

THE JUDGE STANDING AT THE DOOR

James 5: 9 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Warren Wiersbe spoke on v. 9 in his commentary, using the context of the farmer, saying, “Nor does the farmer get into fights with his neighbors. One of the usual marks of farmers is their willingness to help one another. Nobody on the farm has time or energy for disputes with neighbors. James must have had this in mind when he added, “Don’t grumble against one other, brothers, or you will be judged.” Impatience with God often leads to impatience with God’s people, and this is a sin we must avoid. If we start using sickles on each other, we will miss the harvest!” I agree! Today, as we examine God’s word on fault-finding, and holding grudges, remember with grudging, comes judging. Did you know in our world of sin, ever since the fall of man, there is nothing perfect in this world. Every face has its blemish. Every field has its weeds. As one man put it, “No matter how many air-brushes and air-pesticides a person uses, the thorns and thistles are with us to the end.” Charles Spurgeon once said, “You’ll never get “white flour out of a black coal bag.” One of the strangest things about being a created human being, conceived and born in sin, is that we tend to discover mistakes very quickly in everyone else but ourselves. The Bible says in Proverbs 10: 12, “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offences. Peter said in the New Testament in I Peter 4: 8, “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” Paul added in Galatians 5: 14-15, “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”

The Bible makes it clear that if we took care of one another, there wouldn’t be any time left to have grudges over each other’s faults. This idea Paul has of biting and devouring one another must be because we do not know the 45 commands of God in the scripture about taking care of one another. If you would desire to list the references, here they are: This is one of the most caring set of passages. ***Notice how many of them, you offend by disobedience, because you don’t care for a brother or sister in our local church here, which is the body of Christ.*** Romans 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Romans 14:13 Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer Romans 15:5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, Romans 15:7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:14 ... “Be able to instruct one another. Romans 16:16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 1 Corinthians 11:33 So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another--1 Corinthians 12:24 But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor, to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members

may have the same care for one another. 1 Corinthians 16:20 Greet one another with a holy kiss. II Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; the God of love and peace will be with you. II Corinthians 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Ephesians 4:2 ...with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 5:19 ...addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, Ephesians 5:21 ...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Colossians 3:9 ...Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices. Colossians 3:13 ...bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 1 Thessalonians 3:12 ...and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, 1 Thessalonians 4:9 ...Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. James 4:11 ...Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. James 5:16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. 1 Peter 1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 1 Peter 5:5 Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ. 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

How are we doing? These commands are strong in what we must do with one another. Love, outdo, live in harmony with, do not pass judgment against, welcome, instruct, greet with a holy kiss. wait for, care for, comfort, agree with, serve, bear the burdens of, bear with, be kind to, forgive, submit to, teach, admonish, abound in love for, encourage, build up, always seek to do good to, exhort every day, consider how to stir up to love and good works, confess your sins to, love earnestly from a pure heart, show hospitality without grumbling, clothe yourselves with humility toward, greet with the kiss of love, love one another. What would happen next February, if you chose to memorize all 45 "one another" verses? It's wise to learn your "one another's. Then practice them when with your sisters and your brothers! For a few moments this morning, let's examine the three warnings James gives us about how we speak, act and think with one another. (1) Notice the ugly habit we are warned against—grumbling against one another. (2) Notice the unerring outcome of grumbling against one another—we will be judged. (3) Notice the urgency of heeding the warning not to grumble against one another—the Judge is standing at the door. Examine these three strong warnings:

STOP COMMITTING THE UGLY HABIT WE ARE WARNED

AGAINST—GRUMBLING AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. (I.) Notice James 5: 9a – “Do not grumble against one another, brothers...” The KJV says “grudge not one another. First of all, what is this Greek word for grumbling against one another or grudging one another? This Greek word is **stenadzo**. To put another in a bad strait, to murmur against another person so others cannot distinguish the words, to grumble or complain to others about a person, to have a censorious spirit towards another, a groan of half-suppressed murmur and impatience and harsh judgment, to give someone something only in reluctance, to moan with a suppressed feeling of ill will, to feel ill will from envy, to bicker and find fault with a person, to carp against others whenever possible, so as to undermine the church unity as we are waiting for the coming of the Lord, to have or take little or no pleasure in another

person, to criticize severely over petty and small things, to concede or resent the good fortune of another, to stand aloof from another person, to turn one's back on, to withhold one's assent or approval to someone, to make a disclaimer toward another, or as we speak in modern English, to put another person down. Really, this is an ugly habit often found among Christians toward each other. Jesus said in Matthew 7: 1, "Judge not that you be not judged," and James is saying, "Grudge not or grumble not against lest you be condemned in judgment." When we are critical of others, we set ourselves up in the place of judges, and we must then expect more severe judgment of ourselves by others. There is no fault which brings about its own punishment more certainly than the habit of fault-finding.

