

Good Morning Church

So, we are starting chapter 5 of James this morning. Last Sunday, we talked about how we do not know what tomorrow brings, and this Sunday its about the false security of wealth..

The false security that wealth can give us, leads to the passage I read last Sunday, where the Rich Man tells his soul..

Luke 12:19 - And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."

Then God says, Fool, tomorrow your soul is required of you... and then ends with..

*Luke 12:21 - So is the one who lays up **treasure for himself** and is not **rich toward God**.*

Mat 6:19-20 - Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

That is the correlation... keep those verses in mind...

Read James 5:1-8 - The Corrosion of Wealth

(Vs 1) Come Now, You Rich

The first question you may have, is who is James talking to? Who are the Rich?

Are they believers? Well, yes, they think they are... and I believe they are members of the church... there are wealthy people in the church... Individuals that God has chosen to use their wealth for righteousness, always have been, always will be, and his letter was written to believers, and James is calling forth the rich... so the Rich, the wealthy, are there in the congregation.

They are part of the Body of Christ. And James is inviting them forward... to listen to this word of instruction.. this warning..

So, you may have another question...

Why is James picking on the Rich? The Wealthy? Well, he is and he isn't.. it's a warning about the dangers of wealth.. Gold and Silver as he says.. about the deceitfulness of

riches... and within that, warning the wealthy not to put too much stock (pun intended) in what money can buy...

Here is the thing. Is God against wealth? No. Not at all.

God often blessed his servants with wealth. Abraham was wealthy. Jacob was wealthy. David was Wealthy. Solomon was wealthy... all the way up to Joseph of Arimathea... they were wealthy by worldly standards.. they owned land and servants and cattle... etc... and they had gold and silver... but, understand, the widow who gave only two mites (two small copper coins) as an offering, she was wealthy as well... maybe not by worldly standards...

But In God's Eyes..

So, God isn't against wealth, but he does hold a different view on wealth as we do, and as the world does, we look at bank accounts, God looks at our hearts and our motives... which brings up another question?

Does God think all Rich People are sinful and wicked? No. You might think he does, if you don't study all of scripture, I mean just here in James we have read..

James 1:9-11 - Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he (the Rich Man) will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

James 2:6 - ...Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?

Matthew 19:23-25 - And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"..

Why were the disciples astonished?

Simple. They were taught and believed that riches were always a sign of God's blessing and favor. So, if someone was rich, well, then they certainly were going to heaven...

The prosperity Gospel existed even back then, and Jesus called it out for being false...

But here is the thing, this is the warning, riches are deceitful, and they can become and idol, and they absolutely can present an significant obstacle to the Kingdom...

Why? Because the wealthy are the most likely to live independently from God, because their wealth gives them a false sense of security.. Like what we read in Revelation...

Rev 3:17 - For you say, "I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing," not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

So, James writes here, to the rich, he says, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you... James is being somewhat prophetic here... at the end of verse 3 he says, you have laid up treasure in **the last days...**

Basically, what James is saying is exactly what Jesus taught, as we read earlier... it is foolish to lay up treasure for yourself and not be rich toward God...

You can't buy your salvation with it.

You can't save your family with it. You can't take it with you... your wealth is a temporary thing, here today and gone tomorrow..

The situation we live in today, is a spiritual situation.. and investing in physical things (storing up treasures on earth) is foolish, if we don't store up treasures in heaven first and foremost...

Don't put any faith in your wealth, and don't let your love for money control your life...

Remember, it is the love of money that is the root of all evil... not money itself...

1Ti 6:10 - For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

You know why Paul wrote this to Timothy? Because of false teachers infiltrating the church for financial profit. They were fleecing believers and infecting the church with "the love of money."

*1Ti 6:9 - But those who **desire to be rich** fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ...*

And so, wolves in sheep's clothing, are leading the church into temptation. Leading the church into ruin and destruction... when they tempt the church with the desire to be rich... Which is why read, at the end of verse 6..

(Vs 6) You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

Not only that, but we see they also operate fraudulently.. holding back wages.. all for their own self indulgence... their own pleasure...

(Vs 4) The Wages of the Laborers

Leviticus 19:13 - "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

"Deferring payment is a sort of defrauding, as it bereaves the creditor of the benefit of improvement; and so they are taxed here with injustice, as well as covetousness, in that they lived upon other men's labours, and starved the poor to enrich themselves." (Poole)

The rich James is talking about, have no ethical standards and they are robbing from others (the poor) to enrich themselves..

(Vs 5-6) The Self indulgence of the Rich

We see this today, don't we? all across the nation? In our state? The Wealthy Politicians robbing from the poor to enrich themselves, to fund their immortality..

Yesterday I read that the demonic democrat politicians in our state, just voted to raid 4 Billion dollars from the law enforcement and firefighters pension fund so that they can cover (or try to) their multi million dollar budget deficit they created...

Because of no accountability... and the Millionaire Tax they want to pass? That is a door, that once opened, will affect everyone in this room, and will rob many of you of your hard earned savings and investments and they will use it to tax you on your unrealized gains...

So, no wonder James is calling the wealthy out... and giving this warning...

Which is, if you continue to love money more than God, and continue to take advantage of others and lead them into ruin, you will be led into ruin and destruction as well..

Your wealth will corrode and then, it will corrode you...

