

If you have a look at the map up on the screen, that's the Middle East, between 1949 and 1967. And you can see that Egypt held the whole of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip. Jordan held the west bank, which included half of Jerusalem. And as always, Israel was virtually surrounded by its enemies.

In May, 1967, Egypt expelled UN peacekeepers from the Sinai Peninsula, and they announced that they were going to blockade and cut off, some of Israel's shipping access to the Red Seaⁱ. Egypt then began to pour their troops into Sinai, and massed them along the Israeli border, threatening hostilities.

Now remember, Israel were surrounded by their enemies. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon.... 2 and 3 deep, in places, if you go out as far as Iraq, Iran, Pakistan... The whole thing was like a powder keg, just waiting for a spark to set it off.

And on the 5th June, 1967, Israel made a pre-emptive strike, into Sinai and Egypt. In 1 day, they had totally decimated the Egyptian airforce.

Jordan and Syria, then attacked Israel. But of course, Israel was ready for this. And sometimes wars go on for years. But in 6 days – (6 days), Israel had them on the run. And so Israel now held:

- *the whole of the Sinai Peninsula*
- *the Gaza Strip*
- *what is known as "The West Bank"*
- *and the "Golan Heights".*

What has become known as the “Six-Day War”, enabled Israel to occupy territories, previously used by their enemies, to launch gorilla attacks into Israel.

It was an overwhelming display of their military superiority.

But if it was so successful – if they were able to achieve so much in 6 days, why, almost 50 years later, is the Israeli/Arab conflict, an on-going event?

Why are the places like Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, continuously in our news headlines? Why, almost every day, is there a bombing, or a shooting, or a stabbing, or rocket launches, or suicide bombings (in Israel)???? Why does it just go on and on and on???

Well, it’s because these lands are shared by two different peoples. The whole of Israel, is a disputed territory, that the Arab and Persian nations, would like to see totally disappear, and become Arab (again).

But even within Israel itself, lives the Israeli and the Arab Palestinian. Israel’s enemy lives within. And we can only imagine what it must be like for Israel to live with the constant threat, of an enemy, bent on their destruction, living inside...

It’s a nation that can never have peace:

- *2 different peoples*
- *2 different beliefs*
- *2 different cultures*
- *2 different allegiances*
- *2 different gods*

A nation, where its sworn enemies, live within.

*Until Jesus returns, Israel will **always** battle, with not only external attacks, but attacks from inside. (and mind you, they have brought a fair bit of it upon themselves too.).*

But today's lesson **isn't** about geo-political and international conflict... Today's lesson is much closer to home.... It's about the **spiritual** war – the **spiritual** conflict... The daily battle, which rages inside those of us, who are of 2 minds. And I don't mean "2 minds" as in "I'm undecided" – I mean "2 minds", as in "I want to be a disciple of Jesus, but I'm happy to be a worldly Christian." (That's what it means to be double-minded).

James says:

4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

And then he goes on to describe, the combatants in this internal war. He says:

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

There are 2 opposing forces – the world; and God... - worldliness and Godliness...

You see, in this world, there are:

- 2 different peoples

- 2 different beliefs
- 2 different cultures
- 2 different allegiances
- 2 different gods

Those who are in Christ, and those who are in the world. And for many of us, we want to have a foot in **both** camps. – I want to live with the **benefits** of being saved, but I want to hold on to a fair bit of what the world has to offer (because, let's admit it, "It's pretty tempting, to the cravings of the flesh")....

And so the battle (the fight) goes on and on and on, inside of me...

And James is saying, "That cannot be".... **friendship with the world is enmity with God**. If I go and get friendly with the ways of the world, I make myself to be an enemy of God – it's **that** simple.

You know, it's really hard, these days, to talk about this in truly Biblical terms, because of today's expectation of our modern "political correctness". The Bible, uses terms, such as "war" and "battle" and "putting to death"... – none of which are politically correct terminology....

And in a war – for a war to be successful, and to have an outcome of lasting, victorious peace, there has to be a decided victor. The victor – the winner – must rule victorious, and the vanquished is expelled or becomes subjugated (totally submitted) to the victor.

But of course, with today's political correctness, we don't like having winners and losers, do we. And so we prefer to "live and let live".... But if the victor has the attitude of "live and let live", the vanquished (the loser) will continue to have the desire (and the presence) to be ruler again – the desire, to **regain** control – the desire to come back again, to once again, be the master and the lord of the realm.

And that's the way it is, with the person. If we try to let the old, worldly nature, co-exist with the new, Spiritual nature, we will be at constant war, within ourselves.

And so, Biblical language around what it means to be disciples of Jesus, totally submitted to Him, is very politically incorrect... It's language about "putting to death"; It's language about "winning a war"... It's language about friends and enemies...

