

ST. LUKE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH
SERMON BY PASTOR ANTHONY E.
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SEPTEMBER 24, 2017
16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (WELS B.)
JAMES 3:13-18 EHV



Who among you is wise and intelligent? Let him by his good way of living show that he does things in wise humility. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie, contrary to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but it is worldly, unspiritual, and demonic. In fact, where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and every bad practice. But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then also peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who practice peace.

The Word of the LORD!

Smart people? Wouldn't that be people like Leonardo Da Vinci? According to Wikipedia--Leonardo born in da Vinci – not last name/father's last name da Vinci was born 15 April 1452 and died- 2 May 1519 at the age of 72 and change), was an Italian Renaissance polymath whose areas of interest included inventing, painting, sculpting, architecture, science, music, mathematics, engineering, literature, anatomy, geology, astronomy, botany, writing, history, and cartography. He has been variously called the father of paleontology, ichnology, and architecture, and is widely considered one of the greatest painters of all time. Sometimes credited with the inventions of the parachute, helicopter and tank, he epitomized the Renaissance humanist ideal. From time to time there have been people – gifted people who were blessed with an incredible mind. People like Aristotle, Socrates, Hypocrites, Pythagoras. People like Michelangelo and Shakespeare and Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein and Bill Gates and Steve Jobs and so? Brilliant and creative and imaginative people with eidetic memories who invented all the things that Millennials and younger take entirely for granted! And yet God's Word

today talks about the only essential wisdom that has eternal consequences! The wisdom that comes from the Law and Gospel of Scripture! This is the wisdom that means the difference between eternal destruction in the flaming lake of fire – and the forever wedding feast in the presence of the Lamb of God! Today James reminds us:

Wisdom from Scripture is Forever!

I. Worldly wisdom is selfish

II. God's wisdom is eternal!

The epistle lesson for today – Pentecost 16 is from the Letter of James! The People's Bible James, Peter, John Jude was written by Pastor Jeske. **"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ!"** By the grace of God – can we say that? When we wake up in the morning – that essential moment where we can turn off our alarm clock before its annoying noise. When we wake up to a new day – do we begin with prayer? Thank you Jesus for keeping me safe through the night? Over the last week or two I have awakened in the night – because of sirens – police SUVs and fire trucks and those pudgy trucks covered with lights – filled with braces for broken necks and backs and arms and legs – sometimes as many as 5 different vehicles racing in the dark to try and save someone's life! Look at your digital clock and it says 1234 or 222 or 333 and I wonder if our phone is going to ring – that a sheep or a lamb from this flock might be on their way to the hospital! Do we wake up each morning just in time to turn off your alarm before it makes that annoying sound? Do you wake up asking Jesus for strength and health to get up and be a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ? James – Hebrew Ja'akov – the New Testament Greek Iakobos – the French Jacques, the Italian Iago, Jaime or Giacomo – Jacob – James. Which James is this? There were the two sons of Zebedee – James and John – nicknamed Sons of Thunder! I like that! These were men of passion and presence! There was the other disciple James nicknamed "the Little" – the son of Alphaeus and Mary. The 4 gospels nor Acts mentions anything he said or did. His mom was at the foot of Jesus' \dagger --but nothing about that James. There is a third James – the father of the apostle Thaddeus – or Judas – not Iscariot. But that's all we know about him! So...who is left? This must be James – the half-brother of Jesus Himself. Remember--James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? (Matthew 13:55) They didn't

believe in Jesus at first. Remember, **“Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”** Matthew 13:57 All that changed when Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus appeared to his brother James – the 9th of his 11 precious resurrection appearances mention in the great resurrection chapter – 1 Corinthians 15! This is all important information for us to review and remember – and so?

James writes about putting your faith in the crucified and risen Christ into action. First Justification – declared not guilty because Jesus died to redeem us. Then and only then Sanctification – fruit of faith to glorify our Redeemer! James chapter one says, **“Consider it complete joy, my brothers, whenever you fall into various kinds of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces patient endurance. And let patient endurance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything....Remember this, my dear brothers: Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry. Certainly a man’s anger does not bring about what is right before God. So after getting rid of all moral filthiness and overflowing wickedness, receive with humility the word planted in you. It is able to save your souls.** James 1:2f and 19f

