

WARNING TO THE RICH
JAMES 5:1-6

AS WE BEGIN THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES LET US REFLECT ON THE LETTER AS A WHOLE FOR A MOMENT. JAMES IS PASSIONATELY WARNING THE CHURCH TO EXAMINE OURSELVES. IS OUR FAITH IN CHRIST GENUINE OR ARE WE MEARLY SPECTATORS AT A WEEKLY SOCIAL GATHERING? THOSE WHO ARE TRULY BORN AGAIN WILL HAVE EVIDENCE OF CHANGED LIFE. THERE IS A MAJOR SHIFT IN THE LIFE OF A PERSON WHO HAS AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING GOD. OUR STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION (SANCTIFICATION) MAY BE DIFFERENT, BUT A REGENERATED HEART THAT HAS TURNED FROM FOCUS ON SELF INDULGENCE TO FOCUS ON CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM, WILL PRODUCE FRUIT(EVIDENCE) OF THIS FACT. SALVATION IS AN ACT OF GOD. WE DIDN'T FIND GOD, HE CHOSE US. THIS REVELATION SHOULD BRING THE CHURCH TO IT'S KNEES IN HUMBLE AND GRATEFUL REVERENCE. WE WERE TAGGED AND BAGGED FOR ETERNITY IN HELL (THAT IS WHAT WE DESERVE), DEAD SPIRITUALLY, AND ENEMIES OF GOD. BUT GOD, IN HIS INFINITE GRACE AND MERCY, SAVED US, THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF HIS OWN SON. JESUS IS THE SUBSTITUTE AND THE REDEEMER OF THE SINNER'S SOUL. PAID FOR WITH THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD FROM THE PERFECT GOD/MAN, OUR SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST. THAT BEING THE INDESPUTABLE TRUTH, JAMES URGES THE CHURCH TO EXAMINE OUR HEART IN TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS, OBEDIENCE, SPEECH, BEHAVIOR, DEEDS, AND GENEROSITY. WE PICK IT UP THIS WEEK IN CHAPTER 5. JAMES IS GIVING A WARNING TO THE WICKED

RICH. THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY FOR USING WEALTH SELFISHLY AND ACHIEVING WEALTH IN A SCANDALOUS WAY. JAMES ALSO WARNS THE WEALTHY CHRISTIAN. ARE YOU A GOOD STEWARD WITH WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU? OR DO YOU NOT REMEMBER THAT GOD HAS PROVIDED WHAT YOU POSSESS? SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE RICH? WHEN YOU HAVE MORE THAN YOU NEED TO LIVE. YOU ARE RICH. GOD MEETS AND SUPPLIES OUR NEEDS, ANYTHING ABOVE AND BEYOND THAT IS A BLESSING FROM HIM THAT WE MUST BE FAITHFUL WITH.

James 5:1 NIV

5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.

JAMES IS SPEAKING TO THE WEALTHY IN THE CHURCH WHO PROFESS FAITH IN CHRIST, BUT ARE NOT TRULY BORN AGAIN YOU HAVE SPENT YOUR LIFE CHASING THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR WITH NO REGARD FOR THE THINGS OF GOD (ETERNAL WEALTH), THEREFORE, JUDGEMENT IS COMING AND ETERNITY WILL BE MISERABLE FOR YOU

JAMES ISN'T CONDEMNING PEOPLE FOR BEING WEALTHY, BUT FOR MISUSING THEIR RESOURCES. THEY CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIANS, BUT MONEY IS THEIR GOD

1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain,

but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

GOOD STEWARDS ARE FAITHFUL AND GENEROUS WITH THEIR WEALTH, WHY? BECAUSE ETERNAL WEALTH IS THE REALITY OF TRUE RICHES AND TRUE LIFE

-SPURGEON- "THE ONLY THING THAT IS WORTH MY HAVING IS THAT WHICH I CAN HAVE FOREVER. THE ONLY THING THAT IS WORTH MY GRASPING IS THAT WHICH DEATH CANNOT TEAR OUT OF MY HAND"

James 5:2-3 NIV

²Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

3 THINGS JAMES POINTS OUT ABOUT THE PROMINENCE OF WEALTH. AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD (ROTTED), EXPENSIVE CLOTHES (MOTH EATEN), AND MONEY (CORRODED)

ONE DAY WE WILL STAND BEFORE GOD AND WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF OUR LIVES. THE WICKED RICH WHO SPENT THEIR LIVES COLLECTING THINGS, LIVING LAVISHLY, AND HOARDING

THEIR WEALTH WITHOUT ANY PURSUIT FOR GOD WILL EXPERIENCE HARSH JUDGEMENT FROM CHRIST ON THE LAST DAY. THAT VERY LIFESTYLE WILL TESTIFY AGAINST THEM WHEN GOD PLAYS THE TAPE BACK. IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR REPENTANCE. EAT YOUR FLESH LIKE FIRE IS ETERNAL DAMNATION

LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF JESUS AS HE EXPLAINS THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER...WHICH SEED ARE YOU?

Matthew 13:18-23 NIV

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

I PRAY FOR UNDERSTANDING ALL OF THE TIME CHURCH. FOR YOU AND FOR ME. DO WHAT THE WORD SAYS, DON'T BE DECIEVED BY NATURAL DESIRES OF THE FLESH

James 5:4 NIV

⁴ Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

THIS IS A CONDEMNING EXCLAMATION!! THE WICKED RICH PROFIT OFF THE BACKS OF HONEST WORKERS THEN BURN THEM ON PAYMENT. THE LORD HEARS THE CRY OF THE HONEST PERSON AND THE LORD WILL VINDICATE AND PUNISH ALL WHO LIVE LIKE THIS.

THIS IS COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT EVIL WILL BE DEALT WITH IN THE END.

Psalms 135:13-18

¹³ Your name, Lord, endures forever,
your renown, Lord, through all generations.

¹⁴ For the Lord will vindicate his people
and have compassion on his servants.

¹⁵ The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
made by human hands.

¹⁶ They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.

¹⁷ They have ears, but cannot hear,
nor is there breath in their mouths.

¹⁸ Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.

DO NOT WORSHIP AT THE ALTER OF RICHES

James 5:5-6 NIV

⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

PEOPLE THAT LIVE TO SATISFY THEIR WORLDY COMFORT AND DENY THE EXISTENCE OF GOD ARE LIKE COWS EATING UNTIL THEY GET FULL ON THE VERY SAME DAY THAT THEY WILL DIE

1 Timothy 6:9-10 NIV

⁹Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

IT IS OK TO HAVE WEALTH AND BE SMART WITH YOUR MONEY IT IS NOT OK IF IT KEEPS YOU FROM OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD. BE GENEROUS WITH WHAT YOU HAVE AND HOLD IT LOOSELY, BECAUSE OF YOUR FAITH IN GOD. GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL AND HE PROVIDES FOR HIS FAMILY. KEEP YOUR MIND ON THAT LAST DAY WHEN YOU STAND BEFORE CHRIST, NAKED, THEN LIVE YOUR LIFE ACCORDING TO THAT REVELATION

IF WE HAVE GOD IN ALL THINGS WHILE THEY ARE OURS, WE WILL HAVE ALL THINGS IN GOD WHEN THEY ARE TAKEN AWAY