

Sermon Notes: The Blessed Man and Patient Suffering

Text: James 5:1-12 — *5:1 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. 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. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.*

Review: See back

Take Away: *Our confession must match our actions in the little things so that we are strengthened to be ready for the bigger tests to come in the future. We should be mindful of the sin of inconstancy which is always the greatest temptation when persecution comes. Will we be ready to lay our lives down for Christ now in the small things, so that we are strengthened if the true test of our confession comes in the future.*

- I. What does God Think About the Wicked Elite?:** (References: Matthew 24:1–3, 32-34; Matthew 23:25; Proverbs 11:5-6; Leviticus 19:13; Acts 5:1-12; James 1:19–20)

- II. What is the Response for Faithful Christians?:** (References: Ephesians 4:26–27; Psalm 139:19–22; Luke 6:27–28; Romans 12:17–21; Philippians 4:5)

- III. How do we Become Constant When we are Afraid?:** (References: James 1:12; Revelation 2:10; Job 42:12–17; Romans 8:18; Acts 7:55–56)

Review of James 4:1-6

1. **There was a second area of disconnect** that James found from the preaching of the false teachers within the Jerusalem church. James moves to address those _____ who seem to have forgotten how their confession affects their actions. He quotes them in their blindness that they have forgotten that the Lord is the Lord of _____ and _____. He owns every second and every square inch of the universe. How could they possibly think that their business plans somehow fall outside of God's authority? They confess Him as the Creator on the Lord's Day, and then live as if that isn't true the rest of the week.
2. **James moved to correct their blindness in two different ways** by pointing out that they do not know what will even happen tomorrow, let alone a whole year's trip to such and such a place for business. It is God's great blessing of the _____ of the universe where we too can slip into a similar pitfall. We can assume that the blessings we have received have come by our own hands and not by the gracious gift of God. James again warns that such actions, if practiced consistently, would reveal misaligned loves and even _____. Secondly, James reminds these merchants that their lives are but a vapor—here today and gone tomorrow. By looking at our deaths, James wants us to live our lives _____...what is really most important in life? Our confession and allegiance to Christ, or plans in time and space that are but a vapor in the wind.
3. **Lastly, James said that their blindness is really arrogance** and is a serious threat. Such an attitude can lead to the hardening of our hearts in one of two ditches, _____ or _____. In worry we ring our hands and turn over the mill of our fears not truly believing that God upholds the universe by the word of His power. We don't expect good from Him so we believe we must find a solution. Instead we should go to Him in prayer. Or, we can fall into flippancy where we live our lives as if nothing else matters besides our own plans. There is no significance to our actions, therefore I'm just going to look out for number 1. Such a one does not see that the Lord of Space and Time is also a judge of all things. Instead, we ought to _____ ourselves and look to Christ's command to trust Him for today, for He cares for us. We know that He cares because He entered space and time in the incarnation to reconcile His people back to Himself by the cross.

Questions for the Table:

1. Do you have righteous or unrighteous wrath for the wicked elites in our time? How do you know?
2. How should you think about the enemies of God? (Psalm 139; Luke 6:27–36)
3. How should the threat of God's judgement coming upon the wicked cause the church to consider her own actions? (see 5:9)
4. What is inconstancy? Are there areas of your life where you are inconstant?
5. What is James' exhortation for Christians who are facing persecution? Should they join the Zealot militia?
6. How do you do when the pressure is turned up? Are you one to act more Christian or less?
7. How are you doing with your verbal commitments/promises lining up with your actions? Does your yes mean yes and your no mean no?
8. Does the fear of man cause you to be wishy-washy? Does fear lead you to *inconstancy*? What will you do to fix those areas of your life that fall into this weakness? (Psalm 1/Proverbs 1)