

James 5:1-6

Shoe-leather Christianity

For June 15, 2008

LESSON 11

Dr. Jerry Nelson

Questions are to be completed the week of June 8 leading up to the sermon on June 15.

Denunciation of the Wicked Rich

Read James 5:1-6 and answer the following questions:

1. (5:1) Compare 5:1-6 with James 1:9-10 and 2:2, 6-7 and then describe the “rich people.” What do you guess is their spiritual condition and their relationship to the local church?

2. (5:2) Clothing was considered an asset (wealth) in ancient times. What other kinds of wealth rot?

3. (5:3) Not only are their assets depreciating (5:2) but they have apparently been hoarding for a long time (gold and silver are corroding/tarnishing). Looking at verse 4, how will the “corrosion...testify against” (them)?

Not only will the corrosion eat away at the gold and silver but it will eat away at what else?

What might be James’ point in saying “your flesh” will be eaten away like fire?

“You have hoarded wealth in the last days.” The word “in” (NIV) can be translated “for” (NASB). What point would each translation yield?

4. (5:4) How had the rich cheated the workmen?

What forms might that take today?

What indicts the rich person?

What happens to the “workmen’s” cries? What is significant about this?

5. (5:5) How might James describe “luxury” and how would he describe “self-indulgence?”

What might that look like today?

Thinking about the words “fattened” and “day of slaughter,” paraphrase the whole sentence in your own words.

How does this relate to the words in 5:1 and 3 (“misery that is coming upon you” and “in the last days”)?

6. (5:6) How might 4:11(a) relate to “condemning” another person?

“Murder” is a strong word. How might the rich have “murdered” others? Is this literal or figurative language, or both?

What makes the sin especially egregious is that the condemned/murdered are helpless - “innocent,” “not opposing you.” Think about it: How can any of this apply to us?

In what ways are we the “rich” James is describing?

Personal Reflection

The illusion of the rich is that they are to be envied and emulated. What is God’s perspective of their wealth?

The indictments of this passage include the words “corrosion,” “hoarded wealth,” “luxury,” “self-indulgent” and lead to the very implication of murder. How “wealthy” do you have to be in order for these words to be applicable?

In our affluent society, what will keep us from normalizing sinful attitudes of self-indulgence and help us to keep a biblical perspective on what we own?

If you have suffered injustice at the hands of the rich, what will guard your heart against bitterness and revenge?



Memory Verse: James 5:5

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

For VerseMinder go to <http://soundliving.org/verseminder.shtml>