**

If **we submit to God**, we may be sure that when we **resist the devil**, he will **flee from us.**

*We have no power in ourselves against the devil, but he has no power to use against us when we fight* ***with God’s power*.**

By **ourselves**, we can’t win; with **God’s help**, **we can’t lose.**

**If you have to tell me how great you are, how great could you possibly be?**

The word **“resist”** is a military term.

It means you **stand and fight**. You don’t run away.

We are to ***flee* temptation**, but we are to***fight* the devil**.

That means taking up the armor of God and standing up to evil

**(Ephesians 6:10-17).**

**10**In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [draw your strength from Him and be empowered through your union with Him] and in the power of His [boundless] might.

**11**Put on the full armor of God [for His precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier], so that you may be able to [successfully] stand up against all the schemes *and* the strategies *and* the deceits of the devil.

**12**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this [present] darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) *places*.

**13**Therefore, put on the complete armor of God, so that you will be able to [successfully] resist *and* stand your ground in the evil day [of danger], and having done everything [that the crisis demands], to stand firm [in your place, fully prepared, immovable, victorious].

**14**So stand firm *and* hold your ground, having [[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=%28Ephesians+6%3A10-17&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29352a)]tightened the wide band of truth (personal integrity, moral courage) around your waist and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (an upright heart),

**15**and having [[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=%28Ephesians+6%3A10-17&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29353b)]strapped on your feet the gospel of peace in preparation [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news].

**16**Above all, lift up the [protective] [[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=%28Ephesians+6%3A10-17&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29354c)]shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*.

**17**And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Satan is like a football coach studying the opposing team.

He has “a game video” on us, he knows our weaknesses and our strengths, and he uses what he knows against us.

If he can get you discouraged, he’s already won the battle.

He knows when you lose your temper.

Satan is not equal to God, but he’s a lot smarter than you or me.

**Fight back**!

Don’t be surprised when he hits you out of the blue. **Fight back!**

Don’t be surprised when he comes to you with a seductive temptation. **Fight back!**

Don’t be surprised when he whispers in your ear

in a moment of weakness. **Fight back!**

*The devil is a murderer by nature*

**John 8:44 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**44**You are of *your* father the devil, and it is your will to practice the desires [which are characteristic] of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar and the father of lies *and* half-truths.

He will destroy your career, your marriage, your family, and your ministry if you let him.

**You’ve got to stand and fight.**

**Satan studies our "game video"**

Fight back with the **Word of God**.

Fight back by **singing great hymns**.

Fight back by **praying to Jesus.**

Fight back by **speaking in Tongues directly to God**

Fight back by **leaning on your brothers and sisters**.

Fight back by **confessing Christ openly**.

Fight back by **coming to the Lord’s Table**.

Fight back by **fleeing every temptation**.

**Stand and fight, child of God!**

**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**.

**# 3: Draw Near**

**“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you”** (v. 8a).

The question is not, how near is God to us, but rather **how near are we to him?**

*Every married couple understands that proximity is one thing, but intimacy is something else.*

A couple may be seated on the same couch but be miles apart from each other. They may sleep together but not share the same bed spiritually.

It is quite possible to be married and live entirely separate lives.

**Proximity is one thing, intimacy is something else**

***Drawing near to God*** *starts in* ***the heart***.

In your minds eye, take a married couple and watch them for a moment.

She may be reading, watching tv or playing the piano.

He may be reading a book or listening to her play the piano.

Minutes may pass without a word being spoken, but they are happy together.

He has drawn near to her, and she has drawn near to him.

If we come to God with that same desire to know him, he will draw near to us.

You do not need to be an **advanced Christian** or a **super-saint** or a **deep Bible student**.

The newest saint and the weakest believer may know God’s presence.

Lets ask the question –

**“If God feels far away from you, who moved?”**

It’s never the Lord.

*We may know his presence and feel his pleasure if we truly want it.*

He will draw near to you if you draw near to him.

**# 4: Clean Up**

**“Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded”** (v. 8b).

We must cleanse our hands because they are **dirty with sin.**

We must purify our hearts because they **are divided**, and we are **distracted**.

This means we stop making excuses for **bad attitudes**, for **casual unkindness**, for clever **put-downs**, for **dabbling in pornography**, for **bragging** about our accomplishments, for **envy** of others, for **bitterness**, for a **critical** spirit, for our **prayerlessness,** for our need to be **in control**, for **giving in to despair**, for **hating** our **enemies** instead of **loving** them, and for our **failure** to do what we ought to do.

Here’s a useful way to apply this truth.

Take some time to get alone with God.

Pray this simple prayer:

“Lord, show me the truth about myself”.

Then write down what the Lord shows you.

Experience tells me, you can’t do this in ten minutes, and you can’t do this when you are busy.

It takes time to open your heart to the Holy Spirit.

Read the result?

What does it say about your inner self?

Are you appalled at what the Lord reveal’s about your self?

but then be glad for the **cleansing** that comes from **confession** and **repentance**.

**Hosea 10:12 Amplified Bible (AMP)** offers us a promise:

**12**Sow with a view to righteousness [that righteousness, like seed, may germinate];  
Reap in accordance with mercy *and* lovingkindness.  
Break up your uncultivated ground,  
For it is time to seek *and* search diligently for the Lord [and to long for His blessing]  
Until He comes to rain righteousness *and* His gift of salvation on you.

