

14<sup>th</sup> June, 2026

The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn:**

O Praise Ye The Lord! Praise Him In  
The Height;  
Rejoice In His Word, Ye Angels Of  
Light;  
Ye Heavens, Adore Him, By Whom  
Ye Were Made,  
And Worship Before Him, In  
Brightness Arrayed.

O Praise Ye The Lord! All Things That  
Give Sound;  
Each Jubilant Chord Re-Echo  
Around;  
Loud Organs His Glory Forth Tell In  
Deep Tone,  
And, Sweet Harp, The Story Of What  
He Hath Done.

O Praise Ye The Lord! Praise Him  
Upon Earth,  
In Tuneful Accord, All You Of New  
Birth;  
Praise Him Who Hath Brought You  
His Grace From Above,  
Praise Him Who Hath Taught You To  
Sing Of His Love.

O Praise Ye The Lord! Thanksgiving  
And Song  
To Him Be Out Poured All Ages  
Along:  
For Love In Creation, For Heaven  
Restored,  
For Grace Of Salvation, O Praise Ye  
The Lord!

## The Sermon by Timothy James

### Read James 2:14-26 and Matthew 7:13-23 – Living Wisdom

Wisdom is very important in God's eyes: "Get wisdom. And whatever you get, get insight" (Prov. 4:7). James, too, thinks it is important. James's letter is a very practical working out of some issues of Godly wisdom. He offers counter-cultural wisdom on matters such as wealth, status, speech and factionalism. James is essentially applied Christianity.

In this passage, he describes two sorts of wisdom: one "from above" (v.17) and one earthly, unspiritual and even devilish (v.15).

- What does true wisdom look like?

It is **practical** and it is **meek** v.13 "let him show by his good conduct his acts in meekness of wisdom" (literal translation).

What is "meekness"? It could also be translated as humility, or gentleness, refusal to dominate, openness to correction, freedom from egoistic display. It is kind rather than brilliant. In Philippians 2 Paul says, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

The greatest example of meekness is Jesus himself. He said "Blessed are the meek..." (Matthew 5:5) and "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matthew 11:29). In Philippians 2 Paul goes on "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing".

Meekness is not weakness, feebleness or wetness, but it means *not* putting oneself first, *not* looking after No. 1. Who will look after No.1? God will. Your job is to look after all the others.

These are the personal characteristics which are the signs and symptoms of true wisdom.

- What are its effects?

James gives negatives and positives.

The earthly wisdom produces envy, ambition, boasting and untruthfulness (v.14) and disorder (v.16). It is competitive. We train

people to compete, because otherwise they will fall behind and others will get the things they want – the jobs, the assets, the relationships.

The wisdom from above produces seven characteristics (v.17), which can be summarised as *not* insisting on one's own interests. At the head of the list is purity. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." True wisdom is non-competitive. It asks what I can do for the other, not what the other can do for me.

- Where does it come from?

The Bible is very clear about this.

"And [God] said to the human race,

**"The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom,  
and to shun evil is understanding."** (Job 28:28).

Psalms 111:10 and Proverbs 9:10 both say "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...".

James describes this wisdom as "from above" (v.17), just as John reports Jesus saying we need to be born from above (John 3:3,7). The source is the same – God – and the process is the same – grace.

- How can I obtain it?

James told us back in Chapter 1:5: "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, **ask God... and it will be given to you**". So just ask. Wisdom is not worked up or manufactured; neither is it something we are born with. It is a gift.

But be careful what you ask for, because you may get it. Do you want to give up competitiveness and self-interest? Some people may want to take advantage of you. You may not collect all the glittering prizes of this life.

How did the world expect me to live my life? To rise to the top, to out-compete others, to be a winner. That was worldly wisdom. How does God, though his servant James, teach me to live my life? By the wisdom from above. And to show it by my works. And I will reap a harvest of righteousness (v.18).

**2nd Sunday after Trinity:** Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

***The Lord's Prayer:*** *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

***Blessing*** to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

**At the Church of the Good Shepherd:**

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: June 17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: June 24<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

**For Further information:**

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>