

The War Within

by Theodore Epp

The sermon emphasizes the importance of examining our lives and guarding our hearts against bitterness and the old nature.

Scripture: James 4:1

Topics: "Inner Conflict", "Unity Among Believers"

Description

Theodore Epp addresses the internal conflict that leads to strife among believers, emphasizing that the war within each person manifests as external conflict. He references James 4:1-3 and Romans 7:23 to illustrate how personal struggles with sin can lead to destructive behavior, including character assassination through harmful speech. Epp warns against the bitterness that can arise even among Christians, urging believers to guard their hearts and seek the highest good of others, despite disagreements. He highlights the importance of self-examination and the need to control the tongue to prevent harm to others. Ultimately, Epp calls for a commitment to love and unity within the body of Christ.

Transcript

James 4:1-3

James was well aware of the fact that conflict among believers comes from the personal war that goes on within each person. This conflict within the believer is also referred to in Romans 7:23: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Also, Peter warned, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

James's reference to killing was not necessarily referring to taking a person's life but to destroying someone's character. Previously, James dealt with the viciousness of the tongue. When the tongue is out of control, it can be a lethal weapon used for character assassination.

These are sobering words from the Bible, and today more than ever we need to carefully examine our lives. Much bitterness is displayed not only among the unbelieving world but also among those who call themselves Christians. Sometimes, in the name of Christ and in a desire to be separate from sin, Christians commit sin by bitterly attacking fellow believers. We are to take a stand against sin, but we must guard our hearts so that the old nature does not take over, allowing the bitterness of hatred to grip us. Even though we may totally disagree with what another person is doing, we are still commanded as

believers to seek that person's highest good.

"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool" (Prov. 10:18).

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