

## Rich Oppressors and Our Response [James pt. 10] (Js. 5:1-12)

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1. James goes back to where the book began in dealing with suffering and the appropriate response to such
2. He addresses specifically the rich oppressors and what our response should be to them (Js. 5:1-12)

Discussion:

### I. RICH OPPRESSORS (James 5:1-6)

- A. He begins his address (“come now”) the same way he did to those boastful of expected gain who failed to consider God (Js. 4:13)
- B. You rich – those who had obtained their wealth by wrongful means (see Js. 5:4); rich oppressors (Js. 2:6-7); trust in riches (Prov. 11:28)
- C. They should weep and howl at their miseries which were coming – both now and ultimately at the judgment.
- D. Their riches are corrupted and garments moth-eaten (:2)
  1. b/c of excess and hoarding of their wealth, it had rotted through lack of use, garments hung and untouched for long time are moth-eaten
  2. Exactly what Jesus spoke of in the sermon on mount – Mt. 6:19-21
  3. riches gotten esp. through wrong will vanish – Jer. 17:11
- E. Gold and silver are corroded (:3) – they were going to waste
  1. The fact of their corrosion proves they were not needed and were not being used properly – would be witness against
    - a. In the coming judgment (:7,8,9); in the miseries coming upon them (:1); they were hoarding up earthly treasures in these last days [before the judgment] and thus storing up wrath (Rom. 2:5-9)
    - b. Ought to have heeded the warning of Paul – 1 Tim. 6:17-19
- F. The issue was not simply the possession of wealth
  - (Joseph of Arimathea was a rich disciple who was a good and just man – Mt. 27:57; Mk. 15:43; Lk. 23:50-51);
  - (It is difficult but possible for a rich man to make it to heaven with God’s help – Mk. 10:23-27);
  - (Paul’s warning wasn’t against having wealth but to not desire to be rich/trust in riches and to use them to help – 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19)
    1. The problem was how they used their wealth (:1-3, 5-6)
    2. The problem how they obtained their wealth (:4)
- G. They defrauded their workers by withholding their wages (:4a) – (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15)
  1. The stolen wages cry out against them – God will judge those who withhold wages (Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5) – laborers are worthy of their wages (Lk. 10:7; 1 Tim. 5:18)
  2. The Lord of Sabaoth (hosts) hears the cries of the oppressed (Deut. 24:15) – even when their master (the rich oppressor) doesn’t listen
    - The Lord of Hosts (armies in heaven and earth) – will deal with all unjust men

- in this life, sometimes
- in the judgment, always!

- H. They lived in pleasure and luxury (self-indulgence) (:5) [with the \$ they defrauded from laborers]
1. Like the rich man (who oppressed Lazarus) – **Lk. 16:19**
  2. Like the prodigal son (who wasted it on wild living) – **Lk. 15:13**
  3. Compared to animals who eat whatever is put before them even on the day they will be slaughtered – unaware of what is coming
    - they fulfill their every desire with no thought or care as to the coming judgment (**Js. 2:12**) – so speak/do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty)
- I. They even condemned and murdered the just (innocent) (:6)
1. Recall **James 2:6** – oppressed and drug into the courts
  2. Recall **James 2:7** – oppressed the name of Christ
  3. The just – those who had done no wrong to the rich man
  4. He does not resist you – who was not opposing you. The poor who were being oppressed had not reacted by mistreating the rich person, yet they condemned and murdered them.

## II. THE PROPER RESPONSE TO OPPRESSION (**James 5:7-12**)

- A. Therefore – considering oppression, this is how you ought to respond
- B. Affectionately addresses them as brethren (:7,9,10,12)
- C. Commands them to be patient and endure (:7,8,10,11)
- D. Be patient (:7) – endure the suffering, wait until coming of the Lord
  1. When He Returns, He will provide justice (**2 Thess. 1:3-10**)
  2. Leave vengeance to Him, don't resist (**Rom. 12:12; Heb. 10:30**)
- E. Example: farmer waits patiently for the “autumn/spring rains” (:7)
- F. Again, you also be patient (:8) – establish your hearts, for the Lord is coming
  - They should have full confidence the Lord will come (**2 Pt. 3:9-10**)
- G. Don't grumble against each other (:9) – the opposite of patience and being joyful/thankful
  1. Lest you be condemned (judged) – they would be in the same danger of their oppressors at the judgment if they sinned and grumbled against brethren (**Phil. 2:14-16**) Israel (**1 Cor. 10:5-11**)
  2. The Judge standing at the door! – **Rom. 13:11-14; Heb. 10:24-25**
    - Only a heartbeat away from judgment
    - We are in the 'last days' until Jesus comes
  - How often do we grumble against brethren b/c of some suffering they might not even have caused? How often do husbands take out their frustrations from work on their wife/children??
  - DON'T allow another person/this world to cause you to sin and be condemned by God!!
- H. Another example of suffering and patience (:10) – the prophets
  1. The first example was from nature (farmer waiting for rain)
  2. This and the next example are from scripture

3. Great examples of suffering and patience
  - Elijah & King Ahab (Jezebel)
  - Jeremiah & the kings of Judah
  - Daniel & the lion's den
4. The people failed (repeatedly) to heed the words of the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord – **Dan. 9:6**
- I. Blessed are those who endure (suffering) (**:11a**)
  1. **Mt. 5:11-12** – for so the persecuted the prophets
  2. **Heb. 10:35-39** – don't cast away your confidence – endure
  3. **Js. 1:12, 2-3** – blessed is the man who endures temptations, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.
- J. A third example of patience/perseverance (**:11b**) – Job
  - Experience unimaginable loss/hurt but endured and kept his faith
  - But the end intended by the Lord – he was blessed with twice what he had before (**Job 42:10-17**)
  - We see even there that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful - HE cared when His people suffer! And he hears their cries (**Js. 5:4b**)
- K. Do not swear (**:12**)
  1. Again, James speaks of the tongue (recall **Js. 1:19-20, 26; 3:1-12**)
  2. Compare this admonition to the words of Jesus – **Mt. 5:34-37**
  3. Lest you fall into judgment –judged by every word (**Mt. 12:36-37**)

Conclusion:

1. To the rich oppressors – Don't oppress men and store up unnecessary riches, you WILL be judged by the Lord
2. To those oppressed – endure the affliction and don't allow your circumstances to cause you to sin and be judged just like your rich oppressors.
3. Trust in the Lord to deliver justice when he comes in judgment.
4. Cast your care upon Him, for he cares for you – **1 Pt. 5:7**
5. Are you ready for the judgment day??