Jesus said, in Luke 6: 41-42, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first, take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. Think of Jesus and this imagery He shared. He is picturing many of us, if not most of us, running around with locust or cedar fence-poles sticking out of our eyes while we hunt for a tiny piece of lint in our brother's eye. The truth is, we'll never get close enough to really remove a piece of lint from our brother or sister's eye, if we are jamming our locust or cedar fence post into his or her forehead. Each of us have an inborn ability to think too highly of ourselves. Our estimate of ourselves can be so wrong. I read recently that "some people are drawn to failings in others like sharks to fresh blood." I ask us all—are we guilty of having certain people we pounce on, with just the mere mention of their names? God forbid it! James is warning us and calling us off this ugly habit. Secondly,

SEE CLEARLY THE UNERRING OUTCOME OF GRUMBLING

AGAINST ONE ANOTHER—WE WILL BE JUDGED. (II.) Notice James 5: 9b – "so that you may not be judged..." A patient believer who lives with the coming of the Lord as his focal point does not indulge in grumbling and complaining. Gripping about others God is not through with yet, means you are quarrelling with God's process in them and in you. The chronic grumbler ought to remember which generation God hated beyond all others. It was that generation that God gave all the miracles in the Exodus, but they grumbled against the meekest man God ever made, Moses, they spoke against the Lord's anointed. Hebrews 3: 17. "And with whom was God provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? God's judgment on grumbling is severe. See clearly God's unerring judgment for coming against one of His Bride. Grudge-holding is often a life-ruining habit. Remember David's son, Absalom who had a run-in with his father, David, so he fled from home. David could forgive and forget, but Absalom could not. His one goal in life it seems was

to get even with his dad, and to kill him and take his throne. Was he judged harshly for speaking evil of his father and temporarily seizing the kingdom? David ordered Joab, his commander and all his soldiers to “deal gently with my son, my son, Absalom. But this son who would not let go of his grudge found his whole life flash before his eyes as a total loss, as he got his long hair tangled in a sycamore tree where his chest became the dart board for Joab and David’s soldiers. The judgment he was given was the unerring outcome of his grumbling, and his grudge against his father. How tragic it is to never forgive others but to stay bitter.

Leo Tolstoy lived in his marriage in a saga of bitterness. His wife was never satisfied with him. She carped and complained, and she clung to her grudges until he could bear it no more. After being married for 48 years to him, his wife saw what she had lost. So, she begged him to read to her the exquisite, poignant love passages that he wrote about her 48 years earlier when they both were madly in love with each other. As they approached their half century mark, Tolstoy would often read of their happy days that were gone forever, and they both sat in silence and wept bitterly. Ethel Barrett, in her book on James, called “Will the Real Phony Please Stand Up?” on page 180, wrote, “Whether you are working on overt revenge or just fondling your grudge beads, you are wasting a lot of steam that could be put to better use.” Sometimes, beloved, it is the criticized that become critical, it is the bully victims who become the worst bullies. Dr. C. Leslie Mitton, said, “When you face unusual hardships and irritations, and allow these things to provoke you into sharp criticism and censoriousness toward other Christians, such a response signifies victory for the evil one.” Do not blame your troubles on another. Christians who allow life’s troubles and annoyances to provoke them into blaming others are playing the devil’s game for him. I can think of no greater loss than for a man or woman of God who once was on fire for Jesus, once fruitful and vibrant for Jesus to give way for any reason to a mood of bitter discontent with God or others. What does God promise will happen to you if you do?

We read in this verse, “so that you may not be judged.” The Greek word for judged here is a strong, strong word. The word is **katakrino**. The word means to be judged against, to be sentenced, to be condemned, or to be damned. It literally means to have judgment, passed-against you. Jesus spoke using this word to say that “the repentant Ninevites in the days of Jonah will rise up and katakrino – rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah, Jesus Himself is here.” 3rdly,

STUDY CONSCIENTIOUSLY THE URGENCY OF HEEDING THE WARNING NOT TO GRUMBLE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER—THE JUDGE IS STANDING AT THE DOOR. (III.) Notice James 5: 9c – “behold, the Judge is standing at the door.” This warning is an all out watch out warning

saying, “Look who is standing right at the door—it’s Jesus—the Judge of all the earth.” James was inspired of the Holy Spirit to say these words, but they are words he had heard his Lord say. When Jesus cursed the fig tree, just before going to the cross, He explained His judgment later on the fig tree in Mark 13: 28-30, saying, “From the fig tree, learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that He is near, at the very gates, at the very doors. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” John who leaned on Jesus’ bosom at the Last Supper, spoke of Jesus standing outside the door of one of His seven churches—the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3: 20, saying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat or dine with him, and he with Me.”

Beloved, the day is coming when the trumpet will sound. Jesus will come again. The arch-angel will shout—and perhaps, it will be, “All rise!” Jesus, the Judge of the universe will enter His judgment hall. How ashamed will we be if He returns and finds us indulging in petty arguing, criticizing, and speaking against each other. God takes it seriously when we grumble against each other. Patient living for Jesus demands a radical refusal to complain against other believers. It’s what I do when I am offered alcohol. I turn my cup over, not because a glass of wine will condemn me, but because I have made a radical refusal to drink what is ruining millions of lives in my state, my country, and my world, and to give someone that may be weaker, an example and a reason to become an alcoholic. Yet, I believe few radical refusals are more important than refusing to speak against another believer. God has called us to pray for each other instead of accusing, criticizing and grumbling against each other. Did you know that Christians who sincerely pray for other Christians, seldom can criticize them because they love those for whom they intercede daily?

Oh, the urgency of the certain, sudden, and near return of Jesus. He’s at the door. He could return today. When Jesus returns, let none of us forget that it will be a matter of great seriousness and solemnity, for we as believers, Romans 14: 10, 12 will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ...to give an account of ourselves to God. Paul tells us with elaborate detail in I Corinthians 3: 9-15 what that will be like. Follow along as I read it. What will I say and what will you say, when one day soon, as we are scowling or moaning or groaning or sighing, and we hear a knock at our door, and we open it to find Christ standing there asking for an account of our blubbing, bawling, or boiling over about the trivialities of our lives that vex us or about someone in our family or our church family whom we cannot stand? I close with a song you all know-- Somebody's knocking at your door/knocks like Jesus, can't you hear Him, Answer Jesus. Read James 5: 9.