

James 5

Roxborough Bible Chapel

May 28, 2017

OUTLINE

- **The Rich and Their Coming Remorse (verses 1-6)**
- **Exhortation to Patience (verses 7-12)**
- **Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)**

Introductory Comments for James 5:1-6

- The Bible does not condemn money.
 - 1Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil...*
- 3 Parables about riches
- Four cardinal sins of the rich (verses 1-6)
 - The sin of hoarding wealth (verses 2-3)
 - The sin of acquiring wealth by failure to pay proper wages (verse 4)
 - The luxurious living of the rich (verse 5)
 - The rich condemn and murder the just (verse 6)

James 5

The Rich and Their Coming Remorse (verses 1-6)

5:1 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*

5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

5:3 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.

- 5:1 Why does James call for the rich to weep and howl?
 - Because of the miseries which they were about to experience.
- 5:2-3 James mentions the first of the four sins of the rich - **hoarding wealth**
 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mat 6:19-21).
- James speaks of wealth in four forms: riches, garments, gold, and silver.
 - The point is that these things had been hoarded to the point where they were spoiled.
 - “Your garments are moth-eaten,” - When the closet is so crowded with garments that they are used very infrequently, they are subject to moth damage.
 - To James it is morally wrong to hoard clothes like this when so many people in the world are in desperate need.
- Gold and silver do not rust, but they do tarnish and become discolored, and under unfavorable storage conditions, they could conceivably corrode.
- The expression “their corrosion ... will eat your flesh like fire” means that their failure to use their riches for the good of others would cause them the keenest suffering and remorse.

James 5:1-3

Application

5:1 Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*

5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

5:3 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.

- Put your money to work
 - Feed the hungry, clothe the poor, provide medicines for the sick, and spread the gospel.
 - Don't save your money for a "rainy day." It benefits no one, and eventually rots away.
- What will be our condemnation if we have had the means of spreading the gospel or meeting the needs of the saints and have failed to use it?
 - Don't hoard material things when they could be used for eternal purposes.
 - Don't be selfish and greedy with costly jewelry, elegant clothing, luxurious homes, high-priced cars, etc. since this would be a scalding, scorching experience in the last days.

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The Rich and Their Coming Remorse (verses 1-6)

5:4 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.

- v. 4 The second sin James attacks is acquiring wealth by failure to pay proper wages.
 - **The laborers who mowed the fields** were deprived of their rightful pay.
 - Application - Falsifying income tax returns, cheating on weights and measures, bribing local inspectors or other officials, false advertising, and falsifying expense accounts.

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The Rich and Their Coming Remorse (verses 1-6)

5:5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

- v. 5 The third sin James attacks is the luxurious living of the rich.
 - Expensive jewelry, elegant clothes, fancy foods, and homes like palaces - how could they squander their wealth on self when multitudes were in desperate need?
 - Those who live **in pleasure and** are unrestrained in **luxury** are likened to those who nourish their **hearts as in a day of slaughter**
 - Like animals, fattening themselves just before their execution,
 - Or like soldiers who spend their time looting when others are perishing around them.
 - Application - How can we justify the affluence and extravagance of the church and of Christian people?
 - We live in a world where thousands die daily of starvation.
 - Over half the world's population has never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Fellow believers in God's family are in need.
 - The clear teaching of the Scriptures, the appalling need of the world, the example of the Savior, and the simple instinct of compassion tell us that it is wrong to live in comfort, luxury, and ease as long as there are needs around us that we can meet.

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The Rich and Their Coming Remorse (verses 1-6)

5:6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

- v. 6 The fourth sin of the rich is that they **condemned** and **murdered the just**, and **he did not resist** them.
 - **The just** represent innocent people in general.
 - James is thinking of the rough, highhanded way in which rich people have characteristically behaved toward their subordinates.
 - They **have condemned** them by false accusation, by harsh language, and by threats. They have killed them, not directly perhaps, but by overworking and underpaying them. The innocent offered no resistance. To protest might result in further brutality, or dismissal from their job.

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Exhortation to Patience (verses 7-12)

5:7 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.

5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

- James now turns to believers who were being oppressed, and encourages them to be patient.
 - The motive for patience is the coming of the Lord. (either the rapture or Christ's coming to reign).
 - The farmer illustrates the need of patience.
 - There is a long period of waiting for the harvest.
 - First there must come the early rain, causing the seed to germinate.
 - Then at the end of the season is the latter rain, needed to bring the crop to a successful harvest.
- The wrongs of earth will be made right when the Lord returns.
 - Therefore His people should be patient, like the farmer.
 - Their hearts should be established with the certainty of His coming.

