

September 23, 2018
Truth and Wisdom: An Answer in Prayer

First Reading ~ *James 3:13-4:8*

If there are any wise and learned among you, let them show it by good living - with humility, and with wisdom in their actions. But if you have the bitterness of jealousy or self-seeking ambition in your hearts, be careful or you'll find yourself becoming arrogant and covering up the truth with lies. This kind of "wisdom" doesn't come from above. It's earth-bound, animal-like and demonic. Where there is jealousy and ambition, there is also disharmony and wickedness of every kind. The wisdom from above, however, has purity as its essence. It works for peace; it's kind and considerate. It's full of compassion and shows itself by doing good. Nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

Where do these conflicts and battles among you first start? Isn't it that they come from the desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it, so you're prepared to kill to get it. You have ambitions that you can't satisfy, so you fight to get your way by force. The reason that you don't have what you want is that you don't ask for it in prayer. And when you do ask and don't get it, it's because you haven't prayed properly. You have prayed in order to indulge and satisfy your own pleasures.

You faithless people, don't you know that making the world your friend is making God your enemy? Those who want to befriend the world make themselves enemies of God. Do you think scripture says for no good reason that "The Spirit planted in us is passionate to the point of jealousy"? She bestows a greater gift, which is why scripture says, "God resists the proud and favors the humble."

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and it will flee from you. Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you.

Clean your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you double-dealers!

Second Reading

~ *adapted from from Eckhart Tolle*

The human mind, in its desire to know, understand, and control, mistakes its opinions and viewpoints for the truth. It says: this is how it is. You have to be larger than thought to realize that, however you interpret "your life" or someone else's life or behavior, however you judge any situation, it is no more than a viewpoint, one of many possible perspectives. It is no more than a bundle of

thoughts. But reality is one unified whole, in which all things are interwoven, where nothing exists in and by itself. Thinking fragments reality; it cuts it up into conceptual bits and pieces. The thinking mind is a useful and powerful tool, but it is also very limiting when it takes over your life completely, when you don't realize that it is only a small aspect of the consciousness that you are. Wisdom is not a product of thought. The deep knowing that is wisdom arises through the simple act of giving someone or something your full attention. Attention is primordial intelligence, consciousness itself. It dissolves the barriers created by conceptual thought, and with this comes the recognition that nothing exists in and by itself. It joins the perceiver and the perceived in a unifying field of awareness. It is the healer of separation.