

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, July 5, 2026
Scripture: James 4: 1-10
Sermon: Double Allegiance

There is one thing that I am sure we all learned in school and remember to this day. The pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.”

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.”

If you were raised in this country this is one thing we are to be proud of and thankful for. People died in the wars to help keep our liberty. We are asked to be loyal to our country and many were asked to fight for our country in WWII, Korean or Vietnam Wars or lost family members during those times or other conflicts around the world.

Those in the military are asked to give their allegiance to the United States and all that it stands for. Many people around the world would love to live in the USA because of its religious freedom and the great country that it is.

In the same way that our country asks for our commitment, loyalty and allegiance, our God, our Father, our Creator asks us to give our allegiance to serve Him in His army.

When we become a disciple, a believer in Jesus Christ as our Savior we have signed up to be a soldier in the Lord’s army because we are in a war for souls.

The fourth chapter of James speaks to us about the war within us and the war around us. Our world is in constant conflict. We read every day of people fighting with one another and shooting each other.

We watch on the news mass shootings and terrorist attacks. When actions like this are happening it means there are wars going on inside of people, in their emotions, in their spirit, and in their mind. Domestic violence

is at a high. Violence against spouses, children and the elderly is prevalent in our society.

It has been said that we have become or are becoming a society that thinks of our own pleasures, our own desires before the welfare of another person.

In many ways our society has become a society of thinking “We Deserve” this and we deserve that. It doesn’t matter if we need it, work for it, or if it is ours— if we want it we just get it.

In our scripture lesson James is getting very serious with the readers telling them that they can’t always have what they want. They can’t have their own way like spoiled children. We want what we shouldn’t have and what isn’t ours to have.

Max Lucado, pastor, teacher and has many DVD series we have watched and he has written many great books. One of his books is called *In The Eye of the Storm* he writes, “Can you imagine the outcome if a parent honored each request of each child during a trip? We’d inch our bloated bellies from one ice cream store to the next. Our priority would be popcorn and our itinerary would read like a fast-food menu. ‘Go to the Cherry Malt and make a right. Head north until you find the Chili Cheeseburger. Stay north from 1,300 calories and bear left at the Giant Pizza. When you see the two-for-one Chili Dog Special, take the Pepto-Bismol Turnpike east for five convenience stores.’ Can you imagine the chaos if a parent indulged every indulgence? Can you imagine the chaos if God indulged each of ours?” (p116)

The Message translation by Eugene Peterson translates this section of James in contemporary language saying, “Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don’t have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn’t yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it. You wouldn’t think of just asking God for it, would you? And why not? Because you know you’d be asking for what you have no right to. You’re spoiled children, each wanting your own way.”

This seems so true, doesn’t it? Sometimes we all want things our own way. But James is telling the believers that it can’t always be the way we want it. We need to grow up and get serious about serving God.

Where will our allegiance be? Are we going to serve God and follow him or does our allegiance lie with the world? In whose army are you serving?

As Luke 16:13 states, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Mammon represented money, riches or worldly possessions. Jesus used the illustration to depict a divided heart, one devoted to both money and God. Jesus tells us that service to worldly things prohibits giving wholehearted devotion to God. But when we submit to God and ask God to help us with our double allegiance—our Double mindedness will begin turning into Single-mindedness, a Single-Allegiance, as Paul talked about in Philippians.

When we seek “friendship with the world” we are breaking our covenant with God just as in the Old Testament Israel is pictured as the Bride of Yahweh, or God. The prophet Hosea talks about Israel in the sense of committing spiritual adultery against God. God doesn’t tolerate competition. God requires total, unwavering allegiance from the people with whom He has joined himself.

James calls his readers “adulterers and adulteresses” desiring to stir their consciences, to encourage their repentance and to renew their commitment to love and obey God alone. James wants the readers to realize their motivation for doing things—the reasons and if they are really doing it all out of love. Or is it self-motivated? Is it money oriented?

All that we do needs to be done in allegiance to our Savior. We can’t do things motivated out of selfish gain or looking at the financial gain.

All the activities and events we plan and do need to be seen as ministry opportunities and outreach opportunities for those we meet.

When we trust in God, He will bless us financially and in other ways but our main motivation and reason for doing what we do is to reach out to others with the love of God, serving Him with a willing and open heart. Showing others that our allegiance is to the Lord and not the world. We need to look different to the world. It is a struggle to look different many times but with God’s help we can be courageous and strong in displaying our loyalty and commitment to Christ. When we serve God, when we

submit to God, when we draw near to God, when we humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, He will lift us up.

Humility means yielding of the heart. It is primarily a personal quality of dependence on God and respect for other people. Humility is not a natural human instinct; it is a God-given virtue of holy living.

The mind of Christ in essence was humility and sacrificial love for others. Jesus Christ's life provides the perfect example of humility. Jesus humbled himself to become obedient to God's will, which led to His death on the cross. (Philippians 2:5-11) Jesus urged His followers to humble themselves before God and others and to "practice" humility. Humility comes not from self but from God and results in the praise of God.

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

Isaiah 55, our Old Testament lesson is entitled "An Invitation to the Thirsty" and this invitation is extended to everyone. The words, "come," "buy," "eat," are imperatives which express a specific invitation. In these verses the call is issued by God Himself. Not only does He offer water, the basic necessity of life, but He also offers all that brings overwhelming satisfaction or life.

Best of all the invitation is extended to those who have no money. The Lord freely offers everything necessary to give His thirsty people abundant life.

Verse 2-3 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you."

"Listen" carries the idea of obedience. If God's people would respond to Him in obedience, in allegiance, we would enjoy the good life.

As Jesus said in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

It is only God that can give us an abundant life. So many times we get caught up in the world and people think that the world has the answers, that the world will make us content and all of a sudden our allegiance is with the world and we lost sight of God or we never had it in the first place.

“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.” (Isaiah 55:6)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts,” says the Lord. (Isaiah 55: 8-9)

God’s thoughts, God’s ways are different from ours but that is because God wants to give us an abundant life—an everlasting covenant with Him.

The world cannot give us what God gives us for Jesus paid the price for our abundant life. Jesus died and rose from the grave to give us abundant life and to give us living water.

God invites us to abundant living but it does require our obedience – our total surrender—our total allegiance.

This weekend as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the founding and allegiance to the United States of America let us also remember our allegiance to serving the Lord.

May we all be able to say, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24: 15)