

"A VAPOR THAT... VANISHETH AWAY"

James 4:13-17.

INTRODUCTION:

- A. As a child, did you ever watch a kettle boil, and wonder where the steam went? Other things are like steam, they appear for a little while and then vanish away.
- B. In this life, we are prone to seek those things that offer security, pleasure, profit and durability.
 - 1. James points out that life, with its security, pleasure, profit and durability, is still as a vapor
 - 2. So, all those physical things that have to do with this life will also cease to exist.
- C. What a tragedy for any life to be lived primarily for things that vanish. Such a life can have no real lasting substance.
- D. Now, consider some things that are of a vaporous nature: those that are temporary and not permanent:

DISCUSSION:

I. MATERIAL POSSESSIONS ARE A VAPOR.

- A. All around there is success, money, gain, wealth, etc. One not making a lot of money is considered a failure, if wealthy, he is a success--character doesn't matter
- B. Note what Jesus said in Lk 12:15. Then his illustration in Lk 12:16-21.
 - 1. We read such warnings, but still don't learn, do we?
 - 2. Continue to seek material things to detriment of soul
 - 3. Why can't we learn the wisdom of 1Tim 6:6-10?
 - 4. Yes, wealth is a vapor, and can't last longer than our lives, and many times doesn't last that long.
- C. The "wealthiest" man ever on earth, put material things into their right perspective: Matt 8:20; Phil 2:5-8; Matt 6:20.
- D. So, Christians should look "not at the things seen, but at the things not seen: for the things seen are temporal, but the things not seen are eternal." 2Cor 4:18.

II. POPULARITY AND PRAISE OF MEN, ARE A VAPOR.

- A. It is only natural to want to be loved and recognized.
- B. None deliberately sets out to make people dislike them.
 - 1. But sometimes we forget to put the approval or disapproval of other people in their proper places.
 - 2. When all people speak well of us, we need to be careful. Lk 6:26; Prov 16:18.
 - 3. Such flattery can lead us to compromise truth and principle in order to retain popularity.
 - 4. Many of the Jews believed on him, Jhn 12:42.. but refused to serve Him, because their popularity might suffer!
- C. Lest we become "Wise in our own conceit", Rom 12:16

- 1. Whenever we begin to think of ourselves as important, let us answer those questions that God put to Job. Job 38.
- 2. Considering the majesty of God, no room for pride; and praise of men cannot sway us from the course He wants us to walk 1Cor 4:3,4.
- 3. So, what other people think is not important at all, when compared with the Lord's approval.

III. THE PLEASURES OF SIN ARE A VAPOR.

- A. By faith Moses made a difficult decision Heb 11:24,25
 - 1. "Pleasures of sin" are only for a season.
 - 2. Sin's pleasure is a vapor soon gone; many times only remorse is left.
 - 3. Judas must have anticipated pleasure spending the thirty pieces of silver. But never enjoyed what he got for betraying the Christ. Matt 27:3-5.
- B. Paul mentions Demas' love for world 2Tim 4:10.
 - 1. Forsook Paul because of love for world.
 - 2. We are given warning: 1Jhn 2:15-17.
 - a. Have you ever wondered how Demas felt in later years, as his life was drawing to a close?
 - b. Cares, riches, and pleasures of world will choke out word of God from a person's heart. Lk 8:14.
 - 3. Our prayer should echo the words of Gal 1:4, "Deliver us from this present evil world."
- C. No one denies that there can be pleasure in sin.
 - 1. But only "for a season" and the season is too short.
 - 2. So, don't give up your soul for a vapor that vanishes

IV. LIFE, IN THIS WORLD, IS A VAPOR.

- A. We often hear "but we have to make a living!" as we try to exhort someone to give their lives to the Lord. Note: Jhn 17:14-16
- B. Look again and read the context of Jas 4:13-17.
 - 1. Our lives belong to God, and we live by His mercy
 - 2. All must die. Heb 9:27; Note Eccl 9:5; 12:7.

CONCLUSION:

- A. So, rather than build our hopes on "a vapor, that vanisheth away", let us seek those things with substance. Heb 11:1
- B. Look at what Paul wrote in: Rom 8:18; Col 3:1-3.
- C. Peter tells us that the material things, even this earth, will vanish away 2Pet 3:10. But the spiritual values are eternal.
- D. When we "Look not at the things seen, but at the things not seen" then our hope is sure. 2Cor 4:18; 5:1.

Adapted from a sermon by Jim Sasser