

September 20, 2015  
James 3:13-4:10

Proper 20B  
The Son Fixes Man

*Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

A small boy filled with all kinds of playful ideas anxiously awaited his father's return from work. An extra-long day at the office, however, had taken its toll, and his father longed for a few minutes of relaxation. Over and over again the boy tugged at his dad's leg with yet another suggestion of something they might do together. Well, finally in total frustration, the father ripped from a magazine a picture of the world and tore it into a hundred pieces. "Here," he said with a frustrating tone, handing the child a roll of scotch tape, "go and put the world back together." Ah, peace at last or so he thought. But in just a few minutes, he was interrupted again, there before him stood his son—and in his hands was a crudely fashioned picture of the world. "Son, that's incredible. How did you do it?" "It was easy," said the boy, "you see on the other side of the picture of the world was a picture of a man, and as soon I got man straightened out the world came together."

What a profound answer from a child! How true it is! Get man fixed and the world will be okay! What implications for man! Our mission from God is to help fix the world. Well...not quite...but how? Technology? Education? Politics? Welfare? Economics? These are not working! They haven't been working! Sometimes they seem to making things WORSE! There is a deeper problem. It is the sin problem in our hearts. James asked, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, your passions are at war within you?" It's the inner desire of man to get what you want. You know selfish ambitions and jealousy. Man is the problem!

Yes you heard it here: Man is the problem of the world. It's true. We have been unfaithful to God. No wonder James can call Christian people, "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" Even Christ teaches this to us: "You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

Really, what does friendship with the world look like? Friendship with the world looks like embracing worldly values. Look at our nation right now...homosexual marriage is legal in all fifty states based on the opinion of 5 Supreme Court justices. It's not just that...heterosexual couples live together without being married in the eyes of the state or more importantly in the eyes of God. Planned Parenthood and abortion has been in the news far more than in the recent past, and we aren't doing anything to stop it, besides a few facebook posts. Since I graduated from high school some 13 years ago, there's been a huge change in the role of athletics in our lives. Kids of all ages participate in sports seven days a week and then there's their education. Whatever time is leftover, if any, that might go to God and religious instruction, but only when it's convenient for them. How else does friendship in the world look like? Cheating to get ahead, letting our passions make a firm grasp on us. Wanting to have the bigger and

the better. Embracing the desires to get what you want. Scheming to get ahead. Giving people what you think they deserve. There's so much more, we each have our own ways in how we become friends with the world.

James writes: "You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel." When we have those covetous desires it leads to sinful attitudes. It can lead to jealousy, hatred, and more.

Man has really screwed up the world. That includes you and me adding to it. We've been screwing things up since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Mankind screwed things up so much that God destroyed the world with a flood. Man screwed things up so much that they got sent into exile and out of the Promised Land.

James uses a rather pointed term...adulterous. We have been unfaithful to God. You see God demands exclusive commitment to him alone, but yet we have run off with other gods. Much like a cheating spouse does. Perhaps we put our own profiles up so that other gods come find us, much like those desiring an affair put their profiles up on Ashley Madison website. Remember we, as the Church are the bride of Christ. When we are unfaithful to God, it is much like a wife being unfaithful to her husband, since we are the bride of Christ. When James speaks about being an enemy of God, he shows us fully that adultery and being an enemy of God means turning from God to the world.

If you remember from the opening story what the son said to his father, "When I get man straightened out the world came together."

There was another Son that could have said that to His Father. This Son didn't put together a puzzle...He actually came as one of us. Came as a man. God wants to heal man. And the Father sent Jesus, His Son, to provide the way. You see we were lost without Christ. We were broken without our Lord. We were destined to be destroyed. We were destined to spend eternity without our Lord Jesus Christ in Hell.

But God sent His Son to save us from our sin. God sent Jesus to become one of us. Jesus never became friends with the world, although He was tempted to. Actually the world hated him, and it still does. The world hated everything about him. No wonder...He is God. God sent forth his Son to save mankind from their sin. Jesus was a man that the world hated. Jesus says in John 15: "If the world hates you, know that the world hated me before it hated you." My God, the world hated Jesus so much that they killed him. Now the devil and the world thought that they had won. They thought that they defeated Jesus, since He was dead. They killed him with the death of a common man. They crucified the Lord of Glory. They nailed the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to the cross. That is how much the world hated Jesus...they even let a murderer go free.

During all that, Jesus did not respond with hatred. Jesus responded with Love. The Father responded with love by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus didn't stay dead! Jesus broke out of the tomb on that first Easter Morning. Jesus lives again for you.

Jesus even showed the devil who was King and Lord. Jesus has destroyed every enemy of God's...sin, death, and the devil.

My dear fellow redeemed we have this wonderful message of the gospel. We have this good news. This good news of Jesus and what He has done for us. The good news that our sins are forgiven. The good news that Jesus died for us. The good news that Jesus lives again for us. The good news that Jesus loved us even while we were still separated from God and enemies of him. The good news is that Jesus stays with us, even while we are fooling around with other god, with the things of this world.

Remember the story of Hosea...Hosea was told by God to marry Gomer, a wife of whoredom and to have children of whoredom. Hosea did as the Lord commanded. Hosea was frustrated, but he stood next to his wife. He did not turn his back on her. This was a way to give the children of Israel an image of them to their God. God commanded Hosea to name his children, "No Mercy" and "Not my people." Hosea stayed next to his wife Gomer, much the way that Jesus stays with us, His unfaithful bride.

Listen to the Lord's Mercy for Israel from Hosea 2:14-23:

<sup>14</sup> *"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. <sup>15</sup> And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.*

<sup>16</sup> *"And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' <sup>17</sup> For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. <sup>18</sup> And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. <sup>19</sup> And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. <sup>20</sup> I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.*

<sup>21</sup> *"And in that day I will answer, declares the Lord, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, <sup>22</sup> and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, <sup>23</sup> and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, 'You are my people'; and he shall say, 'You are my God.' "*<sup>1</sup>

My dear fellow redeemed. The Good News for you today is that you are the people of God. You are a people fixed by Jesus. Jesus does the fixin' of men. We cannot. Man cannot fix themselves. Only the Son can fix mankind. Only the Son can put humanity

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* (2001). (Ho 2:14–23). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

back together again. Only God can then put the world back together and will do so completely in the New Creation.

James goes on to write about how we are to Submit ourselves before God. We are to humble ourselves before the Lord. When we live in humility, God will exalt you. When James speaks about humility, about drawing near to God, cleansing hands and purifying hearts, he's talking coming to the Lord to confess your sin before God. He's talking about putting your sin at the foot of the cross and letting Jesus fix you. Letting Jesus put you back together. He's talking about confessing your sin and having Jesus lift you up in forgiveness.

When we are forgiven, we are called to live for Jesus, to be friends of God, to be children of God and to serve Him daily, to return to Him with songs of praise and our gifts.

My dear fellow redeemed Saints of God, Jesus fixed the problem of man on the cross, but we still see a world that is in shambles. We see a world where moral issues are thrown to the wayside. We see a world that is in constant fighting and turmoil.

Fellow members of the family of God, Jesus has promised that He is coming back to take all of the faithful to be with him for eternity in paradise. Both those that are alive and those that have fallen asleep in Jesus. He also promised that He is going to make the new heavens and the new earth. At that point the problem of man, sin...will be gone. Man will be fixed and so will the world.

IN Jesus Name. Amen.

*Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*