

9/04/16
James 3:13-18

This past Sunday I began the time of preaching by asking our church, with a request for a show of hands, whether they believed we were in a time or season of peace and tranquility. Nobody raised their hand. Then I asked them if they thought we were in a time of tribulation, even war. Most of them raised their hand.

If we see this time that we are in as a time of war, then it only makes sense to be as prepared as possible. Satan's army is well trained, well equipped, and regimented in such a way as to inflict as much damage as possible (Ephesians 6:10ff). The Scriptures in John 10:10 tell us that he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. To accomplish this one of the devil's major tactics is to divide. He doesn't care who or what gets divided or how it gets divided, his tactic is divide! Long standing ministerial relationships, marriages, missionary comrades, all of God's church is his target for his diabolical plan to divide!!!

James 3:16 tells us exactly what to watch for so that we can safe guard our churches and relationships from his plan to divide. Jealousy and selfish ambition are the ways the devil undermines our churches and relationships. The result of these two is disorder in the house of God. Jealousy is the Greek word *zelos* and it carries the meaning of obsession, envy and contentious rivalry. There is only one view that is acceptable and it is this way or the highway. When a person has *zelos* they will neither hear or nor accept any other view. It is a very selfish look. Combined with selfish ambition, which means to exalt oneself or put oneself forward, fractiousness, the results can lead to only lead to disorder (*akatastasia*). This is where long standing relationships and ministries come to a heart breaking end.

In this piece of scripture it almost seems that James is telling you and me to do what ever is necessary to avoid this tactic from Hell. He tells us to be wise with wisdom from above. It is pure, and peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering without hypocrisy. In Philippians Paul encourages you and me to "do not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Because Satan's army is well trained, well equipped, and regimented in such a way as to inflict as much damage as possible, you and I must be on our guard against our ancient foe. The scriptures in 1 John 3:8b tell us very plainly that "the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." It is time to pray church! Pray like you never have before! Ask Jesus to destroy the works of the devil in your life, relationships and in your church!