

DAILY DOSE OF JAMES



Week 10 - James 5:1-6

Monday August 16

James 5: 1Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.

The first 6 verses of James 5 are the strongest in the epistle. It's a passage of damning judgment against the wicked wealthy who profess Christian faith and profess Christian life but whose real god is money.

James, in Chapter 5, is reiterating a test that our Lord Himself established. James is building on the teaching of the Lord Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:19-21 19"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

James is calling on the wealthy to check the true state of their heart by examining how they're dealing with their wealth. He tells them the day of God's judgment is coming and if all they have is wealth, not Christ, then misery is coming upon them.

Lesson to learn: Handle wealth wisely - there are not enough riches in this life to protect us from God's coming judgment.

Tuesday August 17

James 5: 2Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

James' point is so basic. How sinful, how foolish, how stupid to hoard money, to hoard clothing, to hoard food when it all rots. And even if it remains, you won't. Your last day is coming. And if that's the way you've lived your life, then the question is whether you know, whether you worship God at all.

We hoard so many things. Stocks, bonds, savings account, gold, silver, jewelry, possessions. Where is your treasure? Where is it invested? Where are you piling it up?

Paul's reminder to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6 fits here well: 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Lesson to learn: Handle wealth wisely - this life and its possession are coming to an end. Holding tightly to them doesn't make them last – and they have no lasting or saving value.

Wednesday August 18

James 5:4Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

James reminds us one of the most irritating things to God is for the rich to make their money at the expense of their workers. He is not saying that the owner of the business can't drive a nicer car or live in a bigger house. What he is saying is the ungodly rich, who pretend to be godly, are actually failing to pay their workers. There are many ways such rich people steal from their workers, i.e., inadequate wages, poor benefits, bad working conditions, etc. The rich think doing these things allows them to have more – and they are insensitive to the legitimate needs of their workers.

And God comes along and says to such ungodly rich people that He has heard the cries of these workers and He will render justice!

Lesson to learn: Handle wealth wisely - People who hurt others to gain wealth will be judged by God for their actions.

Thursday August 19

James 5:5You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

Now God explains the justice He will bring in response to the workers who have been treated unfairly. To make sure His point is understood and felt, He uses a frightening

term “slaughter”. For all those years the ungodly rich cared only for themselves, for all those years the ungodly rich treated themselves to excess – the day of judgment and justice is coming. Then that which is slaughtered will not be the animal fattened for their excess dining. It will be them coming to an unexpected horrible end.

Lesson to learn: Handle wealth wisely - Using the riches of this life to benefit only yourself is only setting yourself up for an ugly end.

Friday August 20

How a person feels about and handles wealth is a test. How you feel about money and possessions and material things is a test which reveals the spiritual state of your heart.

Wealth in itself is not sinful. It's not sinful to possess money. It's not sinful to possess the blessings that God grants.

If you have been given wealth by God – and to some extent we all have some wealth - use it for the care of the people God has given you. Use it to build His Kingdom. Use it to win the lost. Use it to care for those in need. Use it to support those in ministry. But don't hoard it. If it has been your characteristic to hoard it all uselessly, then you'll be condemned by God for such behavior, because your actions are evidence of the fact that your heart is set on earthly things and your god is money, not the true God. There's no place for saying you're a believer, you're a true child of God, you're a lover of Christ, a servant of God and then amassing a fortune, uselessly stashed away without regard for God's Word at all.

The only acceptable way to live in the light of the Second Coming of Christ in these last days of redemptive history is to live holding very loosely the wealth that God gives you and to make sure you're using it for His glory. If you've been living an illusion about your Christianity but when you self-examine a little bit you see your real god is money, then bow the knee to Jesus before it's too late. And if as a Christian you find yourself infringing in this area of sin, ask God's Spirit to root it out of your life, loosen your grip on the things of this world and give you the heart to see all things are to be used for the glory of God and anything hoarded is rotted.

Lesson to learn: Handle wealth wisely – how you handle it is proof of your real belief in and relationship to God.