**“Plow up the hard ground of your hearts, for now is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and shower righteousness upon you”**

Plowing is hard work because it means digging up the rocks and pulling the weeds that keep the good fruit from growing. But if we by God’s grace do the hard thing, the Lord promises to send the rain that produces a new life with new joy and fresh fruit from heaven.

**# 5: Get Serious**

**“Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom”** (v. 9).

This isn’t exactly “your best life now,” and it doesn’t sound like the “abundant life” or the “life that wins.”

In fact, this verse runs counter to the “I want to be happy all the time” version of Christianity that is very popular our Western culture.

**This verse seems like a downer**

Be wretched—Who wants to be wretched?

Mourn—Don’t worry, be happy.

Weep—That’s a real downer.

If we laugh, we should stop it and start mourning.

If we have joy, turn it into gloom.

I’ll be the first to agree that this verse, put this way, seems like a downer.

But let’s step back and ask ourselves what James means by all this.

Is he a killjoy? No, that can’t be right.

Is he a Negative person? Whatever that is, that’s not who he is.

**We are more sinful that we think**

*James wants us to get serious about our relationship with God.*

It could be said, that we are more sinful than we usually think we are.

Most people, even those who don’t go to church, would agree they are sinners.

That is, no one’s perfect, we all make mistakes, and so on.

It’s not hard to get people to agree with that statement.

*But the Bible goes much further*.

It tells us that sin has **infected** every part of our human life, that we are **spiritually dead**, **spiritually blind**, **lost**, **separated** from God, and without hope --- **in the world**.

The Bible reveals the solemn truth that **“all have sinned”** (Romans 3:23).

We have all missed the mark.

The whole human race is **lost, broken, dead, blind, deaf** to God’s truth, in a state of perpetual rebellion, and so separated from God that we are under his wrath, and bound for eternal punishment in hell.

That’s what God says about the whole human race.

That was God’s verdict.

**Bigtime sinners need a bigtime Savior!**

If you don’t believe that, or if you think that’s too harsh, or if you can’t handle the truth, then this verse will make no sense to you.

It all depends on how messed up you think you are.

Small sinners need **a small Savior**.

Moderate sinners need a **moderate Savior**.

Bigtime sinners need a **bigtime Savior**.

We are all **bigtime sinners**!

Once we see our sin as it really is, we will be **wretched** and **mourn and weep**.

We’ll stop laughing and start **crying**.

We’ll let our joy be turned to **mourning**.

And that opens the door to the **abundant life** we all seek.

**Weeping** may endure for a night, but **joy** comes in the morning.

This promise comes true whenever we decide to take God **seriously.**

**# 6: Stay Low**

**“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you”**(v. 10).

That’s a good word for us all.

That sentence stands as a powerful word for every Christian.

It is great advice because it describes **two choices.**

You can exalt yourself, or you can exalt Christ, but you can’t do both.

When we decide to **humble ourselves** and **exalt Christ**, there is **no limit** to what the Lord may **choose to do through us.**

**We can be blessed, but we must humble ourselves**

We can be blessed, but we must **humble ourselves**.

We can change, but we must **humble ourselves**.

We can experience the abundant life, but we must **humble ourselves**.

**James 4:6-10** shows us the path that will jumpstart your spiritual life:

**Take a Knee.**

**Fight Back.**

**Draw Near.**

**Clean Up.**

**Get Serious.**

**Stay Low.**

In the **Kingdom of God**, the way up **is down**.

If you **humble yourself**, the Lord will **raise you up**.

One final thought reminds us that God “opposes” the proud.

Ponder that for a moment.

**In God's kingdom, the way up is down**

Could a Christian be an enemy of God? Yes.

If that wasnt true, then the words of James would have no application to most of us.

Could God be “opposed” to one of His own children, even though He loves them with an everlasting love?

The answer is yes because God loves us so much He will not leave us the way we are.

His love leads Him to “oppose” our **pride**, our **anger**, our **loose tongue**, our **lust**, our **unkind spirit**, and all the **excuses** we make for **our sin.**

If you **humble yourself** now, **God won’t have to do it later.**

*The* ***price*** *for dealing with our* ***problems never goes down*; *it always goes up****.*

That’s true personally, and it’s true for our relationships.

We put off dealing with our issues because we think it will **cost too much** to deal with them now

But that’s a **huge mistake**.

Sin left **untouched** always grows.

It’s like a deadly cancer you leave untreated.

Sin always **spreads** because it is the **cancer of the soul**.

We can **humble ourselves** in the eyes the Lord, or we can go on living the way we want until the time **God decides** to humble us.

The choice is ours.

Every blessing awaits those who will **humble themselves** before the Lord.

This is the **promise of God**, and it is good news indeed.

May God help us to take these words to heart.

**Musicians**

**Lets Pray**

O Lord, grant us grace that we might humble ourselves in your sight.

Show us where pride has taken root.

Shine the light of your Word on the hidden parts of the heart.

Where we have sinned, have mercy.

Restore us, Father, that we may rejoice in you once again.

**Amen.**