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“Perspective”

Weekly Bible Study Schedule
Tuesday, April 9, 7:00-7:55 AM in HHR #5
(hot breakfast provided)
Capitol Commission is non-partisan and
non-denominational

Today’s Bible study is from James 5:1-6. James writes from his perspective that God owns time and expects obedience to His will. In chapter 5 his biblical worldview continues; God owns wealth and expects full devotion to Him. God owns everything. What we have is on loan from God.

James is forcefully making the point that wealth is temporary. Do not hotly pursue it, and if you have it use it wisely.

Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. Luke 6:19

Here, James points out to the persecuted followers of Jesus to remain faithful to God. He is faithful to them and takes note of what is happening.

James 5:1 - Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you.

James addresses the rich Jewish unbelievers who are not receiving the letter. It seems rhetorical teaching to give Jesus followers perspective on what was happening to them and God’s view toward those described in our section of the study.

James writes more like an Old Testament prophet declaring a strong message to those outside the faith that is rich, and oppress the poor.

Pay attention-rich people. Pay attention; you who exploit the poor. Listen carefully those that oppress the innocent. James sees through a God Worldview. He looks past the now, and into the future.

But woe to you who are rich (plousiois), for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Luke 6:24-25

Certainty is the tone. Terrible troubles will come. The question is “when?” The paradox is the very thing for which the rich quest will be lost. The things they live in devotion to will be destroyed.

James 5:2 - Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags.

Fine clothes in your bedroom closet wear out. Clothes eaten by moths are usually stored away in the attic.

Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:19-20

Followers of Jesus should unhook themselves from security in riches. God does not speak against affluence; he warns against positioning our trust in the illusion that wealth is an impregnable wall for those that hold it.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. A rich man’s wealth is his strong city and like a high wall in his imagination. Prov. 18:10-11

James 5:3 - Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment.

Gold and Silver, fine clothes, and self-indulgence will witness against you. They will be meaningless in the day of judgment. Unlike rust that takes a while to corrode, fire strikes quickly, just as the judgment day. Possessions cannot save you. Possessions protect no one. To be rich without God is to be short-sighted in light of eternity.

As the rich fool in Jesus’ parable found out,
And he (Jesus) told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought



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to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:16-21

There is nothing wrong with living comfortably. In many ways, we can do much more to advance the Lord’s will when life is not a constant struggle to survive.

The entire period between the first coming of Jesus to His second coming is viewed as “the last days,” although, there is a “last day” for each of us.

James 5:4 - For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

Often in that economy, day laborers got by on that day’s pay. To withhold it would rob the worker and his family of their daily bread.

The injustice is the innocent are hurt, the helpless are mistreated, and the powerful oppress the powerless, only so they can have more.

God marks the lessor. God knows the mistreated. The misuse of power gets God’s attention.

The laborer’s cried out to “Lord of Hosts,” depicting God’s position as mighty leader of a vast army,

It reminds the rich who treat the poor as if they do not have a protector; the Lord of the whole hosts in heaven and earth is their protector and avenger.

James 5:5 - You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter.

The rich man lived in splendor, while Lazarus, covered with sores, longed to be fed with the crumbs from the rich man’s table. But after death, their roles were reversed. The rich man was in agony in the flames of hell, whereas Lazarus was comfortably in Abraham’s bosom. Luke 16:19-31

The principle is not that all rich people go to hell and that all poor people go to heaven. Some rich people love God and poor people that do not love God. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone. We see in the story that selfish-indulgence by the rich man pictured life without God.

The paradox is the rich James speaks of hoarded wealth, only to lose it in the last days. Their very indulgence fattened themselves for the slaughter. As one thinks of a day to give account, one should “fear God” (live in light of God’s will and ways), not accuse and mock God. We are to fear this omnipotent God - fear him so much that we flee from the sins of the self-indulgent and oppressing rich.

James 5:6 - You have condemned and killed innocent people, who do not resist you.

The Greek word for killed/condemned is “katedikasate”; it is used twice in the Scripture. A legal term that could mean the literally killing or indirectly killing of the poor by cheating them of their earned wages. James is outraged by the victimization of people that are not resisting them.

James reminds all that practice injustice, oppression, and misuse of wealth that judgment day is near when wrongs will be made right.

Wealth is a resource to steward for the Lord’s purposes. When misused, it is a dangerous trap. Worldly perspective is to place trust in wealth as though it is one’s protector and provider. A biblical worldview places trust in Jesus as one’s security and Lord over one’s things and life.

At the end of the day, James teaches to encourage followers of Jesus to leave the judgment day to God. God will judge the rich that misuse their wealth and power. Also, wait patiently, even when life is hard, God will make wrongs right.



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