You see, to convert to Christianity, is such a radical shift of allegiance and such a radical transference of headship and Lordship and rulership, no other language could **ever** be strong enough to describe what it's really about...

The kingdom of darkness once used to **rule** you. The Kingdom of Darkness once used to **control** you.... But Jesus Christ has won a tremendous victory **over** the Kingdom of Darkness. And He's won a victory in you. He has liberated you...

*Following World War II, the Nuremberg Trials were held. Nazi war criminals were put on trial, convicted, and executed. This **only** happened because the Allies won. If Nazi Germany*

*and the Axis of Germany, Italy and Japan, had won the 2nd World War, the war criminals wouldn't have been hung – they would've been heroes – they would've been celebrities – they probably would have had political clout... But the fact that the Allies **did** win, meant that the Nazis were tried, convicted, and put to death...*

And the fact that Christ has won a victory in us – the fact that **Jesus** is the ruler of **our** lives, and the world isn't ruling us, means that in the life of the Christian, the ways of the world, must be put to death.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he said:

3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** **But now you must put them all away:** anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Alright, we put to death, what is earthly in us...

In Romans Chapter 8, he said:

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **13** For if you live

according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Because Christ, has won a victory in our lives – because now, **Jesus** is the new ruler – our Lord,,, all the left-overs of the **old** administration – our **old** master – our **old**, worldly ways, need to be expelled – put to death... And we must become totally submitted to our **new** Lord.

We're going to cover this in more detail next week, but some of the symptoms of this double-mindedness – this trying to have a foot in both camps of Godliness and worldliness, well a few symptoms are:

- broken relationships within the church;
- a broken prayer life;
- unfulfilled desires;
- pride;
- greed;
- a constant quest for self-gratification...

All these things are symptoms of worldly desires, that haven't yet been put to death....

Our God is a jealous God. He didn't win the war, so that Satan can continue to rule our lives... V4 says: **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

Now, that's a scary thought (Isn't it?)... I don't want to be an enemy of God. Do you???

But don't we do exactly that, in so many ways?

- Compromises we make, so that we can be more 'world-friendly'
- Some churches have changed the definition of marriage
- What the bible says is "sin", we say "is no longer sin"
- The quest we have, for more and more possessions
- Sometimes there's little or no difference between the morals of the world, and the morals of those who claim to be Christians.
- Sometimes those who claim to be Christians, are so full of ourselves, we say whatever we like, no matter what it does to others...

Our God is a jealous God. He is exceeding jealous, for us. If the church is the bride of Christ, for us to give ourselves over, to Satan and his worldly ways... no wonder James says: **You adulterous people!**

I don't want to be an enemy of God, but when I think about it, my love of Him and my submission to Him, is not complete.

I have been proud, but God opposes the proud... In my pride, I've claimed Christ as saviour, and proclaim Him as Lord, but I have not fully submitted to Him **as** Lord...

You know, right throughout James, the main thrust, is about non-passivity in faith. It's about connecting what you **believe**, with what you **do**. And now we've gotten to the spiritual

cause – double-mindedness – allowing the world to control what Christ has conquered...

What can we do?

Well, "God opposes the proud, but [He] gives grace to the humble."

^{v7} 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 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

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

My friends, that's a very different message to what you'll hear in most churches today...

When's the last time your worship leader said "Come on everybody, let's **Be wretched and mourn and weep....**"?

When's the last time your preacher said, "Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom"?

We try to generate an atmosphere of happiness, and clapping, and excitement, and feelings of joy.... (because that's what we all love...)

But you know what? There comes a time, when we have to push that aside, when the reality hits home, that “I have not made “The Lord” completely “My Lord”” ...

Somebody once said “*He is not lord at all, until He is Lord of all*” ... And that’s true. That’s what it means for Jesus to be Lord. It means for us to be **totally** submitted to Him – in **all** things – in **all** areas of our lives.

And when I realise, that “Hey, I **haven’t** been living my life for Jesus – I’ve been living it more for **me**” ... When I realise the pull that the world still has on me, and the way that my sinful nature is what I seek to please, rather than God,,,,, That’s a time for mourning...

It’s a time to let go of pride, and to humble myself before God.... It’s a time to weep... “Lord, I’m sorry. I’ve been double minded...” It’s a time for repentance. It’s a time to resist the devil, and to draw near to God...

And when we do this – when we humble ourselves before God, He lifts us up...

Next week, we’re going to continue with this passage, because it has more to say to us yet, about prayer, and about our relationship with others in the church.

There is a war within. A battle between:

- 2 different peoples
- 2 different beliefs

- 2 different cultures
- 2 different allegiances
- 2 different gods

"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 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Amen.

ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origins_of_the_Six-Day_War