What is Your Life?

**Read:** James 4:13-17

**Text:** James 4:14 “…For what is your life?...”

**Introduction:** If you talk to anyone who is 25 or older they will tell you that it just seems like yesterday they were a teenager. I spent some time with Mildred who is 99 years old and she talks of her deceased son and daughter as if they were still kids. When it is past; all time seems to have gone at break-neck speed. James asks a question that needs an answer: “For what is your life?” Oh, I know that he answers it and I will preach about that but if he had not answered it how would you respond to the question: “For what is your life?” Is it a grief to yourself or others? Is it a joy to all you meet? Is it trouble and strife? Is it contentment or is it filled with unfulfilled expectations?

James answers the question this way: “It is even a vapor that appear-eth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” What is a vapor? A vapor is “a substance diffused or suspended in the air, especially one normally liquid or solid."

**I. Your life is temporary.** Just as a vapor doesn’t last long neither does your life. If you live to be 100 years old at the end you will say that there is so much more that you would like to accomplish. When you read the obituaries there are usually more old people than young but still there is a large variance in ages. One dies in his late 40’s and another dies at almost 90. Life is short for both. No one seriously expects to get out of this life alive. James is warning us that we need to get busy because time is marching on and one day someone is going to find you dead. It doesn’t take long after you are dead for the memories of you to fade in most peoples mind. Take a trip through the cemetery and you will see that there are more graves with no flowers than there are with flowers.

**II. Your life is barely visible.** No matter how much of an impact we think we have (in the eternal scope of things) our life is barely visible. Tell me about Alben Barkley (pause). Do you even know who Alban Barkley was? He was the 35th vice president of the United States. He was selected by Harry S. Truman and he helped Truman to defeat Dewey in an upset. Why don’t you remember him? If you and I, who were taught American history in school cannot remember a major political leader such as that who is going to remember us 20 years after we pass from this life?

**III.** **A vapor is best seen in contrast to its environment.** The reason you can see a vapor is because of the contrast with what is beyond it.

On a totally clear day a vapor is very difficult to see. We see it coming off of a teapot because of the cabinet or wall behind it. We see it as we drive down the road against the backdrop of trees or houses. Do you recall the story found in I Kings 18. Elijah had just destroyed the peo-ple’s confidence in Baal. The sound of their voice was still ringing in his ears: “The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!” He has killed the prophets of Baal (950 men). Now he is on top of Mount Carmel. He orders his servant to go look toward the sea. He went 7 times and reported that he saw nothing. Finally he sees a mist, a vapor, (if you will) a cloud the size of a man’s hand. Perhaps he had difficulty seeing it because it was a totally clear day. It hadn’t rained in years. It took some straining of his eyes to finally see it.

We live in a world of camouflaged saints. Many times we blend into our environment so well that nobody realizes there is a saint in their midst. Your Christian life is best seen when it stands in contrast to the environment that we live in. If our life is to have any positive impact it must be seen in opposition to the world around us. It is a sad day when we remember the Alamo, we remember Pearl Harbor, and we won’t forget 911 but we tolerate the daily murder of innocent babies. The death toll from 911 is 2,977. Over 3700 babies are aborted daily in America. Shouldn’t we be as upset about that as we are about the Supreme Courts’ decision yesterday to allow same sex marriage? Our voices should be raised and our pocketbooks should be opened to oppose an environment that allows such an assault on God and His creation.

**Conclude:** What is your life? What are you doing to allow God to get the best use out of it? How are you living to display the best contrast to the world around you?