Who among you is wise and intelligent? Let him by his good way of living show that he does things in wise humility. God’s Word says, **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom!”** Psalms 111:10 To learn about Jesus and know the way to Heaven is the most important thing in the world! To learn about law and gospel – that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone found in Scripture alone – is the simple powerful truth that the Lutheran Reformation is all about! It changes everything! There is a very fascinating man – a British Physicist named Stephen Hawking. He wrote a book called, **“A Brief History of Time”** – from the Big Bang to Black Holes! You could study string theory and do those complicated math problems that require a beautiful mind – with a zillion different symbols and more. And yet if you think by that physics calculation you have outgrown your need for God – then eternity will be horrible beyond words! Cultivate smart friends – surround yourself with wise friends – and they will help you again and again! Here at St. Luke’s we are truly blessed with Professors, Pastors, Teachers – people who have the most practical knowledge. When Jesus’ love fills their ♥s and lives – they give glory to Jesus by helping others. How wonderful is that? **Who**

among you is wise and intelligent? Let him by his good way of living show that he does things in wise humility! But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and lie, contrary to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but it is worldly, unspiritual, and demonic. Again and again God's Word reminds us – talk is cheap! It's easy to talk. The difficult part is to show what's in your ♥ by how you treat your spouse, your children, your relatives, your co-workers, your customers – and even those people who count you as their enemy. Selfish ambition is like a terrible infection in your ♥. It pushes and shoves people out of your way – to get ahead. It was a terrible thing – when a terrorist bomb partially went off on a train in London last Friday. Part of the bad news was that people were so panicked – people were hurt by being trampled by other people – in such a hurry to save themselves – that they knocked down and literally ran over other people – all to save themselves! Only Jesus in your ♥ could make you strong enough to protect and save the people around you – even if you yourself get hurt! It is Christian – it is *American* when again and again you hear about the people who throw themselves on the grenade in order to save their friend! It is Christian – it is *American* when so many run away *from* danger – and yet so many run *toward* the danger! We need to think about this now – so that when the danger suddenly appears – we will – by the grace of God – be ready to help others!

But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then also peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who practice peace. Wisdom that comes from Jesus is **pure, peaceful, gentle, reasonable, merciful – sincere!** That's pretty sweet! We live in a sin infected world that is often full of quarreling, arguing, cursing, swearing, anger, bitterness and road rage! North Korea continues to fire inter-continental and short range missiles over the heads of her neighbors. People in London and Paris attack with improvised explosive devices, knives and other deadly weapons – calling out this is to the glory of their false god. In Chicago and Milwaukee there are shootings almost every evening. Our houses need to be *homes* – where there is discussion not arguing and quarreling – not shouting and cursing – not bitterness and anger but kindness and patience. When there is frustration we need to be patient – even as Jesus is patient with us. There needs to be forgiveness and

acts of kindness – not hurt or grudges. The fact that we have someone here with us today is no guarantee we will have them tomorrow – so we need to love them and forgive them here and now. Tomorrow could be too late!

But the wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then also peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. We live in a world full of people who love confrontation! It takes no skill nor understanding to criticize – to complain, find fault, tear down. Take for example cooking competition. The judges taste the food – and say something good about it. This is nice – this is ok. But! They always say, “But – I don’t like this! I don’t like that!” They literally take their fork and pick the food apart – as they pick it apart with their words! Sometimes they don’t even start with a compliment. Sometimes they say, “That wasn’t entirely horrible! It wasn’t completely terrible!” What’s with that? Why can’t this be very good! This is wonderful! And the winner is even better still! When is it ever appropriate to literally spit the food out? Was it in fact so distasteful you couldn’t possibly swallow it? They say Mickey Mantle’s father refused to give his own son a compliment. Mickey would hit a double – not a triple? He hit a home run – *anybody on base*? He hit a home run with men on the bases – *only one – not two or three*? Do we build up our family? Do we build up our children? Are we faithful to send thank you notes? My piano teacher Mrs. Penndel would write thank you notes for thank you notes! Do we think each day of people we can build up and encourage? Do we think each day of someone we can help? And if anyone should notice – do we tell them Jesus is our motivation? Imagine how our world would change when we build up and sow seeds of peace in this world of road rage and anger?

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who practice peace. I have said before, I wish life was more like a musical – people pausing every little bit to literally break into singing and dancing. Like *Little Shop of Horrors* – people singing, “Down on skid row!” *Mary Poppins* – the chimney sweeps singing on the rooftops – *The Man of LaMancha* singing, “To dream the impossible dream!” In my 65 years I have seen spontaneous dancing and singing just 4 times. A couple dancing in the Piggly Wiggly – dancing from the potato chip aisle into the fermented grain beverage department. Three sisters like Aretha Franklins singing and dancing into UW Hospital in Madison and a couple from church dancing down the aisle in the Church parking lot. And now Tuesday the 12th. I

was walking through the Harvest Market – the restaurant on the north end of the hospital. And there in the little coffee and biscotti and scone department was a young lady dancing. I stopped and told her she was only the 4th person in my lifetime – so happy – at work – that she was dancing. She said I had baptized her God-child. How happy is that? When the Holy Spirit has planted saving faith in our ♥--we know all our sins are forgiven. We know we are a child of God by **adoption**. We know Heaven is our home! Then and only then will our ♥ overflow with Jesus' forgiving love to the point that our joy and peace and hope in Jesus. We will bear fruit of faith that will say in the most concrete way: "Thank you, Jesus!" Amen!
To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony P. Schatz

