**The Profitable Teacher**

James 3:1

**Good Morning Beloved**

* Psalm 94:12-15, 19
  + *12Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord,*

*and whom you teach out of your law,*

*13 to give him rest from days of trouble,*

*until a pit is dug for the wicked.*

*14 For the Lord will not forsake his people;*

*he will not abandon his heritage;*

*15 for justice will return to the righteous,*

*and all the upright in heart will follow it.*

*19 When the cares of my heart are many,*

*your consolations cheer my soul.*

* Psalm 71:14
  + *O God, from my youth you have taught me,*

*and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.*

* Isaiah 2:3
  + *… and many peoples shall come, and say:*

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,*

*to the house of the God of Jacob,*

*that he may teach us his ways*

*and that we may walk in his paths.”*

*For out of Zion shall go forth the law,*

*and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

* The Old Testament calls us to draw near and learn from the One who can’t be taught (Job 21:22) because Our God is All-Knowing.
  + Come and be instructed by the One who gave us the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:11).
    - Come and be filled with the Holy Spirit who will illumine your minds (John 14:26) as you savor the treasures of the God-breathed scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16) so that you be taught to love one another (1 Thess. 4:9).
* Those taught by God rejoice in the simple idea in the prayer of Jesus Christ that says…
  + *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* (John 17:3)
    - “The more we know of God the more unreservedly we will trust him; the greater our progress in theology, the simpler and more child-like will be our faith.” – J. Greshem Machen
* How striking then is our passage today which says…

**Reading of God’s Word** – James 3:1 (p. 1012 in the Pew Bible)

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*

**Preaching of God’s Word**

1. **Dangers in Teaching**
   1. First – Pride in Position
      1. James 3:1a - *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers,*
         1. Irony… “Every Sunday School coordinator always has a black sharpie handy to strike out this verse as they try to get teachers to fill various rooms.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
      2. We can hear the words of Jesus from Matthew 23, which declare…
         1. *2 The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, 3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, 6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues 7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.* 
            1. There is an subtle way in which positions on honor become opportunities for pride.

The Pharisees sat in the seat of Moses!

How great and honor.

But rather than dignifying the position with uprightness by obedience…

* + - * 1. They were like the Levites in Micah 3:11 who “judged for a bribe”.

Instead of feeding the flock of God… they used the sheep for self-congratulations.

* + 1. This abuse of the people reveals and arrogance before God.
  1. Second – Indifference to Judgment
     1. James 3:1b - *for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*
        1. When Jesus teaches about temptations in sin, we hear the truth…
           1. *And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.* (Luke 17:1-2)
        2. It seems like the most critical things for a teacher[[2]](#footnote-2)… is not first and foremost content….
           1. The most necessary thing is the fear of the LORD.

That is why in both the church and in the home there is a radical call to “fear the Lord and keep His commandments” (Ecc. 12:12).[[3]](#footnote-3)

* + - 1. In the home, parents are teachers revealing their adoption to the Father.
         1. Deut. 6:7 (from Moses) - *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*
         2. 2 Tim. 3:14-15 (From Paul) - *But as for you (Timothy), continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*
      2. In the church, the Holy Spirit reveals our salvation through the ministry of the Word.
         1. 2 Tim. 4:1-2 - *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

Here is the coupling of dignity… and severity.

Pastor, elder, Sunday School teacher… you share Christ.

Teacher… Christ sees all your message… and your motives… and your means.

* 1. In standing accountable for every word, every motive, and every instance of teaching before the Holy God… surely we would say… with the Prophet Jeremiah…
     1. *And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not, (Jer. 45:5).*
  2. Transition… they why do we have so many teaching opportunities in this church?

1. **Delights in Teaching**
   1. First – Edification of the Family
      1. James 3:1a - *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers,*
         1. John Stott – “Good relationship are founded on respect and respect is based on worth.”
            1. Creation – Each person is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:28).
            2. Redemption – Each Christian is a new creation by God (2 Cor. 5:7).

