

James 5

5:1-3

I Chronicles 29:10-15 – The source of our wealth should humble us

Luke 12:13-21 – The use of our wealth is a matter of the heart

“Better weep here, where there are wiping handkerchiefs in the hand of Christ, than to have your eyes whipped out in hell. Better howl with men than yell with devils.” (Trapp)

5:4-6

Parable representing this reality is seen in **Luke 16:19-31**

Lord of Sabaoth is not Lord of the Sabbath. It is the term used in **Romans 9:29** which is in reference to **Isaiah 1:9**, Lord of Hosts, or heavenly armies.

5:7,8

Verse 7 points us back to **1:2,3**

"O dreary life! we cry, O dreary life!

And still the generations of the birds

Sing thro' our sighing; and the flocks and herds

Serenely live while we are keeping strife."

Be patient, O worker, for impatience sours the temper, chills the blood, sickens the heart, prostrates the vigor of one's spirit, and spoils the enterprise of life before it is ripe for history. Wait thou, clothed with patience, like a champion clad in steel. Wait with a sweet grace, as one who guards the faith and sets an example of humility. Wait in a right spirit, anxious, prayerful, earnest submissive to the ways of God, not doubtful of his will. Disciple of Jesus, "learn to labor and to wait."

‘Waiting’ is defined for us in **Isaiah 40:31**

He waits with a reasonable hope and expectation of reward.

- He waits a long time.
- He waits working all the while.
- He waits depending on things out of his own power; with his eye on the heavens.
- He waits despite changing circumstances and many uncertainties.
- He waits encouraged by the value of the harvest.
- He waits encouraged by the work and harvest of others.

- He waits because he really has no other option.
- He waits because it does no good to give up.
- He waits aware of how the seasons work.
- He waits because as time goes on, it becomes more important and not less to do so.

5:9

The word 'brethren' here is key. To grumble against a fellow-Christian is to judge the law that set him or her free to be in error **(4:11)**

This Judge that is standing at the door is the same Lawgiver of verse **4:12**.

Christians have a judgment for us as well **II Corinthians 5:10**

5:10

Consider **Hebrews 11** here

5:11

Apologetic for the historical reality of controversial figures.

Like Jonah and Noah supported by Jesus.

"And when we come to look all Job's life through, we see that *the Lord in mercy brought him out of it all with unspeakable advantage*. He who tested with one hand supported with the other. Whatever Satan's end might be in tempting the patriarch, God had an end which covered and compassed that of the destroyer, and that end was answered all along the line, from the first loss which happened among the oxen to the last taunt of his three accusers." (Spurgeon)

5:12

The Jews of James' day distinguished between binding oaths and non-binding oaths.

Binding oaths were those that invoked the name of God.

Non-binding oaths were known to be made by those intending to break them. Kind of like crossing your fingers behind your back.

James is here addressing non-binding oaths.

God Himself gives binding oaths **(Luke 1:73; Hebrews 3:11; 6:13)**

James is speaking of this as an integrity issue. The need to swear an oath often comes from the fact that that person's "Yes" or "No" is not good enough.

5:13

Communicating with God is essential from our worst of times to our best of times.

5:14

Some here believe the oil was for medicinal purposes, which it had medicinal qualities.

Some believe it to be a representation of the Holy Spirit.

Some believe both to be true.

I Samuel 16:13

“The Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”

5:15

The question here becomes “how does God here save the sick? Is it healing whereby the sick will be raised up out of his/her sickbed?”

“Or, is this healing the healing of resurrection, and the raising up the raising up from death?”

The Catholic understanding of this verse brings the sacrament of extreme unction.

Mark 6:13 could be used against this interpretation.

5:16

Confessing to one another is the back and forth, faith-filled accountability that does not exist in the confessional booth.

Public sin should have public confession.

Confession should be specific, discreet, and thorough.

Fervent prayer is showing God that you care about what you are praying about.

5:17,18

The point made here is that hearing that the prayers of the righteous avail much, we are then reminded that those with tremendous answers to their prayers are folks just like us.

5:19,20

The seriousness of wandering from the truth is seen in **Hebrews 6:4-8(9-12); 10:26-31 (32-39)**

One reason God uses human instruments is because it brings Him *more* glory than if He were to do His work by Himself. In this way God is like a skilled workman who makes incredible things using the *worst* of tools. After the same pattern, God uses earthen vessels to be containers of His glory.

Most persons have been convinced by the pious conversation of sisters, by the holy example of mothers, by the minister, by the Sabbath-school, or by the reading of tracts or perusing Scripture. Let us not therefore believe that God will often work without instruments; let us not sit down silently and say, ‘God will do his own work.’ It is quite true he will; but then he does his work by using his children as instruments.”
(Spurgeon)

Along this line, can we not say that when we refuse to make ourselves available to God's service – weak and failing as we are – we in fact *rob* Him of some of His glory? He can glorify Himself through a weak vessel like you; you should let Him do it.

“It may not appear so brilliant a thing to bring back a backslider as to reclaim a harlot or a drunkard, but in the sight of God it is no small miracle of grace, and to the instrument who has performed it shall yield no small comfort. Seek ye, then, my brethren, those who were of us but have gone from us; seek ye those who linger still in the congregation but have disgraced the church, and are put away from us, and rightly so, because we cannot countenance their uncleanness; seek them with prayers, and tears, and entreaties, if peradventure God may grant them repentance that they may be saved.” (Spurgeon)

These last verses sum up the theme of the whole letter. Walk in authentic faith and trust in our Lord.

This letter ends abruptly, but not ineffectively.