

22S33 James 5:1-11 (Part 10) Oppressors

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are beginning our study of James with James 5:1-6 (Part 10) Oppressors

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing short letter from James. Who was James? Historians are not sure. Many believe this is James the half-brother of Jesus or even another early Church leader. Most believe this is the same James that appears in the book of Acts and was the leader of the Jerusalem Council in Acts Chapter 15. We don't know the exact date it was written but there are indications that this was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, but we really don't know. The best guess is 50-60AD. Which would make this one of the earliest New Testament letters. James was writing to Hebrew believers scattered among the nations who are facing many trials and persecution. The main theme in this letter is patient perseverance in the midst of the trouble of life. James is encouraging his readers to actively live what they have learned in Christ. He has strong messages about various sins but includes pride, hypocrisy, favoritism, and slander.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read James 5:1-11 (NAS) *¹Come now, you rich people, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. ³Your gold and your silver have corroded, and their corrosion will serve as a testimony against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! ⁴Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of armies. ⁵You have lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and put to death the righteous person; he offers you no resistance. ⁷Therefore be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Do not complain, brothers and sisters, against one another, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. ¹⁰As an example, brothers and sisters, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from James, help us see what James wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, James 5:1 (NAS) *¹Come now, you rich people, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.* This does not seem like a positive start for the rich person. Weeping and howling in miseries. But why, Let's read on, James 5:2-6 (NAS). *²Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. ³Your gold and your silver have corroded, and their corrosion will serve as a testimony against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! ⁴Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of armies. ⁵You have lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and put to death the righteous person; he offers you no resistance.* I don't think James is calling all rich people bad. He is talking about how they get rich. Withhold payment for work. Basically, these are people who cheat. These people live luxuriously off of what rightfully belongs to the workers. Nothing is hidden from God. God sees what they do and God is Just. So they will get what they deserve in the end.

Then James says in James 5:7-8 (NAS), *⁷Therefore be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. ⁸You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.* As always when we see therefore in the Bible, we need to find out what it is there for. James is encouraging those who are being oppressed by the rich to be patience. He uses this wonderful analogy of farming. You plant the seed then you wait patiently for harvest. We too need to be patience as we wait on the Lord to return and endure the troubles of this life. Be patient and trust Jesus.

Then James says in James 5:9-11 (NAS). *⁹Do not complain, brothers and sisters, against one another, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. ¹⁰As an example, brothers and sisters, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.* Do not complain. Ouch that hurts doesn't . I think we all complain but it's not what Jesus wants. Remember God is with us, so we should not be complaining about each other because when we complain we are really judging the other person. Only Jesus in the Judge and He is coming. Why are we so surprised when things don't go smoothly for us. The Bible is full of stories from the Prophets which so that these Godly men had troubles. They were speaking for God and still had trouble. Some were killed. James reminds us of the story of Job. God is in control. God can do whatever He wishes. He's God. Are we not blessed that our Lord Jesus is compassionate and merciful to us. Trust Jesus.

Let's review.

- 1) Rich People? Why? This is not a blanket statement about all rich people. This is about cheaters, those who take advantage of other people. God is watching.

He sees everything. Do you think it's worth it. I don't. Treat others the way Jesus would. Be fair.

- 2) Patience? No one likes this word. No one wants to be patience. We all want it right now. But God knows the best timing. Trust Jesus. Wait for God's timing and things will workout better.
- 3) Don't Complain? This is not a blanket statement about complaining. Although complaining is typically bad. No, James is talking about complaining about our fellow Christians. Don't be their judge, instead remember the stories about Job and the prophets. Let these stories strengthen us and encourage us.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from James. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with this, people will sometimes cheat us. God knows. We need to do what is right in God's sight. Let Him control the outcomes. God is just and as such people who mistreat us will face Jesus some day and face the consequences of their actions

Thank you for joining me for our study of James. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.