

LAST DAYS INSTRUCTION (James 5:1-9) – Pastor Al Pittman – 04/30/2023

Men Hate Instructions! (GPS, putting together Christmas toys, leaky shower). Within our text, *for both male and female*, James provides instructions which enable us to live an effective Christian life, in these “last days.”

“Last days,” or “end times,” is *also* referred to as the “age of grace.” That is, the age between the resurrection of Christ and His second advent, His return to “judge” the earth. (Rev.19).

The disciples believed in the soon return of Christ. In (v.9b) James declared. “Behold the Judge is standing at the door!” If Christ was standing at the door “back then,” He must be turning the “doorknob,” today!

During the Jesus Revolution, the “soon return of Christ,” was paramount to thousands of young people being “converted” to Christ. There was an “urgency” associated with the gospel message!

Today, *however*, “apathy” seems to have replaced the “enthusiasm,” regarding Christ “soon return.” Back then Andrea Crouch sang “Soon and very soon,” Larry Norman, said “I wish we’d all been ready,” and Jermaine Hawkins sang, “I’m going up yonder!”

Instructions from the word readily embraced because we believed, “Jesus is coming soon!” In Matthew 24 Jesus spoke about “signs” regarding the “last days” and the “rapture,” (the sudden snatching away) of His church, (1 Thess. 4).

There He spoke *also* about an “evil servant.” The servant’s master had gone away but promised to return. The “evil servant,” *however*, started doubting his master’s return. He said in His heart, “My master is delaying His coming.” Thus, he began to “...beat” his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.” (Matthew 24:49b)

The master suddenly appeared on a day the “evil servant” was not looking for him. And that “servant” was punished, the master then appointed “...his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!” (Matthew 24:51b) It wasn’t heaven!

Thus, let us approach the instructions we find within our text with an obedient mind and an “urgency,” in light of the Lord’s soon return! In the apostles closing remarks, *in the Book of James*, we find 8 instructional points.

(v.1-6) The first point is, **I. Trust Christ, not cash – (v.1- 6)** Here James “rebukes” the rich, for placing their trust in “fraudulent” wealth!

(v.1-6) Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 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.” 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. 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. There is nothing wrong with being rich, but when our love for money is greater than our love for people, it becomes “idolatry.” The people James is addressing here are the arrogant and abusive “rich and powerful,” who have come into the church.

He calls them to “repent,” of their “idolatry,” in light of the *impending* “miseries,” which will soon come upon them. Could be – warning rich Jewish believers – “destruction” of Jerusalem, in 70 A.D., by the Romans. James died five years before this event in 62 A.D.

More likely, his warning was for the “rich” in general, both Jews and Gentiles. Their “greed” and “materialism” had provided for them a “pseudo- sense” of “security!”

(v.5) “You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury...” However, “true rest,” *peace*, cannot be found in our “greed,” only in God!

(Ecclesiastes 5:12) The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.

The worship of riches can rob you of sleep!” Because by nature “riches” can sprout wings overnight and “fly away!”

(Proverbs 23:5) Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

I was reading, according to Fidelity Investments,

“Retirement account balances loss nearly one quarter (23%) of their value in 2022.” - Fidelity Investments – Your 401(k) can “fly away!” Keep you up all night if that’s where your “treasure” is! Jesus said.

(Matthew 6:19-21) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

There is nothing wrong with having money, but our heart” needs to be in the right place, “heaven!” When our heart is with our treasure is in heaven, we have no need to “defraud” people.

Why? Because we are already “rich” in Christ!

(Proverbs 10:22) The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.

Secondly, in (v.7, 8) James’ instructs the church to **II. Be Patient – (v.7, 8)**

(v.7-8) 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.

As a believer, it’s hard to “be patient” when we forget the “Lord is coming!” Thus, we start relying upon our ability to “make things happen!” There’s nothing wrong with “*planning your work and working your plan.*”

But I’ve learned, *when my plans hit a “snag,”* to wait “patiently” on the Lord, rather than “pushing harder!”

The “farmer” must be “patient” in order to reap a harvest! Farmers do not plant seeds and expect a “harvest” “next week”.

God will not forget your “seed!” **(Galatians 6:9-10) And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

In these volatile times let us not forget our “Provider!” In **Genesis 22:14** Abraham called the place, Mount Moriah, where he brought his son Isaac to be sacrificed, **Jehovah-Jireh – “The Lord Will Provide.”** *Prophetically, it would be the very mount, upon which the temple would be built and Christ “crucified,” for the sins of the world!*

To be patient, we must “let patience” work! **(James 1:4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.** **To “let patience” is to make room for God’s will to be done.**

The work, *the Spirit desires to perform,* can be accomplished if we will “*establish (fix firmly) our hearts.*” Where? In “grace!” **(Hebrews 13:9b) “For it is good that the heart be established by grace...”**

We can “patiently” wait upon the Lord’s return with our hearts “firmly fixed” upon His “*all-sufficient*” grace!

The third instruction James gives here is, **III. Cease Grumbling – (v.9) Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!** **Grumble – stenazo: a sigh, groan, grudge, grief.** The “Judge,” (Jesus) is “standing at the door!”

When I was a child, and my brothers and our sister knew “dad” was at the door,” coming home from work, all “grumbling,” *whether with mom or each other*, “ceased!” We knew after a hard day’s work dad did not want to “hear it!” Any “little” thing could set the brother off!

If we believe the Judge is at the door, that He could come at any moment, it should change our behavior toward one another, in the church! But the fact that it does not, is evidence we believe the “judge” is a “joke!” My daddy was no “joke,” and neither is the “judge,” Jesus!

(1 Peter 4:8-10) And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

God’s grace is “manifold grace,” applicable in “multiple” situations, without fail! Grumbling about one another, is to judge God’s grace insufficient and irrelevant within our relationships!

(Hebrews 10:24-25) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

CONCLUSION: The next 5 areas of instruction include *Perseverance, Integrity, Caring, Prayer, and Restoration.*

Today we are witnessing “prophecy” unfolding before our eyes! As we see the *prophetic* stage being set, for the “invasion” of Israel – from the “kings of the east,” (China and its allies) – **Revelation 16** – and from the north, by Russia (by Rosh ancient name referring to Russia), mentioned in - **Ezekiel 38, 39.**

In between now and that “prophetic invasion,” I believe scripture teaches, we will see the “rapture” of the church, from earth! **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 24:36-44.**

“Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King!” Let’s get ready with our *confidence* in “Christ and not cash,” with “patience,” and “no grumbling” against one another!

(2 Peter 3:11-12a) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.”