

Second Hand Preacher

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 20, 2015

James 3:16-4:3

Many times we are attracted to stories that pit good versus evil. We like to see them square off and have conflict, but like all good stories we want good to come through in the end. This applies to super heroes, law enforcement, and even common everyday folks. The protagonist must endure hardships and show his or her humanity. We like seeing people overcome difficulty and triumph over evil. Most of us want to be seen as good and most of us have a soft spot for a hero.

This was true in the time of St. James as well. If you were a believer in the Christ, you saw him as the ultimate hero. You believed in him so much that you were even willing to die for his sake. This is what the Paschal Mystery was about. Jesus died and rose for us. We must also die to self and choose life in Jesus. No one ever said that this would be easy. Early Christians suffered greatly and James is telling them to keep the faith. He is telling them not to be jealous or selfish clinging to their own passions. This gets a little confusing for us as we are taught that passion can be good. James is referring to passions that are not of God. We should follow his Passion rather than selfish passions that do not build up the kingdom. If a passion is of benefit to others, especially the marginalized, then the passion is of God.

In our world today we see much greed, jealousy, and self centeredness. We as Christians need to turn away from these and cling to virtue. We are called to be humble, faithful, compassionate, and loving children of God. James and all members of the early church do not want us to forget this. We must make a decision to be followers each day. When we trust in Jesus evil does not have a chance.