

Warnings and Righteousness

[Jas 5:1-6 ESV] 1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

I. Intro

A. Warnings against wealth

1. James is sending a message to those who are practicing their version of faith in an ungodly way.
2. The godless practice of judging
3. The godless practice of self righteousness
4. The godless practice of planning your life void of God's plan
5. The godless practice of gaining wealth for the wrong reasons and with the wrong practices.

B. In that day:

1. There was a great divide between the wealthy and the poor
2. No real middle class

C. For today:

1. We are living in wealth, so we are all included in this warning
2. According to the World Bank: Around 3.5 billion people (44 percent of the global population) remain poor by a standard that is more relevant for upper middle-income countries (\$6.85 per day), and the number of people living on less than this standard has barely changed since the 1990s due to population growth.

D. Wealth is not the problem

1. Wealth is amoral in itself, but can cause a lack of dependance on God and greed.
2. Money or material possessions are to be used in a proper way
3. Wealth is to be gained in a proper way, and to be used for the purposes of God

E. James 5 is connected to the truth we just studied in James 4, and the problems persist:

1. Arrogance has no place in the kingdom
2. We need to find the foundational truth connecting things

F. Luke 12: parable of the rich man

1. Man was planning to build bigger barns
2. But he didn't make it, he dies before his plans come together
3. [Luk 12:13-21 ESV] 13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." 16 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

G. Fruit Comes From the Root:

1. The root of the plant is in the soil gathering nutrients to produce the fruit of the plant
2. Your life is also planted in something that will produce fruit

3. As you plant in the philosophy of the world and the love of the things the world offers, your fruit will show that.
4. IF your root is in the fertile soil of the truth of the gospel, what is produced in you will also show that.

II. Text

A. Verses 1-3

1. Wealth will never fill the void left in a persons life that only God can fill
2. The desire to gain and the desire to keep will not just corrode, it will corrode your flesh like fire!

B. Verse 4:

1. Cheating the workers, cheating the books
2. Honesty is the first thing to go bankrupt in the carnal flesh
3. So many in the world are trying to "Get over" on someone, rather than earn an honest living.

C. Verse 5: this reminds us of the danger we are in today.

D. Verse 6:

1. The contrast of the righteous and the unrighteous.
2. There is unrighteousness in poverty and wealth, this is not so much about the number in your bank account but the heart and mind.
3. We should always see what we have, wether little or much, as a tool in the hand of God to bring the gospel to the lost world.

III. Point

A. Wealth and Purpose

1. There are examples of misused wealth in scripture, as well as wealth properly used
 - a) Jesus confronts the wealthy religious leaders of the day
 - b) Jesus teaches parables regarding the difficulties of dependance when wealthy
 - c) And yet we see Joseph of Arimathea risking all his influence and position to do the right thing at the burial of Jesus:
2. [Mat 27:57-61 ESV] 57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.
 - a) He was wealthy
 - b) We was a Disciple
 - c) And. When he was needed, He served in a way that others could not.
3. Wealth has a purpose
 - a) God has blessed you with much, so you can accomplish much in obedience
 - b) Use the resources God has given you to be about the gospel:
 - (1) Serve sacrificially
 - (2) Give sacrificially
 - (3) And continue to work in a way that will honor God

B. Honesty and Integrity

1. Connected back to the previous chapter regarding mindset:
 - a) You are not God,
 - b) You must trust God,
 - c) Don't forget this and assume God's role
2. Basically, we are being challenged to serve with integrity
3. When we gain much, but its done in a way that is dishonest, we are shortsighted and failing to see God's bigger plan.
4. The reason: we are not yielding to Him, but assuming a role of authority that is not ours to assume.

5. [1Pe 3:10-12 ESV] 10 For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

6. Do the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, and God will honor it.

C. Warnings and Reality

1. When you learn to trust in your wealth, and your strength, you are not trusting in God.
2. Heed the warnings, they are there for a reason
3. Warning labels sometimes make me laugh...
4. This is something we should all pay attention to and allow to impact our lives
 - a) When the Holy Spirit gives you a warning we are to heed the warning
 - b) God is trying to protect us and shape us.
5. There is no-one beyond the negative influence of the carnal mind, so the answer is to not let the carnal mind have its way in us.
6. We need the renewal of our mind.
 - a) Not a one time renewal, but continual
 - b) This comes through growth and discipline.

IV. Close