

James 5:1-11 Materialism / Patience in Suffering

One of the themes that run through this chapter is "trouble". James begins with the issue of money. First, he aims to show the destructive power of earthly riches; and he aims to show the detestable character of those whose focus is on obtaining riches. By doing this he hopes to prevent his readers from placing all their hopes and desires on earthly things. James then encourages the recently uprooted and relocated believers (because of persecution) who were struggling to be patient and wait on the Lord.

Read James 5:1-11

Read Luke 12:16-21 - What is the lesson to be learned from Jesus' parable?

V. 1-3 – Is James condemning wealth? Do items that are used and cared for rot?

James is accusing the people who have gained their riches by exploiting others. They have stored up far more than they can ever use themselves, while others have gone without. When James tells them to "weep" and "howl," he's warning them that God's judgment is at hand and the corrosion of their wasted wealth will testify against them. Look up: 1 Timothy 6:10

To the question, "How much money is enough?" John D. Rockefeller famously answered: "Just a little bit more". Is it humanly possible to be content where we are at financially, even if you're already struggling? (Philippians 4:12,13)

V. 4 - God gave definite instructions concerning the laboring man to protect him from the oppressive employer (Deut.24:14-15; Lev.19:13). The Lord hears the cries of the poor; He is coming again, and He will put all things right. (Psalm 34:6 ; Isaiah 3:15)

Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

- Jeremiah 22:13

Read Romans 13:8 – God's word is clear not only the concept of financial debt, but also on those debts we often have outstanding: respect, love, gratitude, empathy, forgiveness , reconciliation, etc.

V. 3-5 -Instead of being used for good, their riches were stored away and corroded. The lost luster of their riches bore witness against their selfishness, and would testify against them again at the judgment.

Chapter four ended with a clear instruction (v 17). If we are holding firmly to things which are fleeting, how could we ever properly grasp the teachings of Christ? What are some of those things that are difficult to loosen our grip on?

Look up: James 1:27, Mark 12:41-44

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful

- Hebrews 10:23

V.7,8 – There is much work to do to ensure a good harvest. Both the farmer and the Christian must live by faith, looking toward the future reward for their labors. Keep working faithfully to build Christ's kingdom – the King will come when the time is right.

V. 11 - What was Job's attitude while he was suffering? Will we always understand the reason for the trial?

When we offer our "bodies as living sacrifices", we declare to the Lord that whatever He may lead us through, we will strive to bring glory to Him through our living testimony. The lesson might not be for us, it might be for those watching.

Look up: Job 1:22, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

God showed abundant compassion and tender mercy toward Job because of his faithfulness through his trials. Likewise, while Christians may not understand God's purpose for their suffering, they find peace in the knowledge that God is full of loving compassion and tender mercy.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

- Psalm 34:18

What are some of the scriptural reasons for why we experience suffering?

John 9:1-3 James 1:2-4, Heb 12:10,11, Romans 5:3, Psalms 119:71 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4