

The Source of Heavenly Wisdom - James 3_13-18

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of heavenly wisdom, which is obtained through a vital relationship with Christ and is demonstrated through godly behavior.

Duration: 32:00

Scripture: James 3:13

Topics: "Wisdom", "Heavenly Wisdom", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the distinction between heavenly wisdom and devilish wisdom in his sermon on James 3:13-18. He explains that true wisdom is not merely academic knowledge but a deep, spiritual understanding that reflects the character of Christ. The sermon calls believers to seek a daily union with Christ, allowing His wisdom to govern their lives, which will manifest in pure, peaceable, and gentle behavior. Beach warns against the dangers of earthly wisdom, which leads to strife and confusion, urging the congregation to earnestly ask God for the wisdom that comes from above. Ultimately, he encourages a lifestyle that reveals the nature of Jesus to the world.

Transcript

You could turn your Bibles to the book of James, all right? And we have been looking today, or this afternoon, or this evening, at how the Lord Jesus wants us to recognize that he is committed to doing the will of the Father. So in light of this, I'd like you to turn to James chapter 3. And with the help of God, I believe we have some insight here from the scriptures and by the Lord that if we would get a hold of this tonight, it can transform our life, all right? All right, what we're going to call this tonight is the source of heavenly wisdom. Do you want to have heavenly wisdom? Do you want to be governed by wisdom that comes from above? Now, the natural sequel in thinking is if we know the source of heavenly wisdom, then we've got to know the source of devilish wisdom.

What is the cause? How does a believer become a possessor of heavenly wisdom? And how does a person fall prey to devilish wisdom? That's what we're going to look at tonight. How does a believer be filled with heavenly wisdom? First of all, a believer does not come into heavenly wisdom by just simply learning scriptures and memorizing passages of the Bible. No, it's something far more intense than that.

So that's what we're going to look at tonight, all right? James chapter 3. James chapter 3. We're going to read verses 13 through 18. James chapter 3, 13 through 18. Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. All right.

This is a section of scripture here where James is discussing wisdom. And there's two types of wisdom that James here is talking about. There's heavenly wisdom, and there's devilish wisdom.

And what we want to show you tonight is there's only one way, according to this text right here, that a believer can truly become a vessel through whom heavenly wisdom is revealed. There's only one way. And the key that unlocks this whole text is found in the first sentence of verse 13, the key.

Who is a wise man? Now, we're going to stop right there. We're going to stop right there, and we're going to look at that statement. Who is a wise man? That word wise has a much deeper implication than does simply the word wisdom or a wise person.

It does not mean the kind of wisdom that someone like Albert Einstein possessed. Neither does it mean the kind of wisdom that a person would possess if they decided that they were going to learn something about the solar system. So they went to a library and spent three years reading every book they could on the subject.

They would gain wisdom. They would gain understanding. They would gain knowledge.

But this wisdom is not the wisdom that that refers to. It's not that kind of wisdom. So therefore, when we look at James chapter 3, verse number 13, who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge, we see that whatever kind of wisdom that this particular verse is referring to is a wisdom that produces knowledge, and it is a knowledge that does not puff up.

It is a knowledge that is not fleshly. It is not exclusively a scholastic theological knowledge. But this wisdom here is linked with a knowledge, and this knowledge is linked with not so much facts and information about something, but rather an ability to express, an ability to display, an ability to pattern the very nature of God Himself.

So when the Bible says, who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you, the Holy Spirit through James is cutting through all of their fleshly wisdom, cutting through all of their knowledge. There were many who this letter was written to who were students of the law. They were students of the law.

They were students of the Old Testament. They understood the law of Moses, at least they thought they did. They understood the book of Psalms, at least they thought they did.

They knew about Jonah. They knew about Isaiah. They knew about the intricacies of the tabernacle and the temple.

They could tell you about all the different kinds of sacrifices. Oh, they were experts in the law, but they were full of sin. James said that they were double-minded people.

James chapter 1, verse number 8. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. So therefore, the apparent wisdom, the apparent knowledge that these believers possessed wasn't cutting it. Understand what I mean? It wasn't the kind of wisdom and knowledge that was enabling them to be that man that James was looking for.

Who is the wise man and dude with knowledge among you? Where is he? I don't see him. I hear a lot of jargon about the law. I see a lot of nice gatherings.