(Vs 2-3) Your wealth is corroding

Now, you may be asking, can Gold and Silver rust and corrode? The literal translation means to be covered with rust.. and the answer is a yes and no...

No. Pure Gold (24K) does not corrode or rust

Have you ever heard of Potato Creek Johnny? He is the third most important person, historically speaking, from Deadwood, South Dakota. Buried in the cemetery right next to Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok. I have been there, I have seen his grave. I can show you a photo of it...

Why is he famous? Because in 1929, he discovered one of the largest Gold Nuggets ever... a 7.364 Troy ounce gold nugget..

Almost 100 years ago now.. and guess what, its on display in the Adams Museum and it hasn't rusted or corroded one bit...

He sold it for around \$250 dollars back in the mid 30's, today it is worth around \$35,000 dollars.. and it sits encased in glass.. the real thing.. not a replica...

So, No. Pure Gold (24K) does not corrode or rust

Yes. Gold alloys can corrode, because they aren't pure.

Pure Silver can't rust, but it can tarnish, but most tarnish can be cleaned off..

But again, the more impure the silver, the more rust or corrosion you can get.

James isn't trying to be scientifically accurate. He is using this as a illustration..

But it isn't just the Gold and Silver that corrodes, you will as well... Let me give you another example...

Its a story, it is about a man named Tommy Thompson. Real person. Real story. He was an inventor, and a explorer. He was a modern day treasure hunter. Back in 1988, he built his own submersible, called the Nemo, which was described as looking like a industrial freezer with robotic arms, and while searching around 7,500 feet below the Atlantic Ocean he discovered a shipwreck...

It was the SS Central America, a massive side-wheel steamship that sank in a hurricane off the coast of South Carolina in 1857, with 425 passengers and crew members and (they say) 30,000 pounds of federal gold from the new San Francisco Mint..

It was a remarkable find. It usually only happens in the movies or in a Clive Cussler Novel... But it was the Gold that attracted all the attention obviously — the ship was carrying lots and lots of gold when it sank.

Supposedly they recovered around 15 tons of Gold.

Which, was estimated to be around or close to half a billion dollars in value at that time. He sold some of the gold he recovered for \$52 million dollars back in the early 2000's..

And that of course, started all kinds of problems... The moment he set his foot on dry land basically, you could say that Tommy was hit with every legal issue known to man. Everyone wanted to get their share of the fortune. Even His investors claimed that he ripped them off, and the litigation was unending.. And the question at that time was, was it Gold Fever, or was Tommy a legitimate pirate? Who knows... it has never really been settled...

So, in 2012, with all of these problems overwhelming him, Tommy ran and hid. He went underground you could say. He took a suitcase full of cash and gold and disappeared... Not for long though. He stayed on the run for around 2.5 years until he was finally caught.

When they found him he was suffering from neurological problems and chronic fatigue syndrome, which supposedly impaired his memory. He was genuinely sickened and overwhelmed. All of this led to meandering explanations about what he knew and what he remembered.

In December 2015, they jailed him indefinitely on charges of contempt, until he cooperates. As of today, he is still in Jail.

All due to the deceitfulness of riches. Due to the corruption of wealth.

"The Gold" had upended partnerships, and it had ended his marriage, and now keeps him behind bars... What started as a valiant adventurous mission of science turned into something else...

"The pressure 8,000 feet below the sea is 250 times greater than on the surface, and Tommy Thompson (has been) was squeezed by something even more intense for the better part of 30 years."

Talk about the corrosion of wealth, and then, that corrosion eating your flesh... James writes that it will be evidence against you. It literally was evidence against Tommy...

So, how much do you love money? How much does it control you? How do you treat others because of it? Are you defrauding or enriching the lives around you?

(Vs 7-8) Be Patient. Establish your hearts.

Hebrews 13:5 - Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he (God) has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Lets go back to Silver and Gold.

Pure Gold (24K) does not corrode or rust. Pure Silver can't rust or corrode.. But Gold Alloys, Impure Gold, and Impure Silver... absolutely... We live in a world that is impure and all the wealth the world offers is impure, no matter how impressive it is.. if you put your faith in what the world offers, your faith will be impure as well...

It can corrode.

Understand this..... everything you save up here on earth, all your wealth, your stocks, your investments, your food, your grain, your clothes your shoes, your cars, your houses etc.. has no eternal value, these temporary riches will just rot and flake away...

In these last days, it is best to store up your treasure in heaven...

It is best to put your faith in something better than Silver or gold..

Pro 8:19 - My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver.

Psalm 119:72 - The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

So, in these last days, be patient. Don't be tempted by the deceitfulness of riches.

Establish your hearts. That means strengthen, make firm, make stable... your hearts, through Gods Word.. in prayer... root your Hearts not in temporary worldly wealth but in the eternal righteousness of Jesus.

"When God shall give you a rich return for all you have done for him, you will blush to think you ever doubted; you will be ashamed to think you ever grew weary in his service. You shall have your reward. Not tomorrow, so wait: not the next day perhaps, so be patient. You may be full of doubts one day, your joys sink low. It may be rough windy weather with you in your spirit. You may even doubt whether you are the Lord's, but if you have rested in the name of Jesus, if by the grace of God you are what you are, if he is all your salvation, and all your desire, — have patience; have patience, for the reward will surely come in God's good time." (Spurgeon)

Be encouraged. Have Hope. The Lord is returning.

Amen.