

## Thursday, September 24

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.” <sup>14</sup> Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

**James 4:11-16**

Since the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg last week, I’ve found her slipping into my thoughts unexpectedly. Her legacy of working for justice and for finding ways to work with those with whom she disagreed are especially important at a time when our nation is so divided. One of the quotes that keeps coming back to me is, “Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” The fight for justice is essential to our Christian calling, but so is kindness and love. RBG’s message encapsulates both fighting against injustice and showing love and grace in the midst of the fight. It isn’t a matter of vilifying our opposition—our “enemy”—but working for change in ways that unite instead of divide.

I wonder what it would look like for us to be doing that as Christians today in the midst of an election season. This epistle warns us: “Do not speak evil against one another.” However, if you’ve been watching TV, reading the news, or browsing social media, I’m guessing you’ve seen lots of Christians saying lots of hateful things towards their perceived enemies. These judgments are our boasting. We boast that we are right, and the “enemy” is wrong. We condemn without listening, judge without thinking. This scripture calls us to more. We are called to listen, to humbly come before God, to recognize our insignificance in the face of God’s power. Still, that does not mean that we give up the fight for justice. Rather, we keep fighting for a justice that means that all in our society are loved and cared for the same way we want to be loved and cared for. It’s the way we fight that needs to change. We need to approach these conversations with love instead of hate.

Like many things in our Christian life, this is no easy task. There are no easy answers, and love is often the hardest thing to do. As James 4 reminds us, we do not do this alone, but God who is greater works through us with love and grace.

*Compassionate God, who shows us love and mercy even though we don’t deserve it, help us continue to fight for justice and mercy in the world without attacking others. Give us wisdom as we approach the election, that we may not judge others, but work to improve the lives of all in our society, trusting in your grace and mercy and leaning on love in all our interactions. In the name of Christ, Amen.*

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