

James 5:1-8
April 16, 2023
Jason Huffman

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about standing before the Lord? What is most exciting? What makes you nervous?
2. Have you known anyone that invested in the kingdom? What did that look like?
3. Why do most Christians forget we are in a spiritual battle? How can we invest to support the high cost of combat?
4. What are specific ways you can make better investments in His kingdom?

Back in James: BIG IDEA:

James is the building inspector of our spiritual home.
His building code will help us stand when storms come and the Lord returns.

James' brother, Jesus said, our lives are like a house...

Those who build on the sand are like those who...

... hear His word but do NOT obey it.

They were building in the sense of hearing...

...but they had a weak foundation in a sense of doing.

However... those who hear His word and obey it...

...they are like those who built their house on the rock...

...When the storms and floods come, which they always do...

...the house will stand.

Last week, we talked about the women at the empty tomb.

They were puzzled, but they didn't run. They stood.

And as they stood, they received revelation and then they ran.

They didn't run away as a reaction to their fear and confusion...
...They ran away as a response to the revelation...
...AND responsibility they had with what they knew.

Having done all to stand is our goal as Christian soldiers.
...Standing is the final pose of the victor...
...who has conquered his enemy.

BESIDES being able to stand in the face of the storm...
...We must also stand in the face of God's judgment.

The Bible says we will all stand before the Lord.

Without Christ, we stand in our sin.

The wages of sin is death and the judgement of God is just.
Those who do not choose to be forgiven and reconciled with God
will continue to be separated from God and all good for eternity.

For those in Christ Jesus...

We stand in His righteousness -Our sins are forgiven & paid for.
...But our works will be judged.

This is the "Bema seat" of Christ.

The Bible teaches that God is a rewarder...
...and to reward, He must judge and "assess".

"A bema was a raised platform on which judges sat to view athletic games. Their job was to make sure contestants followed the rules and to present awards to the victors."

Even the women at the tomb, were asked...
...Don't you remember what He said? As if they should have.

II Cor 5:9-11 9Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

In school, did you ever ask the question...

...“Is this on the test?”

Why do we want to know?

Because...the test tells me it matters.

BIG IDEA 2: Your life and how you invest it matters.

Your life is the test.

Our motives will be weighed.

Our investments will be reviewed.

Our words will be remembered.

Our actions will be examined.

And our lives are not just our own...

We are stewards of the lives we have been given.

BIG IDEA3 Our life is meant to be invested in God's kingdom.

It is an arrogant and foolish thing to think, this is MY life.

You and I did nothing to be alive...

...Life is a gift that we have been given by God.

...How we steward this gift matters to the One who gave it to you.

For the house to stand the storm and the final inspection...

James speaks with direct and unapologetic truth about...

TITLE: Kingdom Investing

This morning will be a sharp sword swung in our direction...

...But remember...

- The sword of the Word of God is not to harm, but heal.
- It is not to cut us down, but cause us to rise up.
- It is not to condemn, but to set us free.

James comes hard at the rich in light of all of this.

This is not about spiritualizing things like read ur bible and pray.
It is investing your time, talent and treasure in God's kingdom.

Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

V1 NLT Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you.

There is a debate on who this part is addressed to...

...Is this the rich Christian or the rich unbeliever?

Because of the tone and context...

...I tend to think it is the rich unbeliever...

...But that does not mean that we cannot learn from this section.

...So let's gain some wisdom from this rebuke...

The rich are often seen as untouchable.

They are not effected, impacted, or concerned.

They don't care because they don't need to care.

James says, wrong...weep and groan for the troubles ahead.

There is no groan in school like the groan of a pop quiz.

Some students know the pain of not being prepared and moan.

For other students, they simply get their #2 pencil out and jump in.

1. Invest like everything is on the test.

Live in such a way that you need not be afraid...Be prepared
“A test is always easy when you know all the answers.”

Live like you always have a hot mic.

Live like you know the auditors are going to check it out.

If we KNOW we will all stand before the Lord...

...let's live in such a way there will be no shame only reward.

The judgement of God is piercing and pure.

He sees the actions, the motives, the intentions, the heart.

NEXT...very practically...

2. Invest in what can be used

The issue that James is bringing to their attention is **hoarding**.

...We have all seen those crazy hoarding shows!

How much do we need?

How much should we have?

Maybe not more than you can use?

Their wealth is rotting away.

They have more clothes than they can wear.

They have more gold and silver than they can spend.

...And it just sits there.

What good do we do with what we have?

How do we invest in things that don't corrode?

The thing is silver and gold don't rust or corrode.

...But this is not just about precious metals...
...it is a metaphor for a selfish, wasteful mentality.

