

The Book of James

James 5:1-7

Welcome once again to “It’s a Good Life.” Today, we want to continue our study in the book of James, and we’re going to pick up with James chapter 5. But before we do that, let me share with you a couple of psalms here.

In Psalm 121:1-2, it says, *1I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.*

And then in Psalm 28:7, the Bible says, *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.*

We may have a lot of problems coming into our lives, and you may be going through something right now, but God is a God of joy. He’s the God of peace. And let me encourage you to place your trust in Him completely. Now, if you’ve trusted Him as your Savior, you have trusted Him to take you to Heaven. And if you have trusted Him to take you to Heaven, you need to get into the Scriptures and especially some of the verses like some of the verses that I just read with you here, Psalm 28:7 and Psalm 121:1-2. The Lord is our joy. He is where we draw our strength from.

Now, it’s good to have humans around us, and they can certainly encourage us, but God is the great encourager. He is the one we draw our strength from. And let me say today that the joy of the Lord is my strength, and He can be your strength, as well, and you need to place all of your hope and your trust in Him today. If you’ve never trusted Him as Savior, you need to do that right now.

Well, we want to look in the book of James once again, and we’re going to pick up our study in James chapter 5. And I would divide this up into several sections here. In James 5:1-12, I would title this “Patience under Oppression.” And then I would divide that further by saying, in James 5:1-6, “God’s Anger at Rich Oppressors.”

Let me quickly add here, there’s nothing wrong with being rich. I would like to be rich, but I have what God has given me and I’m satisfied with that. I know that there are people who keep wanting more and more and more, and the Bible says there’s nothing wrong with being rich, but when you give all of your attention to that, then it is going against the Word of God. When you let riches stand in your way of either accepting Jesus as Savior or serving Him after you get saved, then the Bible says that’s wrong and you shouldn’t do that.

Well, let’s look at James 5:1. James says, *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.* Now, once again, there’s nothing wrong with being rich as long as those riches do not interfere with your worship of God and doing what God wants you to do. In verse 1, I believe what the Lord is saying to us through James is, “Your poverty is coming.” Now you may be rich now, but leaving God out of the picture, you need to understand that your poverty is coming.

And then in verse 2, James says, *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.* Why is your poverty coming? Well, your riches are rotten, according to that verse. Your riches are corrupted. And we also see in that verse that you can no longer hide behind your riches. God sees everything. God knows

you and He's saying, especially to this rich person here, that you can't hide behind your riches. Now, as a rich person, that person may have a secretary or may have people working for him or her. And they're able to avoid confrontation a lot of times, I understand, by having what I would call a front person, a person who represents that rich person and that rich person maybe never has to give an account of what they do with their money or how they act. Well, the Bible says, I don't care how many front people you have, people who are going out representing you, you are the one who has to give an account of your riches as to how you are handling those riches. And if we do certain things that are against the Word of God, He says your riches are corrupted. They are rotten. You can no longer hide behind them. You can't use them as a shield.

Verse 3 of chapter 5 of James says, *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.* And I believe what God is saying here in this first part of this verse is your money is infected. It's like a sore that has become infected.

And notice the money residue. The residue of the money will consume and testify against you. It says, *And the rust of them shall be a witness against you...* And he goes on to say that this money that you have hoarded you have hoarded selfishly for the end. Money is not going to save a person. The old saying is, "I have never seen an armored car following a hearse to the graveyard." You're not going to take it with you, and the money needs to be used for the Lord's work to further the Word of God.

In verse 4, *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of*

them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Notice what James is saying here: "You've cheated your workers." You've cheated the people who have been working for you. Not only are you rich; not only do you want to get more and more; not only are you hoarding your riches, not only are they infected; and one of the reasons your riches are infected, you are selfish, according to verse 3. You are selfish and you'll do anything to hold onto that money, especially when it comes to cheating your workers, those people who work for you. And the workers call for help here, and as they call for help, they are heard by the Lord of Hosts. That's what "sabaoth" means here, the Lord of Hosts. When we are done wrong in this life, we need to call out unto the Lord. In verse 4 section *b* of that verse says that the Lord hears our cries. And in Psalm 84:8, it says, *O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*

And not only does God hear our prayers as saved people, the LORD of hosts hears our prayers when we are done wrong, but He hears our prayers as we go to Him in prayer and we bring our petitions before Him. He hears our prayers because He is the Lord of Hosts.

And notice verse 5 now. It talks about these rich people or this rich person. It says, *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton...* In other words, you're never satisfied... *ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.* I believe what James is saying here, you have lived it up, but you're still not satisfied. It makes no difference what happens in your life and you try to get more and more, and you have more and more pleasure. You're searching and searching, but you're still not satisfied.

And he goes on in the next part of that verse, verse 5, you have gorged yourself with riches, with greediness. You're greedy. It says there you're wanton and you're never satisfied. *Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.* You've gorged yourself and you're still not satisfied. You want more and more.

Well, notice verse 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.* "You've judged," James is saying here, "and you're found guilty... and murdered the just who do not oppose you." In other words, this person may not have done anything to the rich person, but you murdered that person, not necessarily physically, but you'll do anything to gain riches and to hold onto those riches, and to get more riches, you'll do anything. You will even murder the person with your words. You will testify against their good character. You will do anything to bring a person down in order for your riches to grow and grow and grow. But the Lord lays out this accusation here, and He condemns this by saying, "Your riches are infected or cankered. You're wrong."

Well, notice now as we continue on here in verses 7-12. I believe that there is a call for patience under oppression. We sort of leave that idea now about the riches and the rich person wanting more and more and doing things wrong and cheating people. We go now for a call of patience under oppression.

In verse 7, it says, *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.* I believe what James is saying here in the first part of this verse, "Endure until the Lord comes. Things may be rough but endure that." In enduring the oppression described in the preceding verses I believe it's speaking of here,

we are to endure and we are to do that until the Lord comes.

And he goes on to say, "Consider the farmer who waits for a harvest." In Galatians 6:9, it talks about there's a harvest coming. It says, *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* Don't give up.

In Deuteronomy 11:14, it says, *That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.* I believe what James is saying here and what the Lord wants us to understand is don't worry about it. Wait. The harvest is coming. Do what you have to do. Do what is right. Just as the farmer waits patiently for the grain to grow, the farmer's crop must go through growing seasons before the harvest comes. And that's the way we are as saved people. We need to wait on the Lord.

We'll continue our study next time in James chapter 5 and we'll pick up with verse 8.



You can also go to our Website, www.LRWM.org On the Website you can actually go through Bible studies there... Bible studies on the Book of John, the Book of Proverbs, discipleship, and so forth.

It's been great being with you today, and let me encourage you to be here next time when you hear me say, "It's a good life."