



## Lesson 5

### Warning to the Rich (Verses 1-3)

“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.

Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.

Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.”

Jesus said

“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:23)

The disciples were astonished at these words, so he went on to explain that people with lots of money tend to trust in their money and not in God. Such people have good cause to wail and cry, and not to rejoice. Jesus warned about how treasure on earth does not last for long.

“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” (Matthew 6:19-20).

James describes the wicked things that rich people had been doing. But the treasure that they have stored up will rot away. We should aim to have treasure in heaven i.e. trust in Jesus, not in anything on earth. If we do this then when he comes back we will get eternal life which cannot be destroyed by anyone or anything.

### Cruel Masters (Verses 4-6)

“Behold, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

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

You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”

These verses are shocking, as they describe what the rich people had been doing. They had been holding back the wages of their workers, and this was directly against the Law of Moses, which took care of people, especially the poor.

“You shall not oppress your neighbour or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning” (Leviticus 19:13).

The rich people were showing no respect for the laws and standards of God. This shows what can happen if we get our priorities wrong, and do what we like.

### Patience in suffering (Verses 7-8)

“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.

You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

The most important thing in our lives is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth. But we must be patient. Even a farmer has to wait for the crops after he has planted and watered the seed.

### Be Patient (Verses 9-11)

“Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.



As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”

But in waiting we need to get ready, for we do not know when He is coming. We are not ready for Jesus if we are grumbling and criticising each other. When Jesus comes He will judge us, and we need to think about that. We may even have to suffer while we wait. But this is exactly what happened to the prophets in the Old Testament. They suffered for speaking God’s word. Another example is Job who was steadfast – not doubting – when he suffered. He lost servants, family and his health, because he was God’s servant. There is a whole book about him in the Old Testament.

Whatever happens to us, we know from the Bible that God is compassionate and merciful so we have no reason to grumble.

### Speaking the Truth (Verse 12)

“But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.”

God is completely trustworthy so we should be trustworthy and when we say yes we should always mean it and only need to say it once. In particular we should not take oaths.

James here seems to be referring to the words of Jesus when he said:

“I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil” (Matthew 5:34-37).

### The Prayer of Faith (Verses 13-16)

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

Finally James reminds his readers of the importance of praying. The very act of prayer should acknowledge that God is so much greater than us.

We should pray at all times, but there are some times when we are likely to forget. James lists specific occasions for prayer. They are when:

- We suffer;
- We are happy;
- Someone is ill;
- Someone has sinned.

We can only pray for each other’s sins if we know about them, so James encourages us to be honest with each other about our failings. Righteous prayer – offered in the way God likes – can do some wonderful things.

### Elijah’s Prayer (Verses 17-18)

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.

Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.



My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

An example of amazing prayer is that of the prophet Elijah, who lived many years before Jesus and who remained faithful when most of Israel was disobedient. Elijah was only a man but his prayers caused the rain in Israel to stop and then to start again, he asked God to change the weather and this actually happened. We must remember that this was not because Elijah was cross with the people but because God had promised that if they were unfaithful then He would withhold rain. So Elijah’s prayer was in accord with God’s will, and designed to turn the people to God. (This is recorded in I Kings 17:1 and 18:41-45.) We should always want what God wants, and if we pray ‘Your will be done’ then that prayer will definitely be answered. It is so important for us to know what God wants.

Finally, James touches on a sad subject. Sometimes people desert their faith and go back into worldly ways. How wonderful to be able to help such a person back to God.



### Lesson 5 Questions

Name _____
Address _____
_____ Reference Number _____
Tutor's Name _____

Answers to most questions can be found in the lessons or Bible passages given. Please write your answers on this question paper and send them to your tutor

1. What bad things were the rich people doing?
2. Why do we need to wait patiently for Jesus?
3. What is wrong with grumbling?
4. Who is the judge and what does it mean by 'standing at the door' (verse 9)?
5. Name some prophets who suffered for being faithful.
6. Look at the book of Job and list some of the things he suffered.
7. Read Matthew 5:34-36. Why shouldn't we make oaths?
8. When are the times in your life when you forget to pray?
9. James was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this letter. But he seems to be thinking a lot about what Jesus said. List the chapters he seems to refer to often.
10. What have you learnt most from this chapter?

