



## September 11, 2022

# Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

### James' Last Words of Wisdom

*("Who Owns Tomorrow?") Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them. (James 4:13-17, NIV, Sunday's Scripture Reading)*

*Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well... (James 5:13-15, NIV)*

### Our Personal Reading of James

The two passages above are powerful: either one can and should be the focus of spiritual teaching, preaching, and personal meditation. But, looking back at the whole Letter of James, now that we have explored it chapter-by-chapter, how can we continue to benefit from its wisdom? Here are a few suggestions.

Read James as a Book of Proverbs: a good personal practice is to read through James and highlight wisdom that speaks to you. If you think you have read it somewhere else before, you may be right! James echoes much of the wisdom of the Hebrew Bible (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Sirach, as so forth).

Read a Topic-Specific Verses: Trials and tribulations (1:2-18); Listening - Doing (1:19-26); Faith - Deeds (2:14-26); Taming the Tongue (3:1-12); Two Kinds of Wisdom (3:13-18); Turn Back/Repent (4:1-12); Mortality (4:13-17); Warning to Oppressors (5:1-6); Patience in Suffering (5:7-12); Prayer and Faith (5:13-20)

Read to Find and Explore Important Themes: reading through James lets us gather wisdom statements, comparisons, and analogies to have a fuller sense of how James present God's message. For instance:

- "Double-mindedness" – trying to live in two worlds at once, and failing to live either one well
- Wisdom of the World vs. Wisdom of Heaven – a consistent theme throughout James
- Relationships with God and Others – another theme throughout James. What helps? What hinders?
- How To Live Well – It's been pointed out that James doesn't offer solutions, but yet, he does. How would you summarize James' message on living well?
- Care for the Poor and Humble – James gives great importance to these

Let us keep in our prayers: the soul of Donna (formerly of Saranac Lake); Fay's recovery from surgery; Bill facing upcoming surgery; a friend who has entered hospice care; a friend facing serious surgery; all the students going back to school and their teachers; continued prayers for those suffering from extreme weather (Pakistan, Mississippi, California); those suffering from violence; all who are suffering from disease and hunger; pray for ourselves as we continue to seek and live by Wisdom. Lord, hear our prayer!

