

James 4:13-17
THE WORLD HAS
CHANGED
Making Plans



Last March I preached on this passage in James for the first time.

It's a passage about making plans.

As I read it again I'm struck by how many plans have been disrupted!

In a short period of time the world has changed.

You and I are don't have the precise planning control we wished we had.

When I worked as a geotechnical engineer I had a personal practice of always writing field logs in pen (not usual pencil).

Still have deep desire to get plans right...

but life experience is that pencils and erasers are essential.

Yet more than tools in hand...

we need planning posture in changing world that recognises God is unchanging.

**'Merchants': overconfident in ABILITY; failure to recognise FRAILTY
(v13-14, 16-17)**

Let me remind you what pre-COVID life was like.

[v13]

These are C1st 'merchants':

- Entrepreneurs; Traders and salespeople
- Always on the move, ambitious and making money wherever they go
- Life and business and money making has no borders...

A global pandemic has taught us what wise James had to say about the flimsiness of plans and the frailty of life.

[v14]

James says: anyone who fails to recognise FRAILTY and FLIMSINESS of plans...

and pushes on through life planning in pen...

with an inflated confidence in their ABILITY...

is not just foolish... but evil:

[v16-17]

[Illustration: Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12)]

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

Jesus goes on to teach his disciples to NOT worry about life and stuff...

'Wise': 'if it is the Lord's will' (v15)

James gives us the KEY for making plans right in the middle verse.

[v15]

All plans in a changing world come with a footnote: 'God-willing'

It's not about planning with doubt or uncertainty.

But planning with confidence and certainty in God...

to work all things out according to his good plans and purposes.

'God-willing'

More than technical phrase to be spiritually pious / theologically accurate.

Humble recognition of OUR frailty and GOD's ability.

Acknowledges that ALL we do is by God's will: every breath, heartbeat, hour at work, dollar we earn, goal we achieve, trial we persevere through, temptation we stand firm under, every ambition we have and plan we make.

Every moment is underscored by... 'if the Lord wills'

We need to write 'God-willing'...

not just as a minor footnote by majestic heading over every part of our life.

The world has changed... and it will change again...

we need planning posture that recognises I am but a frail mist...

But God is unchanging...

So my confidence rests in him.