

James for Everyman: Building a Faith That Works

Week Five: James 5

Dusty Davis

Many early church leaders saw the book of James as lacking in spiritual depth of insight, and yet it remains one of the most practical and studied books of scripture. Written to the believers “of the dispersion” it provides God’s Man with unique insights as to how we are to live when our culture opposes our faith. This series, *James for Everyman*, will challenge you to move beyond a faith that is merely ideological into a faith that works!

James 5:1

“Look here you, you rich people.....”

Right away we can be tempted to think that James isn’t talking to us when he refers to “the rich”. We’re often think of those with *more* than us ignoring our own situation, and rarely do we adopt the proper mindset when thinking about wealth. If we’re going to take the gospel to the entire world, our perspective must shift....

We must adopt a _____.

James 5:1-5

“Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. 2 Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment. 4 For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

5 You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and killed innocent people, who do not resist you.”

As we get into this, it’s important to note:

_____ isn’t evil, the _____ is. (1 Tim. 6:10)

1 Timothy 6:10

“For a LOVE of money is at the root of ALL KINDS of evil. And some people, CRAVING money, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

What James is talking about is a heart issue. With regards to money, James is revealing issues of trust and generosity. Hoarding wealth, displayed where the people had placed their hope. Their wealth had begun to rot...why?

Because they had _____ it.

Matthew 6:19-21

“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.”

Their hoarded wealth began to testify against them, why? **Because I was** _____
to be a _____.

Matthew 25:14

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone.”

James 5:5

“You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter...”

The issue is not with our stuff, if we see the problems as lying with the things we have we will wrongly demonize *them*. We will seek to create “spiritual equations” about how much is ok to keep, how much we *should* give, etc.

The problem is not _____, **it’s when our things** _____.

James 5:7-8

“Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord’s return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.”

James switches from generosity and trust, to hope. For followers of Jesus our hope should be anchored in a single person...not a set of circumstances. Even as we wait and endure through trials, even as we wait for Christ’s return...

Let’s choose to hope in Jesus _____.

James 5:9

“Don’t grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door!”

James 5:10-11

“For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.”

We’re called to look to the prophets for encouragement, but their lives were extremely challenging! Most were ignored, all were persecuted and they were often misunderstood. In order to be encouraged by their lives, we must choose a new standard.

We can’t use the _____ **standard of** _____.

Where does it all bottom out? What are James’ final encouragements to the people who have been dispersed throughout the Roman empire because of their faith in Jesus?

PRAY. Become people of prayer! Even when we don't understand it, we choose prayer:

Because _____.

We ask Him to _____.

And through this cycle of prayer and confession, we will experience _____.

For Discussion:

- 1. How does the hoarding of our wealth reveal a heart that does not trust Jesus? How does our generosity, not only reflect our heart for Jesus, but reveal our hope and trust in Him to provide?**
- 2. God's gifts *to* us, are intended to move *through* us. Has generosity been a challenge for you in your life? Why? What practical steps can you take to begin to model the radical generosity that Christ displayed towards us.**
- 3. We often pray for the resolution of our problems, and rightfully so! If we're in pain, we ask for healing. When we're unemployed we pray for a job. When a relationship is broken, we pray for restoration. These things are good to pray for, but we cannot place our hope in an outcome...we must place our hope in Jesus while we wait. Are you currently in a season of "waiting"? How can you cling to Christ as your hope while you wait?**
- 4. Prayer is a mystery – but our lives in prayer reveal what we believe about prayer. If we believe prayer is effective, we will pray...simple as that. What does your time spent in prayer reveal about your believe in prayer? What steps can you take towards building a prayer life that reflects Christ's own prayer life?**