*Introduction*

Two weeks ago we look at “Not being ashamed of Christ” and it was a word which I believe was very challenging to us all. It made us look at those times when we have denied our Saviour when we are with non-Christians because we felt we were embarrassed, fearful or didn’t know what to say.

We looked at Peter and how he denied knowing Jesus at his trial, yet was restored in the same manner that he had denied Jesus – 3 times. When we fail, if we repent, there is forgiveness and restoration.

We saw also that without restoration we are useless to the work of Christ and there was a need for us to be courageous and bold in speaking to others.

Today, we take another step in looking at our Christian lives, that is, ARE WE A FRIEND OF JESUS OR A FOE OF JESUS?

James is an apostle who does not mince his words, he doesn’t make it palatable or pink and fluffy as the world would. No, he goes straight for the jugular – no messing

***JAS 4:4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.***

James challenges us in this verse to look at our relationship with God. He tells us that there is a choice to be made.

On your seats when you came in this morning there was a piece of paper with a question on it.

That question is:

*Are you a friend of God, if so, how close a friend are you?*

I want you to just quietly take a moment to look at that question and write down an honest answer.

GIVE TIME

Now, just put that piece of paper to one side, but do not lose it, yu will need it again at the end of the morning.

The Apostle Peter also spoke about the way we live and states

***2PE 3:10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives***

Just so that we get the context right this morning, the first question we must ask is this: Who were James and Peter writing to?

The answer to that question is – Believers in Christ, Christians!

That means they were writing to the Church in their day, and to US TODAY.

The message is for US.

*Main theme*

In the context in which he is writing, what did James mean by ***You adulterous people?***

What does it mean to be adulterous?

ON the internet in Wikipedia, which I do not use as the be all and end all, it says

***Adultery*** *(also called* ***philandery****) is sexual* [*infidelity*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infidelity) *to one's spouse, and is a form of* [*extramarital sex*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extramarital_sex)*. It originally referred only to sex between a woman who was married and a person other than her spouse.*[*[1]*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adultery#cite_note-0) *Even in cases of separation from one's spouse, an extramarital affair is still considered adultery.*

***1CO 6:9-11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.***

So then, an adulterer is someone who is “having a bit on the side”! They are making out to be committed to one but actually are being disloyal.

This is what James is talking about to the Church, Christians making out they are committed to Christ yet being unfaithful through a friendship with the world.

It is a very strong point that James and Peter are putting across.

Jesus himself also put the point across in the Gospels-

***MT 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.***

Throughout the OT the same theme occurs, God is jealous for his people Israel, and all through their wanderings in the desert before they got to the promised land, and then when they went in to take the land, Gods message to the Israelites was keep yourself separate, do not be joined with them.

God knew what they were like, and so he told them that they had to totally wipe out the other nations from the land. We know of course that when they disobeyed and left remnants, when they intermarried, when they worshipped other gods, they became defiled and powerless.

God knows that we, if we allow ourselves to be tainted by the world will become ineffectual and powerless.

We know, as Christians, that the world is sinful, it will constantly entice us into sin and more sin, what starts out to be something perhaps small and insignificant soon gets out of control and becomes a wildfire.

What does it mean ***friendship with the world***?

Let us be clear, God did not make a world to enjoy and then say, do not touch it or be part of it. What he did say was

***1JN 2:15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.***

Being in friendship with the world is being like one of the world, it is acting like one of the world

***GAL 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

***EPH 5:3-7 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.***

We are called to be in the world but not part of it, to have a part in it and of it means that we are making friends with and therefore an idol of the world and this will separate us from the love of God and make us his enemies. You, James says – Makes the choice – you choose to be a friend of the world.

So, in light of that, how should we be living so that we are friends of God?

***EPH 5:8-11For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.***

***EPH 5:15-21 Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.***

Peter said

***2PE 3:10-11 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives***

*Conclusion*

There is a distinct difference, or should be, in the way the world lives and the way the Christian lives. They should be like chalk and cheese. One is darkness the other light. One is arrogant and proud, the other is lowly and humble. One is anything goes and is permitted, the other is holy and righteous.

Peter challenges us in the light of the nearness of the Lord’s coming to ask the question “What kind of people ought you to be?”

He says “You ought to live holy and godly lives”.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Who would you rather be with, believers or non-believers?
2. What are the most important things in your life?
3. Who or what is at the top of that list?
4. How do we conduct ourselves when we are in the company of non church people/friends? Do you do what they do? Or do you say NO?
5. How important is seeking Gods will for your life over your ambitions?
6. Are you willing to give up the things that you want, your friends, your job for Him?
7. Is God speaking to you right now?

***MATT 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***

***ROM 14:17-18 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.***

***2PE 1:5-11 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.***

***Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

I do not bring this message to you this morning because I or God want to bash you over the head with it. But to encourage you to live a life that puts Jesus where he should be, at the very centre of all you do. I challenge myself at the same time.

As we close, take out that piece of paper and look at the answer you gave at the beginning.

Look at the answer you gave to the question:

*Are you a friend of God, if so, how close a friend are you?*

***Does your answer need to change?***

Take the lid off your light and let it shine in these dark days for Christ, seek Him, live for Him.

Amen