

February 7, 2021

The Bridge Bible Fellowship

Pastor Paul S. Brown

James 5:1-6

“Wicked Wealthy: Wake Up and Weep! Part Two”

A. Who (1) – “you rich” (cf. Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:4; Mt. 27:57; 13:22; 19:22ff)

B. What (1)

1. Wake up!

2. Weep while wailing!

3. Wretchedness is coming!

C. Why (2-6)

1. Hoarding (2-3; cf. Mt. 6:19ff; Lk. 12:33; 16:9)

2. Fraud (4; cf. Dt. 24:14f; Prov. 14:31; Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5)

3. Self-indulgence (5; cf. Lev. 19:13; Dt. 24:14f; Amos 6:1-7; Mt. 13:39-41, 49; 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7f)

4. Injustice (6; cf. 1 Kings 21; James 2:6; Zeph. 1:18)

1 Timothy 6

So What?

Discussion & Application:

1. James 5:1-6 parallels Psalm 73 and confronts a false belief called “Retribution Theology.” Share some examples of that philosophy in our current culture. Give some examples from your own life where you have at times lived according to that philosophy (no matter how briefly).
2. Is wealth inherently evil? What are some positive biblical principles on wealth? (i.e., how to acquire it; use it; save it; share it; pass it on to future generations)
3. How does James describe the problem of **hoarding** in vv. 2-3? Why do people hoard things? What does this say about their trust in God? What does it say about their love for their neighbor? Are you guilty of hoarding things? What could you do this week with some of your “stuff” so it can be a blessing to others in need and not end up the way James describes in vv. 2-3?
4. In what way were the rich people guilty of **fraud** in v. 4? Why would they think they were going to get away with it? What are some ways that people defraud others today? What are some excuses people might make for doing it?
5. The rich were also guilty of **self-indulgence** in v. 5. Our world glorifies self-indulgence (fashion magazines, live of the rich & famous, etc.). What is wrong with being self-indulgent? What are some ways that even “poor” or “middle class” people in America are guilty of self-indulgence?
6. Finally, the rich were guilty of **injustice** in v. 6. This is a hot topic in our culture today. What kinds of injustices are people talking about in America? How are they connecting wealth with injustice? Why do wealthy people at times literally get away with murder? Will they ultimately get away with it? What are some less drastic forms of injustices that even believers might practice toward others?
7. Read **1 Kings 21**. Discuss where you see parallels in this account and the principles we studied in James 5:1-6. Why did Naboth refuse to sell his property? How are Elisha and James similar in what they say to the guilty? What should we do when we see injustices in our society? Should we expect all injustices to go away?
8. What impact would James 5:1-6 have on a congregation that was mostly **poor** people? What lessons would they learn about wealth, power, sin, and coming judgment?
9. Read **1 Timothy 6**. What principles in this chapter are similar to the ones in James 5:1-6? How can we individually as believers and corporately as the church model these principles for a watching world? How can we help each other not get caught up in being envious of the wicked wealthy? How can we train our young people (from an early age) to keep their eyes fixed on things above and not be tempted to engage in the sinful patterns of the wicked wealthy?
10. **Memorize James 5:1-6**. Meditate upon the wrong and the right uses for wealth. Ask the Lord to make you a better steward of all that He has entrusted to you both now and in the future. Give away some of your excess before it rots, is moth-eaten, or rusts. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” “Lay up treasures in heaven.”