I see a lot of so-called external Christianity, but my eyes are able by the power of the Holy Spirit, says James, to go beyond that, to rip the veneer open. And I see a lot of double-mindedness. I see a lot of superfluity and naughtiness and evil speaking.

I see a lot of hearing of the Word, but not any doing of the Word. This is what James was talking about prior to James chapter 3. He says, I see a lot of respective persons. James says, I see that in your assemblies you gather together, and when someone comes in that's well-dressed, and there's something about that person that makes them look like they're important, you invite them up to the front and you have them sit down in a nice seat.

But then when a poor man clothed with dirty clothes comes in, you just have them sit down at your feet. James says, there's something wrong, beloved. There's something wrong, beloved.

You've got an external form of Christianity, but inwardly you're full of sin and you're controlled by sin, and your wisdom and your knowledge, your so-called wisdom and knowledge, is doing nothing for you but bringing you deeper into trouble. So you see, when the Bible here says, Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you, we must understand the intention of the Holy Spirit is not to try and find people who can display wisdom and display knowledge and thereby say, ah, you're the one that the Bible's talking about. Oh, you're the one that the Bible's talking about.

No, it is not a wisdom or a knowledge that is only related to facts and information and theology and being able to do things in a shrewd way. You know, this isn't calling for an administrator. You know, administrators, they can look at a situation and they can, in their mind, figure out the best way to do things.

They could put things together, and there's a place for that. We're not belittling that. Wives need to learn to be administrators in the home.

Everyone needs to learn administration to a degree, but we want to distinguish between that and what the Holy Spirit is calling for now, because there's a great difference. And we're going to see that as we look into the meaning of the word wise. The meaning of that word reveals exactly what God is looking for.

All right? So now that we have seen that the Holy Spirit is calling for something that this group of believers did not possess, they didn't possess it. Now, think about this. Think about this.

I'm intending tonight, by the power of God's Spirit, to help us see our need. They had a lot of wisdom. They had a lot of knowledge.

They had a lot of religion. They had a lot of theology. They had gatherings.

They had church. But they lacked the essential, vital ingredient that makes Christianity work. They lacked the essential, vital ingredient that makes Christianity work.

And because they lacked it, everything they did have, God didn't want. He wasn't interested in it. So there's something here that we need to pray that the Lord will grant to us in ever-increasing measure, lest all that we do have becomes abominable to Him.

All right? All right, let's look. Who is a wise man? The word wise there means this. One who knows how to regulate his course in view of the movements of the heavenlies.

I'll say that again. One who knows how to regulate his course in view of the movements of the heavenlies. Now, I want to make this very, very clear.

What I am not teaching and what the scriptures are not teaching is astrology here. It has nothing to do with being governed by the stars, the literal stars. It has nothing to do with planning your day around the horoscope.

It is absolutely unrelated to that. This is a spiritual meaning, it is a spiritual epistle, it was written by a spiritual man, it was inspired by the Holy Spirit. And what the Bible is saying here, who is a wise man, what the Bible is saying here is, where is the one whose life is governed by and regulated by the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ as he is moving in the heavenlies? The call of the church of Jesus Christ is to come under the Lordship of Christ so that we are moving, we are being governed by, we are being regulated by the movements of our head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The wise man is the man who builds his house upon the rock. Isn't that what the Bible says in Matthew chapter 7? The wise man builds his house upon the rock. That suggests that the wise man of James 3.13 is the one whose life is so founded upon the rock, so built upon the rock, that the rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, governs and controls that person.

The great lack in this assembly that was the cause of their continued sin and selfishness and also was the cause of Satan being able to get in and really make a mess of things was that they had everything externally but they lacked a vital union with Christ on a daily basis. They lacked a vital union with Christ on a daily basis enabling them through this union, through this continued relationship with Christ, enabling them to be regulated and governed by Christ and not their own impulses and not their own desires and not their own whims and not their own inclinations and not their own sinful drives. Beloved, you cannot live the Christian life without the power of Jesus Christ flooding your soul on a daily basis.

And if you try, you are going to sink into the powers that are in this world. You're going to sink into the powers of the flesh and you're going to find yourself living a defeated Christian life. The call of the Spirit of God in the book of James among men and women who knew the Bible, who knew the law, who knew the traditions of the church was a call to come into a union with Christ on a daily basis and learn the life of dependence upon Christ, a life that was broken before God.