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Exhortation to Patience (verses 7-12)

5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!
5:10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

- During times of persecution and difficulty, victims can turn against one another.
 - In times of pressure we build up wrath against those we love most.
 - Therefore, the warning: Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned.
 - Don't let resentment build up. After all, the Judge is already at the door! He knows what we think. Soon we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an account. We should not judge lest we be judged.
- The OT prophets are brought forth as an example of suffering and patience.
 - Note that suffering precedes patience. "Tribulation produces perseverance" (Romans 5:3).
 - Patience in the NT means fortitude or steadfastness. (Patience should characterize the mature believers.)
 - Because of their faithfulness in declaring the word of the Lord, the prophets were persecuted unmercifully. Yet "they endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27, Hebrews 11:32-40).

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Exhortation to Patience (verses 7-12)

5:11 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.

- We honor (respect) the prophets (like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel) for their lives of zeal and devotion and thus call them blessed.
 - If we want to be blessed, it is only reasonable to conclude that we will be called on to do the same.
- Job is a fine example of perseverance.
 - Few if any men in the history of the world have ever suffered so much loss in so short a time as Job.
 - He never cursed God, or turned from Him.
 - In the end, his endurance was rewarded. God revealed Himself, as He always does, to be compassionate and merciful.
- ... the end intended by the Lord = the final issue or result which the Lord brings to pass
 - Asaph was jealous when he saw the prosperity of the wicked (Psa_73:3-17). The more he thought about it, the more perturbed he became. Then he went into the sanctuary of God and understood their latter end. This dispelled all his envy.
 - David had the same experience. In Psa_17:15 he describes the portion of the believer in the life to come. In view of this, it pays the believer to be steadfast.
 - In Job's case, the end intended by the Lord was that God gave him twice as much as he had before (Job_42:10-15).

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Exhortation to Patience (verses 7-12)

5:12 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.

- Impatience in times of trial many times results in swearing.
 - Not necessarily profanity, or cursing
 - Neither is it a matter of taking an oath in a court of law.
 - This is the thoughtless use of the Lord's Name or some other name to attest the truthfulness of one's speech.
 - The Christian should not have to swear by anyone or anything, either in heaven or on earth.
 - Those who know him should be able to depend on the fact that his "Yes" means "Yes" and his "No" means "No."
- Lest you fall into judgment
 - Perhaps thinking of the third commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

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Sickness and Divine Healing (Introduction to verses 13-20)

- In a general sense, sickness is a result of sin
 - If there is no sin in the world, then there is no sickness
- Sometimes sickness is a direct result of a specific sin
 - Example = I Corinthians 11:30 (Participating in the Lord's Supper without confession and forsaking of the sin)
- Many times, however, sickness is not a direct result of sin
 - Example = Job, Man born blind (John 9:2-3), Epaphroditus was sick because of his tireless activity in the work of the Lord (Phil. 2:30). Gaius was spiritually healthy but apparently physically unwell (III John 1:2).
- Sickness could be a result of Satanic activity
 - Job's trials were from Satan, Satan crippled the woman in Luke 13 for 18 years, Paul had a thorn in the flesh (a messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2Co 12:7))
- God can and does heal.
 - In a very real sense, *all* healing is divine. We should acknowledge God in every case of healing.
- God uses different means to heal
 - Natural bodily processes, medicines, through doctors/surgeons (Luke – the beloved physician), “The surgeon dresses the wound; God heals it.”
- God can heal miraculously
 - There is nothing in the Bible to discourage us from believing that God can heal miraculously today.
- It is not always God's will to heal
 - Paul's thorn in the flesh, If it were always God's will to heal, some would never grow old or die!
- God has not promised to heal in every case
 - Healing is not something we can demand from Him. Healing is spoken of as a mercy, not something which we have a right to expect.
- Failure to be healed does not necessarily indicate a lack of faith.
 - If it were, this would mean that some would live on indefinitely; but no one does. Paul, Trophimus, and Gaius were not healed, and yet we would never say that their faith was lacking.

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Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)

5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

- The theme of the closing verses of the Epistle is prayer. The word occurs seven times, either as a noun or verb.
- 5:13 What is our initial reaction to suffering?
 - If we are walking close to the Lord, we would approach Him in prayer in every situation.
 - In times of rejoicing, we should lift our hearts to Him in praise.
 - He wants to be brought into all the changing moods of our lives.

