

"True Faith and the Wealth of this World"**James 5:1-6****Part 2**

Introduction: We have been working our way through the book of James now for quite some time. The purpose of James writing this book is really twofold.

1. **James instructs his readers in practical living.**
2. **James gives to us a series of tests through which we can look at our lives in order to be sure our faith is real.**

As I have told you many times James was present at the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus preached. In that sermon when Jesus reached the end He presented His listeners with a decision they needed to make.

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.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned about being religious but not saved. James picked up on that and it became a great concern with him. That is exactly what we see as we approach James 5.

Notice James 5:1

Here we can see who it is that James is addressing within this section. James is addressing those who are rich and are not saved. We know this because James speaks of the judgment that **SHALL** come upon them. He does not say that it **MIGHT** come upon them but it **SHALL** come upon them.

These were people who were controlled by the riches and the wealth of this world.

But there is something else here that I want you to see about these people. They were mixed in with those who were true believers. James addresses them directly knowing that they will be there when the letter is read. He does not write and instruct the true

believers to go out and tell these people what shall come upon them. He addresses them directly.

Now let me enlighten you on something here; these people desired to have a place in God's family. That is why they were within this group of believers. They desired to have eternal life but they were not willing to come to God on His terms. They desired to come to God on their own terms and for that reason they were RELIGIOUS but they were not saved. Let me show you what had happened.

Let me show you the Words of Jesus when He interpreted the Parable of the Sower.

Luke 8:11-14

¹¹ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

¹² Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

¹³ They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

¹⁴ And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

These people desired to be saved but they were not willing to turn their back on the wealth of this world. They desired to live for the world and to live for God. But that does not work. When we come to Jesus we must be willing to turn our back upon this world.

Let me give you an example of how it is impossible to live for the world and to follow God.

The story of Noah and the ark are a picture of salvation. The ark is a wonderful picture of the salvation we have in Jesus Christ. Now in order for Noah to enter into the ark he had to turn his back upon the world. He could not live with one foot in the world and one foot in the ark. He would have drowned. He was either all in or he was all out. There was no middle ground.

Application:

It is the very same way today. When a person comes to Jesus Christ he or she must be willing turn their back on the old life and surrender over to the new life in Christ.

People who say they are saved but they are caught up in the wealth and the ways of this world are completely deceived. When a person is truly saved they will battle with the temptations of the world but they will not live a life sold out to the world. They will desire to walk in obedience to God's Word and they will come under great conviction when they are lured into the world.

There is another verse that comes to mind when I think of these people whom James is addressing.

James 1:22

²² *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

The people James was writing to were not controlled by the WORD they were controlled by the WORLD! Therefore they were deceived into thinking they were saved but they were only RELIGIOUS.

I. The Pronouncement of Judgment**Notice James 5:1**

We looked at this verse the last time we were together but I need to just refresh your memory on what James is saying. James calls on them to repent in Godly sorrow because of the direction they are headed. Here in this verse James is warning them about the coming judgment in which they will stand before God.

The riches will bring no comfort when the Day of Judgment comes.

Application:

Let me just remind you if you are someone who places all of your trust in the wealth of this world. If you die without Jesus Christ in your life all of your wealth will mean nothing. It will bring you no comfort at all.

Illustration:

I remember hearing a story many years ago about a very wealthy man who passed away. His attorney sent letters to all the family announcing that on a certain day there would be a gathering at the home place and at that gathering there would be the reading of the will. When they all arrived there was one of the family members who was very anxious and as

the attorney entered the room he could not help but to shout out, "How much did he leave?" The attorney quickly responded, "He left it all. He took nothing with him."

II. Their sins exposed.

As James moves on in these verses he will point to the sins of these rich people.

1. The sin of hoarding wealth.

Notice James 5:2-3a

In the days which James lived there were 3 ways in which wealthy people invested their wealth.

- a. Grain
- b. Clothing
- c. Coins

I believe that James has these very 3 in mind:

Notice James 5:2a again.

The word "corrupted" here means "rotted". This would be a reference to their storage of grain.

Notice James 5:2 again.

Their garments were moth eaten. This spoke of investing in the garments.

Notice James 5:3a

The word "cankered" means "corroded". Now we need to understand that in James' day their coins were a mixture of gold or silver and also corrosive metal. So it was possible for their coins to deteriorate over time if they were placed in storage.

Now let me get to the main thought which James has here. James was reminding these rich people who were hoarding the grain, the garments, and the gold that it would not last forever.

Notice James 5:3b

James tells them that the "rust" of their wealth will one day be a witness against them and it would eat their flesh as it were fire.

This makes me ask, "What is James referring to here?"

I believe James is speaking of the torment that will come upon these people when they find themselves in hell. Let me show you.

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.

Here in the account of the rich man in hell we see that Abraham reminds him of the wealth he had in his life on the earth. This man would never forget that he had traded the fleeting wealth of this world for eternal life. For all eternity this man will regret the choice he had made to seek the world's wealth instead of seeking a relationship with God. The torment of his memory would be that which would add to his misery in hell.

I believe this is the very thought that James has in mind. The torment of remembering that you traded eternal life for worldly wealth that did not last will be that which contributes to your misery if you end up in hell.

Application to the believer:

James was addressing the unbelievers in this text but there is a very important application for the believer here. Let me show you where James gathered these thoughts from.

Matthew 6:19-20

¹⁹ *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

²⁰ *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

We are to use our money to invest in eternity. That is what it means to lay up treasure in heaven. When we do this our investments are secure. Every dollar invested in God's work will bring huge dividends in eternity.

Now Jesus goes on to warn about greed in the life of the believer.

Matthew 6:21-23

²¹ *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

²² *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*

²³ *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

The "single" eye is the eye that does not look in 2 directions. In other words it is focused upon eternity and living for Jesus Christ.

The "evil" eye is the greedy eye.

Proverbs 28:22

²² *He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*

Deuteronomy 15:9

⁹ Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and **thine eye be evil** against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

Let me go back to Matthew again.

Matthew 6:23

²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

When greed enters into the life of the believer it affects our entire life. It places us in spiritual darkness.

Conclusion:

1 Timothy 6:6-11

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.

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.