

James 5:1-6

Discussion Group Questions

June 15, 2008

LESSON 11

Dr. Jerry Nelson

For discussion following the sermon on June 15, 2008

Denunciation of the Wicked Rich

“Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 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. 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. 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.

Discussion Questions

If James were aware of the incomes and lifestyles of suburban Denverites, how would he define “rich?”

What “misery” is coming upon these “rich?” Is this referring to final judgment or something more immediate?

What words in verses 1-6 communicate the seriousness of this indictment?

James says the corrosion of gold and silver “will testify against you.” What comparable things would testify against the “rich” today?

What does “hoarding” look like in our day? In our lives? When saving become hoarding?

Most of us aren't landowners paying wages to field hands. What are comparables to this failure to pay wages? How do we consumers contribute to this injustice?

Define “luxury.” Define “self-indulgence.” When does appropriate enjoyment and pleasure become self-indulgence?

In what way (s) are “luxury” and “self-indulgence” defined by comparison to what others have or don't have?

What implications do these verses have on earning money, saving money and spending money?

What is our responsibility to the poor in our church, in our community, in our world?

Some think a different response is called when comparing the destitute with the working poor. What might be those differences?

What implications do these verses have for our political choices?

How will you respond to these verses?