The wealth is doing nothing but deteriorating (or depreciating)...
...It is all going to burn...
...and if that is where we put our hope...
...we will be burned as well.

This is direct opposition to what Jesus taught in Matthew 6.
19“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What Jesus taught is not just good advice...it is what matters.
...it is what is on the test...

AND when you do...you will build a strong house...
...and you will make an impact in His kingdom.

So outside of the hoarding issue is timing.

When people talk about investments, timing is a big deal.
It is not time to invest in stocks and houses and cars and luxury
“You have heaped up treasure in the last days.”
3. Invest like we are at war.

The “last days” is a term used for the time after Christ has come.
James is saying...
...you have stored up more than you need...
...AND you live in the last days.

Jesus could return at any moment...

...These 2000 years are the last days...
...and we are in a spiritual battle.

In times of war, people do not hoard...
...they give to the cause.

“During the spring of 1942, a rationing program was established that set limits on the amount of gas, food and clothing consumers could purchase. Families were issued ration stamps that were used to buy their allotment of everything from meat, sugar, fat, butter, vegetables and fruit to gas, tires, clothing and fuel oil.

The United States Office of War Information released patriotic posters in which Americans were urged to **“Do with less—so they’ll have enough”**

Meanwhile, individuals and communities conducted drives for the collection of scrap metal, aluminum cans and rubber, all of which were recycled and used to produce armaments. Individuals purchased U.S. war bonds to help pay for the high cost of armed conflict.”

We are in a spiritual armed conflict...
This is time to invest in ministry, churches, people, the kingdom.

These are the things that will last.
These are worthwhile investments that will pay off in the end.

After Hoarding and Timing, the third issue is Acquiring...
4. Invest with integrity

4 Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

So the indictment is not only hoarding in the last days...

...They have not paid people a fair wage.

The obvious and clear application is...

...if you oversee employees...

...they should be paid fairly.

God rewards those who serve and so should we.

And even more...they kept it back by **fraud**.

They used some loophole, some trick to avoid what was right.

It may be legal, but it was not just.

And so the Lord of the Hosts has heard their cry.

There is a similar passage in Isaiah 5:7 where Isaiah says:

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts *is* the house of Israel,

And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.

He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;

For righteousness, but behold, a cry *for help*.

The Lord looked for righteousness, but he found crying for help.

No one should be crying for help that work for us.

We should be doing what is right and good for those under us.

James goes on...

5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. **6** You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

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

slaughter. 6 You have condemned and killed innocent people, who do not resist you.

5. Invest in His Kingdom not yours

The language here is unique.

“In luxury translates a verb (tryphaō) not found elsewhere in the New Testament but points to **extravagant comfort, stressing the softness of luxury;**

you have lived in pleasure (spatalaō;) does suggest the breaking down of divine restraints, going beyond pleasure to vice.

Together the words offer a picture of a life without self-denial, not necessarily corrupt in every way, but certainly offering no resistance to sin where there is promise of comfort and enjoyment.

These people don't invest in God's kingdom.

They invest in their own and their own excess judges them.

James reminds us of one of his brother's teachings...

In Luke 16, Jesus tells of Lazarus and the rich man.

This rich man lived just as James described.

Jesus said he “fared sumptuously every day while a beggar ate the crumbs from his table.

They both die.

The rich man “being in torment in Hades” cried out have mercy and send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue.

The interesting thing is before Lazarus desired to be fed and got nothing from the rich man but crumbs.

And now, the rich man desires to have a drink of water from Lazarus, but Lazarus can't give him anything.

There is a time when we can do something.

And we should not just be living for ourselves.

We will end with the next couple of verses
(and why I think the rich are unbelievers)

7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.
See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth,
waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter
rain. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming
of the Lord is at hand.

Jesus will return.
The judge does come.
Our cries will be heard.

After everything is said and done, my prayer is we will stand with
Christ as victors unashamed with a well invested life.

When God looks at our portfolio, He says,
Well invested my good and faithful steward.

Romans 14:10 "...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat
of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee
shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

So...If we can invest in such a way to stand in victory now...
...we will be able to kneel in worship then.

And the crowns that we gain we give them back to Him.
Even in heaven, we acquire to give back to Him.
What a joy to be able to have something to give back to Him who
has given us everything.

This church has a legacy of giving.

May our hearts continue to live out that legacy.
It is our Kingdom Assignment.

Wealth...It's earthly cushioning dulls the sense of spiritual urgency

Worldly wealth is an area of high risk in the battle to walk humbly with God. It is hard to be rich and lowly at the same time. The use of money and the life of self-pleasing are never far apart.

Motyer, J. Alec. The Message of James (The Bible Speaks Today Series)