

"True Faith and the Wealth of this World"**James 5:1-6****Part 1**

Introduction: Today as we return to our study of the letter of James we will be stepping into James 5. But before we get into this chapter there are some things we need to have brought to our attention. The bottom line is that we need the context of the letter right at the front of our minds in order to grasp what it is that James is saying here and who it is that James is speaking to here.

I again want to remind you that James was present when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. He listened the entire way through the sermon and he then brought back into this letter much of what he had heard. I told you before that there are many parallels in this letter and the Sermon on the Mount. In James 5:1-6 we are going to see one of the topics of the Sermon on the Mount.

Now as I told you before one of the thoughts which really had an impact upon James was the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

¹⁴ *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

When Jesus spoke these words James never forgot them. He remembered that Jesus said the Gate to eternal destruction is a wide Gate and there are many that will walk through that Gate. He also knew that the Gate to Eternal Life is very narrow and there are very few that will find their way through the narrow Gate.

There was something else which Jesus had said that James knew very well.

Luke 13:24

²⁴ *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

These also were the words of Jesus and He is telling His disciples here that it is a struggle for people to get through the Narrow Gate.

You see it is not just "saying a prayer", it is not "raising your hand in a church service", and it is not "filling out a decision card". It is about a person coming to the end of themselves and realizing their TRUE spiritual condition. It is realizing that on my own I can do nothing. It is completely abandoning all my efforts to please God and then turning from my old life to the New Life offered to me through Jesus Christ.

There are very few people that are willing to come to that place. You see it is a battle with the flesh. Many people have come to Jesus but have never entered through the Narrow Gate. They love this world, and they love the sin that is in their life and it is impossible to get through the Narrow Gate while clinging to the world or your sin.

Matthew 19:16-22

¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

¹⁷ And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

¹⁸ He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

¹⁹ Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

²⁰ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Here was a man who held 2 things in his hand which prevent him from coming through the Narrow Gate:

- 1. Self righteousness.**
- 2. Love for the world.**

In our day of easy believeism someone in the church would have sat this man down and gave him a prayer to say and then told him he was saved. That method has sent more people to hell than all other false teachings.

So, James has all of this in his mind and he knows the lives of the people he is writing to and I say this because he calls them out on certain things specifically. So as he looks into the lives of the people he is writing to there are those who lives do not reflect the life of Jesus Christ. There are things in their lives that James knows should not exist in the life of a believer.

Therefore he is very concerned about their salvation and so in this letter we have a series of tests for everyone to us to examine their lives so as to be sure they are saved.

Now with that said we have in **James 5:1-6** one of those tests and it is the test of wealth.

In chapter 4 James wrote concerning the believer's relationship with the world and he then rolled that very thought into the believer and the will of God.

Notice James 4:13-17

There were people who professed to be believers who were living for and controlled by personal gain who were mixed in with those who were true believers.

Now as we come to James 5 he will keep the same thoughts from chapter 4 and now he will address those who profess to be believers who are completely controlled by the riches of this world. Before we get into this passage let me show you something else that Jesus said.

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

²⁵ *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

²⁶ *But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

²⁷ *So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*

²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest:

With this parable Jesus tells us that among the believers there are unbelievers and that is the very thing that James is concerned about.

I. The Pronouncement of Judgment

Notice James 5:1a

We can see in this verse that James is addressing those who are rich. This would be people who live for the wealth of this world. They would be people whose lives are controlled by the desire to accumulate as much wealth as they can. These would be people who place work and money above all else.

Now these people were mixed in the church but they are people who are not saved.

Notice James 5:1

James calls on these people to weep and howl. The word "weep" means "to cry" and the word "howl" means "to cry out in a very loud voice". With the use of both of these words James is calling on these people to GRIEVE DEEPLY.

But why were they to GRIEVE DEEPLY?

Notice James 5:1 again

Because of the miseries that would eventually come upon them. Now this raises another question, "What are the miseries that were going to come upon them?"

The answer may shock you but the miseries which were to come upon them were the sufferings of eternal damnation.

Listen to what James is saying! Those who are controlled by the riches of this world whose lives are built around material wealth are not saved!

Let me show you what Jesus said in Luke 12.

Luke 12:15-21

¹⁵ *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

¹⁶ *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:*

¹⁷ *And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*

¹⁸ *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*

¹⁹ *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*

²⁰ *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

²¹ *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

This is the very idea in the mind of James. James also knows that those who live for this world will one day find themselves in a place of great regret.

These people James is speaking of will one day stand before God and on that day their riches will mean absolutely nothing.

Luke 16:19-26

¹⁹ *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

²⁰ *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

²¹ *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

²² *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

²³ *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

²⁴ *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

²⁵ *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

²⁶ *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

Luke 6:24-25

²⁴ *But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.*

²⁵ *Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

Conclusion:

Let me just say that it is not a sin to be rich. Many who are rich are believers who are used of God in mighty ways. So James is not saying that it is wrong to be wealthy.

He is talking about people who are controlled by wealth. When I say "controlled" I mean that in a literally. You see what happens with many people is they allow money to become their god and the demonic spirits attach to the idol and they become controlled by the demons as the demons work through the money.

"Strolling along the banks of a pond, Gotthold observed a pike basking in the sun, and so pleased with the sweet soothing rays as to forget itself and the danger to which it was exposed. Thereupon a boy approached, and with a snare formed of a horsehair, and fastened to the end of a rod, which he skillfully cast over his head, pulled it in an instant out of the water. "Ah me!" said Gotthold with a deep sigh, "how evidently do I here behold shadowed forth the danger of my poor soul! When the beams of temporal prosperity play upon us to our heart's content, so grateful are they to corrupt flesh and blood, that, immersed in sordid pleasure, luxury, and security, we lose all sense of spiritual danger, and all thought of eternity. In this state, many are, in fact, suddenly snatched away to the eternal ruin of their souls."

1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶ *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

⁷ *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

⁸ *And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

⁹ *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

¹⁰ *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*