

April 2017

Money Talks
James 5:1-6

If money talks, said a popular comedian, “all it ever says to me is goodbye?” But money was not saying goodbye to the men James addressed in this section of his letter. These men were rich, and their riches were sinful. They were using their wealth for selfish purposes and were _____ the poor in the process. One of the themes that run through James chapter 5 is “trouble.” We meet poor people deprived of their wages (James 5:4), as well as people who are physically afflicted (James 5:13-16) and spiritually backslidden (James 5:19-20). A second theme that James introduced is “prayer.” The poor laborers cry out to God in verse 4; the sick and afflicted should pray in verses 13-16, and Elijah is an example of one who believed in prayer in verses 17-18. When you join these two themes, you arrive at the fifth mark of the mature Christian: he/she is prayerful in TROUBLE!

1. The Way They Got Their Wealth (5:4, 6a)

The Bible does not discourage the _____. What the Bible condemns is acquiring wealth by illegal means or for illegal purposes. James gave two illustrations of how the rich acquired their wealth. Holding back wages (vs4) and Controlling the Courts (6a)

2. The Way the Rich Used Their Wealth (5:3-5)

It is bad enough to gain wealth in a _____ but to use that wealth in sinful ways just makes the sin greater. They _____ Of course, there is nothing sinful about saving. But it is wrong to store up wealth when you owe money to your employees. The rich men were hoarding grain, gold, and garments, _____ guarding it for their own security and pleasure.

They kept others from _____ (verse 4). By fraudulent means, the rich men robbed the poor. As stewards of God's wealth we must be faithful to use what He gives us for the good of others and the glory of God. They lived in _____ (verse 5). "You have lived in high style on the earth!" (literal translation of verse 5). Luxury has a way of _____. It is a form of self-indulgence. If you match character with wealth you can produce much good, but if you match self-indulgence with wealth, the result is sin.

3. What Their Riches Will Do (5:1-4)

The rich thought they had it made because of their wealth, but god thought otherwise. "Howl for your miseries that shall come upon you (vs.1). James described the consequences of misusing riches: Riches will vanish (vs.2-3a); Misused riches erode character (vs3); Judgment is a certainty (vs.3, 5); The loss of precious opportunity (v3);

It is good to have the things that money can buy, provided you also have the things that money cannot buy. James did not condemn riches or rich people; he condemned the wrong use of riches, and rich people who use their wealth as a _____ and not as a _____ with which to build.

The Power of Patience James 5:7-12

James was still addressing the suffering saints when he wrote, “be patient.” This was his counsel at the beginning of his letter (James 1:1-5), and his counsel as his letter came to a close. God is not going to _____ in this world until Jesus Christ returns, and we believers must patiently endure and expect. But the question we must answer is how can we as Christians experience this kind of patient endurance as we wait for the Lord to return? James gave three encouraging examples of patient endurance:

1. The Farmer (5:7-9)

If a man is impatient he better not become a farmer. No crop appears overnight except weeds, and no farmer has control over the weather. He must be patient with the seed and the crop, for it takes time for plants to grow. Jewish farmers would plow and sow in what to us are the autumn months. The “early rain” would _____ the soil. The “latter rain” would come in the early spring and help to _____ The farmer had to wait many weeks for his seed to produce fruit. Why did he willingly wait so long? because the fruit is _____ (James 5:7). The harvest is worth waiting for, “to due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

James pictured the Christian as a _____ looking for a spiritual harvest. “Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts” (James 5:8). Our hearts are _____, and the _____ (Luke 8:11) There are seasons to the spiritual life just as there are seasons to the soil. Here then is a _____ when the going is tough: God is producing a harvest in our lives. He wants the fruit of the spirit to grow (Gal. 5:22-23) and the only way He can do it is through trials and troubles. Keep in mind that the farmer does not stand around doing nothing; he is constantly at work as he looks toward the harvest. James did not tell these suffering believers to put on a white robe, climb a hill, and wait to Jesus to return. Keep working and waiting was his admonition.

2. The Prophets (5:10)

They were in the will of God, yet they suffered. They were preaching “in the name of the Lord,” yet they were persecuted. Satan tells the faithful Christian that his suffering is the result of sin or unfaithfulness, and yet his suffering might well be because of faithfulness! “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:12). The prophets encourage us by reminding us that God cares for us when we go through suffering for His sake. The _____ will never lead you where the _____ cannot keep you!

Many of the prophets had to endure _____, not only at the hands of unbelievers, but, at the hands of professed believers. Jeremiah was arrested as a traitor and even thrown into an abandoned well to die. God fed Jeremiah and protected him throughout that terrible siege of Jerusalem. Both Ezekiel and Daniel had their hardships, but the Lord delivered them. And even those who were not delivered, who died for the faith, received that special reward for those who are true to Him. Envy, Strife, Boasting, and Deceit, all found in verse 14. When God’s wisdom is at work, there is a sense of humility and submission, and you want God to get all the glory. You have no desire to compare yourself with any other Christian, because you see only Christ- and compared to Him, all of us still have a long way to go. The evidences of true wisdom is Meekness, Purity, Peace, Gentleness, Compliance, Mercy, Good Fruits, Decisiveness, and Sincerity, found in verses 13 and 17.

3. Job (5:11-12)

“As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered” (James 5:11 NIV). But you cannot persevere unless there is a trial in your life. There can be no _____; there can be no peaks without valleys. If you want the blessing, you must be prepared to _____ the battle.

It is difficult to find a greater example of suffering than Job. Circumstances were against him, for he lost his wealth, and his health. He also lost his beloved children and his wife was against him, for she said, “curse God and die (Job 2:9). His friends were against and accused him of being a hypocrite. Yet Job endured. Satan predicated that Job would get impatient with God, and abandon his faith, but that did not happen. The idea that if you were wealthy and comfortable, you were blessed of God, but if you were suffering and poor, you were cursed of God. The book of Job refutes that idea, for Job was a wealthy and righteous man, and yet he suffered.

IT IS TIME TO PRAY

James 5:13-20

The gift of speech is a marvelous blessing, if it is used to the glory of God. As we have seen, James had a great deal to say about the tongue, and this chapter is no exception. He mentioned some of the lowest uses of the tongue: complaining (5:9) and swearing (5:12). But he also named some of the highest uses of the tongue: proclaiming God’s Word (5:10) and praying and praising (5:13). **Prayer** is certainly a high and holy _____. To think that, as God’s children, we can come freely and boldly to His throne and share with Him our needs! Seven times in this section James mentioned prayer. The mature Christian is _____ in the troubles of life. James encouraged us to pray by describing four situations in which God answers prayer:

1. **Prayer for the Suffering (5:13)**
2. **Prayer for the Sick (5:14-16)**
 - The person is sick because of sin (vs. 15b-16)
 - The person confess his sins (vs. 16)
 - The person is healed by the “prayer of faith” (vs. 15)
3. **Prayer for the Nation (5:17-18)**
4. **Prayer for the Straying (5:19-20)**