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Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)

5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

- Since it is not always God's will to heal, we are forced to the conclusion that James is not talking about *every* kind of illness, but only about a certain form of sickness.
 - One interpretation is that healing in this section is connected with the forgiveness of **sins**. (v. 15)
 - This interpretation assumes that a man has committed some sin, probably involving the testimony of the local church.
 - Shortly afterward he is stricken with illness and he realizes that this sickness is a direct result of his sin.
 - God is chastening him in order to bring him back into fellowship.
 - He repents of his sin and confesses it to God. But since the sin has also involved the public testimony of the assembly, he calls **the elders** and makes a full confession to them as well.
 - They **pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord**.
 - This **prayer of faith** saves **the sick** man, **and the Lord will raise him up**.
 - It is a definite promise of the Lord that where sickness is a direct result of sin, and where that sin is confessed and forsaken in the manner described, the Lord will heal.
 - The responsibility of **the elders** is to **pray over him, anointing him with oil**. One view is that the *ritual use of oil* is meant. This view is strengthened by the words **in the name of the Lord**. In other words, the anointing was to be done by His authority and in obedience to His word. Oil was sometimes used by the apostles when effecting miraculous cures (Mark 6:13). The healing power was not in the oil, but the oil symbolized the Holy Spirit in His healing ministry (I Cor. 12:9).
 - In response to the **prayer of faith**, God will heal the person. It is a **prayer of faith** because it is based on the promise of God's word. The elders can pray with complete assurance because God has promised to raise up the man when the conditions described have been fully met.

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Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)

5:16a Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

- Primarily James means that when we sin against someone else, we should be prompt to confess those specific sins to the person we have wronged.
 - This is not necessarily advocating telling other people all about our secret sins.
- Also we should **pray for one another**.
 - Instead of holding grudges and allowing resentments to build up, we should maintain ourselves in fellowship with others through confession and prayer.
- Confession, prayer, and healing are linked together
 - Physical healing is linked with spiritual restoration. This illustrates the vital connection between the physical and the spiritual. Man is a tripartite being—spirit, soul, and body (I Thessalonians 5:23). What affects one part of him affects all.
- Deliverance from the guilt, defilement, power, and penalty of sin can come only on the basis of the blood of Christ, and through confession both to God and man.
 - More often than we are willing to admit, illnesses are caused by sin (Worry, anger, an unforgiving spirit, intemperance, jealousy, selfishness, pride, etc.)
 - Sin in the life brings sickness and sometimes death (I Corinthians 11:30). We should confess and forsake sin as soon as we are aware it has come into our lives.
 - This is vital for our spiritual health and good for our physical health.

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Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)

5:16b The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

5:18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

- Tremendous power is made available through a good man's earnest prayer.
 - Example = Elijah (I Kings 17:1-19:10).
 - Ahab was king of Israel at the time. Through his wife Jezebel, he became a worshiper of Baal, and led the people into this vile form of idolatry.
 - “Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him” (I Kings 16:33).
 - It was a direct result of sin that drought came upon Israel for three and a half years.
 - Then Elijah had the famous contest with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel. After the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, the altar, and the water, Elijah **prayed again** and the drought ended.
- The example of **Elijah** is given as an encouragement to us to pray for those who have sinned and wandered away from fellowship with God.
 - The prayer of a man whose heart is right with God works wonders.
 - James reminds us that **Elijah was a man** with the same kind of frail flesh. He was a mere man, subject to the same weaknesses and infirmities as other men.

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Prayer and the Healing of the Sick (verses 13-20)

5:19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,
5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

- We have seen the elders of the assembly being used in the restoration of a sinning saint.
- We have seen Elijah being used in the restoration of a backsliding nation.
- Now we are exhorted to turn back the Christian brother who wanders from the truth (in doctrine or practice) restoring him back into fellowship with God and others in the family of God.
 - This ministry is extremely important!
 - First of all, he will save his erring brother from sickness and/or dying prematurely under the discipline/chastening hand of God.
 - Secondly, he will cover a multitude of sins. They are forgiven and forgotten by God.
 - Also these sins should be forgiven by fellow believers and so that the outside world will not see the name of Christ being defamed.
 - In our desire to evangelize the lost, perhaps we do not give sufficient attention to those sheep of Christ who have wandered from the fold.

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Summary and Conclusions

- Do you lay up treasures on earth? Are your business methods strictly honest? Your income tax return, for instance?
- Do you live luxuriously, or do you live sacrificially so that others may come to know the Savior?
- When you sin against another person, are you willing to go to him and apologize?
- When you become ill, whom do you contact first? the doctor or the Lord?
- When you see a brother fall into sin, do you criticize him or try to restore him?

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- Jas 5:16 Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
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