

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

Introduction: We are coming back to the book of James this morning and we are again in James 5:1-6 and today will be the conclusion of this section. In this section James is addressing the rich who were mixed in with the believers but the rich addressed here were not saved. They were religious but they were not willing to come to God on His terms.

Over the past weeks I have told you that it is not a sin to have wealth. It is a sin to worship wealth and to allow the wealth to control you. Let me show you what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷ *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*

¹⁸ *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;*

¹⁹ *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

In 1 Timothy 6:18 I have underlined 2 words that are very important.

Distribute – This word means to be "liberal" with what we have. In other words Paul is calling on those who are rich to be liberal with the wealth they have been given.

Communicate – This means we are to be "willing to share".

Paul tells Timothy when we share that which we have been given then we are investing in eternity.

The end of verse 19 is very interesting. In the old manuscripts the verse reads a little different.

They read like this "that which is really life".

It is speaking of eternal life and its joys being solid and enduring. Paul is telling us that we are to invest the riches into that which counts for eternity for the life that awaits us is **true life**. Notice what the Psalmist says.

Psalm 16:11

¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Life on this earth cannot be considered "the best" life. Because all that we have here will one day be gone.

James 4:14

¹⁴ Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Now let us get back to James again.

I. The Pronouncement of Judgment.

Notice James 5:1

James opened this section with a warning of the coming judgment upon these people. This verse was to help them to see the danger of the position they were standing in.

He then went on to expose the sins of these people.

II. Their sins exposed.

1. The Sin of hoarding wealth.

Notice James 5:2-3

2. The Sin of withholding wages.

Notice James 5:4

This brings us to where we are in our study. The next sin which James points to is:

3. The Sin of Self Indulgence

Notice James 5:5

⁵ *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

Let me define some words in this verse so that we can understand what it is that James is saying here.

"Pleasure" means **"to live in softness"**.

"Wanton" means **"to be given over to pleasure"**.

"Nourished" means **"to fatten"**.

Now let me pull all of this together. These people whom James was addressing were hoarding their wealth and they were withholding wages from the part time workers and let me remind you they were doing it by fraud. This meant it was done in a deceptive way. They would claim to not have the money to pay the workers so they sent them home with very little. But the truth was they did have the money and instead of paying the workers they spent it on themselves to live a soft life of indulgence.

They knew the needs of others but they were unwilling to help because they desired to have more for themselves.

Now please allow me to explain something to you. It is not a sin to enjoy what the Lord has given to you. James is not saying that it was a sin to enjoy what they had. The problem was they had no concern for other people. They would not pay the workers and they submerged themselves into a "PLUSH" lifestyle.

It reminds me of what Amos wrote in his letter.

Amos 6:1, 4-6

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

⁴ *That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;*

⁵ *That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David;*

⁶ *That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: **but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.***

The end of that verse is a play on words. The people Amos wrote to were just like the brothers of Joseph who threw him in a pit and then sat down to eat as if there was no problem. There was a problem and it was that their brother was suffering but they were too concerned with filling their bellies.

Genesis 37:23-25a

²³ *And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;*

²⁴ *And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.*

²⁵ *And they sat down to eat bread:*

Let me show you what Isaiah wrote about certain people in Israel.

Isaiah 5:11-12

¹¹ *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!*

¹² *And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: **but they regard not the work of the LORD,** neither consider the operation of his hands.*

Let us now get back to James.

Notice James 5:5

There is a phrase here that I want you to see.

"ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter..."

This means they had "fattened their hearts as in a day of slaughter" - They were like a stalled ox waiting to be killed. Completely ignorant of what was about to come upon them. The Day of Judgment is fast approaching.

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

This is the very judgment which James is speaking about.

Now here is the point that I want you to see here: they were so caught up in the wealth of the world that they were blinded to the Day of Judgment that would come upon them. Their desire for the wealth and the gathering of the wealth had blinded them concerning that which was important in life.

Maybe they believed their wealth was a sign that God was pleased with them. If that was the situation they were wrong!

Application:

Maybe that is the way you believe. Maybe you have much wealth and you have been led to believe it is a sign that God is pleased with you. Let me show you something.

Romans 2:1-4

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

³ *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

⁴ *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

The longsuffering and the goodness of God which He shows to you is meant to bring you to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

It is not a sign that God is pleased with you but it is a sign that He is patiently waiting for you to come to Him on His terms.

There was yet another sin which James pointed out.

4. The Sin of Persecution.

Notice James 5:6

⁶ *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

Here we see who the people were that they were oppressing and persecuting. It was the "just" or the "believers".

They were taking advantage of the righteous and the righteous were not evening resisting them. Let me show you what was happening.

James 2:4-6

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

⁵ *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

⁶ *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

Here at the end of verse 6 we see what was happening. The rich were dragging the believers into the court system and there they were "judicially killing them". They were taking everything they had.

Conclusion:

James started this section to warn the rich of the coming judgment. He spoke of the judgment as a sure thing which was coming on the rich and there is a very good reason for that.

Their lifestyle was NOT the lifestyle of a believer.

1. They hoarded wealth.
2. They took advantage of their hired workers.
3. They lived an indulgent lifestyle.
4. They persecuted the righteous.

These 4 sins were solid evidence that they were never saved. They may have been in the church services. They may have placed money in the collection plate. They may have prayed. They may have spoke openly about Jesus Christ.

But none of these would save them.

What about you? What are you trusting in to get you to heaven?

- ✓ There is only one way to heaven and is through Jesus Christ.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

- ✓ You are a sinner and God requires that all your sin must be paid for.

Romans 6:23a

²³ For the wages of sin is death;

- ✓ You cannot earn God's forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- ✓ God provided a way for you to be saved.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

- ✓ When you are truly saved your life will be changed.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.