A life that was soft before God. A life that was tender before God. A life that was lived like the branch and vine.

The branch would never boast as possessing life in itself. All the beauty that the branch possesses is entirely related to its connection to the vine. It can't boast.

The vine holds the branch. The branch doesn't hold the vine. You break the branch off and throw it aside and see how well it does in continuing to bear fruit.

And it dies and it withers. This is the great lack that was in this assembly. And this word speaks to us today in the 1990s to the Christian church.

We have more Bibles circulating in this country than we have ever had. Most every Christian has at least three Bibles. At least three Bibles.

Many of us have more. We hear the Bible more and more and more than any other country in the world. We could turn the radio on at any time of the day or night and within 30 minutes we could hear something about the Word of God.

You could most likely find a church or a gathering of saints any day, any time, any time of the year, if you look hard enough. We've got everything we could ever imagine or dream as far as the benefits of being Christians. But the Holy Spirit is saying, the Holy Spirit is crying out, where is the wise man? Not the one who has all the external wisdom and the facts and the knowledge and the Scriptures and the sermons and the principles and the books and all these things.

No, no, no, no. The Holy Spirit is not crying out for that. He's saying, where are the saints? Where are the Christians whose lives are being governed by the movements in the heavenlies? And the only movements in the heavenlies and the heavenlies that this is referring to is not the physical heavens.

It's talking about the heavenly places that we are seated in together with Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2, 8 and 7. We have been raised up and we are seated together with Christ in heavenly places. And the Holy Spirit is saying, where is the Christian home? Where is the husband? Where is the wife? Where is the assembly? Where is the group of Christians who are committed to nothing but waiting upon God and searching the Scriptures until they know that they know that they know what the movements of the Lord Jesus are and then move in unison with Him and contradict what the flesh says, contradict what the devil says, contradict what the philosophy of this world says, and they're committed to nothing but the movements of Christ and the Word of God and the Holy Spirit all working together to bring that about.

Where is this wise man, James says? Where is this wise man? And as we read on here, we'll see that for such a thing to happen in your life, for such a thing to happen in your life, in my life, the result would be a lifestyle, a behavior that would reveal the wisdom from above. Now, I want you to know that in 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse number 30, the Bible says, But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom. So when the Bible is here talking about heavenly wisdom and the wise man, who is the wise man among you? Then he goes on and talks about heavenly wisdom.

Both of these terms, the wise man and the heavenly wisdom that comes from above, are simply ways of describing what would happen to a person who through the discipline of God and through coming under the Holy Spirit and the Word of God would allow their lives to be governed by Christ. This wisdom that they would be living, this behavior that they would be living, would be none other than a life that would be revealing in ever-increasing manner what the Lord Jesus is like through the power of the Holy Spirit. James was saying, Do you know that you have made a mess of things, people? You've got so much quibbling and jealousy and strife and envy and the works of the flesh are running wild in your assembly.

And then James puts his finger and says, But you find me a wise man. You find me a man in whom God has done something. God has stripped you of jealousy and covetousness and greed and a backbiting tongue.

He has delivered you from the dominion of self and you're broken and contrite and you live on the basis of Christ and you're empowered by the Spirit darely to do those things that are pleasing to God. James says, You show me a man like that, he'll set things in order. Not with talk, he'll set things in order, but by showing you what Christianity is.

Not by talking about what Christianity is. That's what the Holy Spirit was looking for. That's what He's looking for today.

Find me anywhere, just a few people, not a whole bunch, a few people, a family. Just a family, one family, who's under the government of the Holy Spirit and every area in their life is governed by the movements of the heavenlies. And I'll show you a family that's doing more than preaching Christianity.

I'll show you a family that's living Christianity. And by virtue of their living, they are exposing darkness. They're exposing the works of the devil.

They're shaming other Christians. But not because they're haughty, not because they have a holier-than-thou attitude, but because the heavenly wisdom is living through them. And there's God's call in this late hour.

Listen closely as we read. Let Him show out of a good conversation. That conversation there means behavior.

Now see, this wise man, oh, how much wisdom we see today, and it doesn't affect the person's behavior. They get up, they talk about all the wisdom they have, all the knowledge they have, yet their behavior, their lifestyle is certainly not under the government of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because when you get under the government of the Lord Jesus Christ, your lifestyle is not unto yourself, but it's unto God.