Acts 20:28 - *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*

The clarity of the family is based on the work of the Trinity…. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the primary care giver.

* + - 1. Because God is the Head of His Church… we see the practical ways we are to delight in teaching… as Paul makes clear to Timothy.
    1. 2 Timothy 4:11-5:2 - *11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 5:1 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*
       1. Watch your Example (vs. 11-12)[[4]](#footnote-4) – Timothy has a position of authority, but it is his manner that validates his message.
          1. Note the comprehensive manner… speech,
       2. Identify your Authority (vs. 13) – Timothy had a role… to stand in until the Apostle Paul came.
          1. He is not to become like Prince John sitting in King Richard’s throne. He is to give way to the writings of the King in the scriptures.
       3. Exercise your Gifts (vs. 14) – Timothy was commissioned to serve by the authority of the elders (1 Tim. 6:1)
       4. Share your progress (vs. 15) – There was a growth in spiritual maturity and ministerial service.
       5. Mind your consistency (vs. 16) – Practice what you preach and share what you have.
          1. James 1:19 – *Be doers of the law and not hearers only.*
       6. Adjust your relationships (vs 5:1-2) – Love the whole congregation…
          1. Older and younger – respect those who are older than you
          2. Men and women – restraint in purity
    2. Why all that work?
       1. Col. 1:28 - *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*
    3. How awesome to see God work through is Word…
       1. Cowardly become Confident (2 Cor. 4)
       2. Angry become meek (James 1:19)
       3. Apathetic become missionaries (2 Cor. 5)
       4. Unengaged become spark plugs of joy (Phil. 4)
       5. Malcontents to become ambassadors of peace (Jude 5)
       6. Debauchery to being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
          1. Do you see how that change comes?

It is only in and through Christ.

* 1. Second – Adulation of the Savior
     1. James 3:1b - *for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*
        1. The irony… James was a false teacher.
           1. As a younger man… James would have heard about his brother Jesus…

The angelic visit to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

The hosts of heaven praising God outside of Bethlehem (Luke 2:14)

The healing of man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21ff)

The cleansing of a leper (Mark 1:40ff)

The healing of a paralytic (Mark 2:1ff)

The restoration of a man with a withered hand (mark 3:1ff)

* + - 1. In light of all that evidence… by the earliest part of Jesus ministry… James and the rest of the family concluded…
         1. Mark 3:21 - *And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”*
    1. When James writes these words under the power of the Holy Spirit… he does so as a man who received grace.
       1. For Jesus Christ, whom he blasphemed, incurred the judgement James deserved.
          1. On the cross, the Profitable Teacher was regarded as a heretic.

On the tree, the Good Teacher, whose words combined simplicity, clarity, and authority, was mocked by the very mouths He formed.

In the tomb, the compassionate rabbi who visited the wealthy and the impoverished in their homes, was treated as apostate.

* + 1. Why?
       1. So that you today would remember the power of Christ’s resurrection.
          1. In John 20, we read…

*15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

* 1. Because of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Profitable Teacher, our Rabboni, our Savior…. Jesus Christ… we can say with the Psalmist…
     1. *Teach me your way* (Ps. 25:4-5; 27:11; 86:11)
        1. For the Holy Spirit assures us that the Son has ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and Our God.
           1. No where is this more clearly seen than at the Table of our Lord and Master.

**Benediction – Romans 15:5-6**

*May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. Steve Estes quote [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Gingrich,** *Greek NT Lexicon (GIN) -* διδάσκαλος, ου, ὁ teacher Ro 2:20; Hb 5:12. As a term of honor and respect Mt 8:19; Mk 10:17; Lk 9:38; J 3:10. Of teachers in the Christian church Ac 13:1; 1 Cor 12:28f; Js 3:1 (our passage). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “As the natural family is a fundamental unit of human society and is the normal means of care and nurture, all sins which threaten, undermine, or marginalize it are both spiritually dangerous and detrimental to human flourishing.” From the Ad Interim Committee Report prepared for the 48th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John Stott, *The Problems of Christian Leadership*, chapter 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)