



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: When Riches Become Ruin

Passage: James 5:1-6

Speaker: Pastor Dan Preston

Introduction:

“For the love of money is the root of all evil...” (1 Timothy 6:10)

Money itself is not the problem. The issue is when the heart bends toward it, trusts in it, and worships it. James is not condemning wealth itself, nor is he addressing every person who has been financially blessed. His warning is aimed at those who place their trust in riches rather than in God, who use people instead of serving them, who hoard instead of help, and who worship wealth instead of the Lord. This passage speaks to all of us, because one does not have to be rich to love money. Materialism can live just as easily in a mansion as it can in a mobile home. Tonight, James pulls back the curtain to show us what happens when riches become ruin, and he calls us to examine our hearts carefully as we walk through this passage together.

I. A Solemn Warning Against A Self-Confident Future (Verse 1)

A. Temporal Judgement

For many who misuse wealth, judgment comes in ways such as loss of wealth, security, reputation and peace.

Guilt, fear, suspicion, relational collapse — wealthy oppressors often destroy themselves.

B. Eternal Judgment



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“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath...” (Romans 2:5)

So the “misery” includes:

- The judgment seat of Christ for unbelievers
- Eternal judgment and separation from God

The misery is not just financial loss — it is divine wrath.

II. A Picture of Riches That Will Not Last (Verse 2-3)

A. Riches Are Corrupted

Food storage rotted. Grain molded. Crops spoiled.

B. Garments Are Motheaten

Moths eventually ate what pride once displayed.

C. Gold and Silver is Cankered

Even the metals they trusted would tarnish. The very thing they worshiped would witness against them.

III. A Rebuke of Those Who Use People Instead of Serving Them (Verse 4)

When the powerful crush the powerless, God hears, sees and rises to judge.

God defends the mistreated, fights for the oppressed, and holds His people accountable for how they treat others.

IV. A Warning Against Living For Self (Verse 5)

When entertainment replaces devotion, convenience replaces commitment, comfort replaces obedience, and leisure replaces worship, we are fattening our hearts for a spiritual slaughter.



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Don't let comfort lull you into complacency or pleasure blind you to eternity.

V. A Final Charge: God Will Right Every Wrong (Verse 6)

A. Hold Everything Loosely

Your money, home, and comforts all belong to God.

B. Make People More Important Than Possessions

Serve rather than use, bless rather than burden, and give rather than grasp.

C. Practice Generosity On Purpose

Generosity is spiritual warfare against greed.

D. Do What is Right Today

Delayed obedience is disobedience.

Conclusion: Our text tonight is a mirror that forces us to face the truth: conflict doesn't start "out there"—it starts in our own hearts. Our restless desires leave us frustrated, and even our prayers become twisted when we seek only our own pleasure. But here's the hope: God gives more grace. The answer to conflict isn't better techniques or stronger willpower—it's surrender. When we yield our desires to God, His grace can bring peace where our selfishness brought turmoil. James invites us to trace it back to the heart, bring it before God, and lay it at His feet. If we humble ourselves and confess our selfishness, the war inside us quiets, our relationships heal, and our prayers are heard. God's grace is greater than our conflict.



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