So you see the characteristics here. The wise man is endued with knowledge, and he shows, he displays, he manifests in his very behavior, in his very lifestyle, he manifests his works. He shows his works.

And his works are not the works of self-righteousness, but they're the Ephesians 2.10 works. For you are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, that you should walk in the works which God has before prepared for you. The works that are wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's the works here that he's talking about. With meekness and wisdom. So you see the characteristics of the wise man is he has a knowledge.

He has good works. He has a behavior and a lifestyle. All displaying and showing forth and revealing what the heavenly man is like.

The heavenly man in glory. The Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 14, But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth.

Verse 14 implies that we are not daily under the government of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not seeking daily to be full of His Spirit. And look at what happens.

Bitter envy, strife results. Verse 15, This wisdom, this is a wisdom, but it's not a heavenly wisdom. This wisdom descends not from above.

See, it's not the wisdom coming from Christ and His character and His life being lived through us. Wow. This wisdom is not from above, but is earthly.

That is originating out of flesh. When our life is not under the continual government of the Lord Jesus Christ, it then draws itself out from the flesh. It's earthly, it's sensual.

That means soulical, pertaining to the flesh. Sensual. That means it's a lifestyle and a behavior.

And it's not revealing what Jesus is like. It's revealing what the human soul is like. The sinful soul.

And then there's envying and strife and confusion and every evil work. And now again in comparison, but the wisdom that is from above, that is the wisdom that is coming into our life as a result of our being in union with the Lord Jesus Christ and under His government on a daily basis. On a daily basis.

That wisdom is pure. There's no defilement in it. That means that the lifestyle is going to be free from defilement.

Oh God, you can speak a commentary on this. When you're under the government of the Holy Spirit, your life is pure. You're not setting before your eyes that which would shame angels and bring disgrace to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your life is pure, right? There it is in the Word. This wisdom, this lifestyle is pure. Then it's peaceable.

You're not a fighty person. You're peaceable. The peace of the Lord Jesus.

Gentle. Easy to be entreated. Full of mercy and good fruits.

Without partiality. You see, James was dealing with partiality in James chapter 2. He says, when you get the wisdom from above, it's not partiality. And without hypocrisy.

That means no fake. It's unfeigned. It's genuine, beloved.

And then verse 18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. So here we see.

Two types of wisdom. Heavenly wisdom and earthly wisdom. Heavenly wisdom becomes a lifestyle.

Earthly wisdom becomes a lifestyle. Each of these lifestyles are characterized by certain characteristics. Certain features within each lifestyle.

How do you know what kind of wisdom you possess? How do you know what kind of lifestyle you possess? Ask yourself. Ask yourself. Am I growing in a daily union with the Lord Jesus and being governed by the movements of His heart on a daily basis? If I am, then I can pretty much know that my life is characterized by heavenly wisdom.

But if I'm not, then it doesn't matter how much I know, how much I think I know. Earthly wisdom is working through me. The presence of all those things that earthly wisdom is, is living through my life.

And God is not being glorified. So in conclusion, I take you to James chapter 1, verse 5. James 1, 5, and this is the conclusion. If any of you lack wisdom, oh my, do you want this wisdom that comes from above? Do you want this heavenly wisdom? If you lack it, listen to what the Bible says.

Let a mask of God. That gives to all liberally and finds no fault. He's not a fault finder.

That's what abradeth means. And it shall be given Him. If you want to be a container of heavenly wisdom and reveal the heavenly man in your lifestyle, then you come to the Lord Jesus and you ask Him to help you daily seek Him.

And you confess sin when God deals with you and don't be arrogant and proud and resist the Lord. But you say, Lord, give me a tender heart. A heart that is willing to say, Lord, I'm sorry I did wrong.

And willing to go to the one you wronged and say it. And He'll fill you with heavenly wisdom. And your life will be characterized by purity, by mercy, by kindness.

You'll be free from hypocrisy. You'll be real through and through. And the Lord Jesus will be glorified in your life.

Okay? Father, we thank you for your word tonight. We thank you for the call to a wisdom that is beyond scholastic wisdom and philosophical wisdom and theological wisdom. We thank you for a wisdom that is in fact a life revealing the heavenly man to a lost and dying world.

God, grant to each one of us a desire for this wisdom and lead us and guide us into the relationship that we need with you so that this wisdom can be the wisdom that we display to all people. That you might be glorified. In Jesus' name, amen.

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