

James Part 11

- In the first 6 verses of Chapter 5, James takes up the case of those, perhaps in his congregation, who have been dealt with unjustly. He scorns the abuser, the wealthy who use their power to exploit the innocent and take advantage of them. Here James gives the church an eternal perspective and how God sees the injustice and will bring judgement.

James 5

1 Now listen, you rich people, **weep and wail** because of the misery that is coming on you. **2** Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. **3** Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. **4** Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. **5** You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. **6** You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

Vs. 1

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.

“He speaks to them not simply as rich but as wicked, not only wallowing in wealth, but abusing it to pride, luxury, oppression, and cruelty.” (Poole)

- Here James speaks to the unjust “rich” as he did to the “double minded / sinners” in - Chapter 4

James 4:8-10

8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9 Grieve, mourn and wail.** Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- Both the “Double-minded, Sinner” and the unjust “Rich” are given an appeal from James to first feel the weight of their wrong doing and second turn by (**weeping and wailing**) before God so they might find mercy. As he says
- 4:10 “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”
- 5:11 “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”

So for both the sinner and the unjust rich there is opportunity for redemption. This is not a notice of condemnation but a pathway for salvation...

Quick Question:

James says in **Ch. 4** “Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.”

Then in Ch. 5 weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.

What is absolutely essential for these things to happen?

- #1 The Holy Spirit. (This is a beautiful indication that God is working)
- #2 The recipients willingness to allow Him to work.

Note: If you ever see someone repent and turn to God like this you know God is at work.

Tears are an indicator of life. When the Holy Spirit gives you tears it is because something that has grown cold is coming back to life again.

The message of James to the Rich here is two fold:

1. Their earthly possessions will not last

Vs. 2,3

2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. **3** Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

2. God will deal with the Unjust, Greedy person

Vs. 4

Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

- The Hebrew term used here for Lord Almighty is better translated Lord of Hosts, which means “the Lord of armies,” especially in the sense of heavenly and angelic armies. It describes God as the warrior, the commander-in-chief of all heavenly armies.
- James keeps with this theme from Chapter 4 that God is a Warrior who opposes (stands against) the proud, but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6
- Now the Lord of Armies, hears the cry of the honest worker who was dealt with unjustly.
- Verse 7-9 James turns his attention to the faithful.

Vs. 7-9

7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. **8** You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. **9** Don’t grumble against

one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

- We serve a God who keeps good record...
- So after James rebukes the unjust rich, he reassures the believer and says, be patient...
- The Lord is coming, be patient...
- As a matter of fact, in your patience, don't you blow it either...

Patient:

To be of a long spirit, not to lose heart.

To persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles.

To be patient in bearing offense.

To be mild and slow in avenging

Slow to anger, slow to punish

- Be Patient even as the farmer waits for the land to yield its crop...
- Be Patient even as if waiting for the autumn and spring rains...
- Be Patient and stand firm...

James then gives these believers their own warning

Vs. 9

Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Grumble: Grudge, sign or groan

- James warns us not to grumble because the Judge is standing at the door. The one who will judge the unjust rich will also judge the grumbler.

- James implores the believer not to allow the same wicked bile that sickens the heart of the unjust to infect them. They are to close the finish line to blow it with this kind of foolishness.

There is an old Story told by John Newton called “The Broken Carriage” that illustrates how something like grumbling can derail us from what God has given us.

Picture a man, on his way to claim his million. Riding along in his carriage. Oooh, there it is. Now he’s got the city in his sights. He grins. Almost there, he thinks. So close.

But at mile marker one—he hits a sinkhole of a pothole. The carriage shakes. Underneath him groans, wobbles, quakes. The wheel falls off. On the outskirts of the town where his fortune awaits, his carriage breaks.

He jumps down to inspect his broken wheel and that’s where things go wrong. Because this man doesn’t reason right. He doesn’t think, It’s only a mile to town. I’ll walk in and stake my claim.

Instead he stumbles to town, complaining to himself and to all who pass by as he goes:

My wheel fell off. My carriage is broken.

The Journey in the Carriage = Life

The Broken Wheel = Unexpected hurts that come

The Million = What Paul calls our inheritance

The City = Heaven

The Last Mile = That’s what’s left on your journey

- How foolish to allow a broken wheel on a carriage that will soon not be needed to distract us from our promised inheritance. All the man in the story has to do is get to the castle and all will be his; that old carriage will no longer be needed.

Vs. 10-12

10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **11** As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

“Sometimes, indeed, the very hope of the coming of the Lord has seemed to increase impatience rather than patience... Oh, to be patient in fellowship with God!” (Morgan)

From Vs. 7 to Vs. 10 James has said the word patience four times...
The answer to their suffering and unjust treatment is be patient...

James gives two examples of Patience:

- James reminds us the Prophets faced suffering with perseverance.
- Job also persevered and was blessed two fold.

Vs. 12

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.

- In true proverbial form James adds this bit of wisdom
- Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No...
- NKJV says: “lest you fall into judgment.”

“This motivates us all the more to prepare for that judgment by our speaking with integrity.” (Guzik)

James ends his letter with this encouragement to pray:

Vs. 13-19

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. **16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. **18** Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, **20** remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Closing: