

Page 1 of 12 James 17 (cont)

Good Morning We're going to read from ~ James chapt.5:v1-6

But notice ~ that to make it personal,

He repeatedly uses 'you' & 'your.' In these verses (17 times, in fact)

All thro' his letter ... James, has repeatedly raised a subject ...
& then come back to it later ~ to study it from another angle.

In chapters 1 & 2 ~ He **addressed** those ...

Who'd become **rich** ... before ... they **came to Faith**;

reminding them ~ that a new style of behaviour was needed,
to demonstrate ~ their new found faith.

Now in these ~ (verses) ~ he addresses those,

Whose riches have largely ~ kept them ...from faith !

Perhaps... some of them were sitting there ~ 'in the church'

Hoping ... **that just by associating, with Christians,**

God would bless them ~ with **more 'abundance'**

Nowhere in the Bible ~ does it teach us ~ that 'riches' are **evil** !
nor ... that being poor ... is a **virtue** in itself.

Instead ... it constantly refers to the **attitudes** ~

we should **hold** in our **hearts** ...

and **demonstrate** ~ through our **behaviour**.

We can imagine, the majority in the church, *who were not rich.*

Mentally... clapping their hands

and saying ... 'You tell them ~ James'

James knows, that regardless ... of our **wealth** ~ or lack of it
There's a **danger of trusting in things** ~ & believing that
more things ... will make us feel happy ~ & more secure !
So these 6 verses ... are a warning ...
Let's look at some of them ~ more closely.

v1. read ~ **Their riches** had become **their status symbol**,
creating an **insulating wall** ~ they thought,
between them ~ and all the rest !
But ...the very things they trusted in ...were not trustworthy.

v2.&3. read ~ Their misery ~ will start with **embarrassment**.
Because the **source of their pride** ... is falling apart !
But worst of all ...**their friends**, are going to **see** ...
Their shame ~ and their embarrassment !

As a young Christian ~ the part of v3. That says:
'Your gold and silver are corroded.' (KJV- says: rusted)
Was a problem to me ~ because **gold, doesn't go rusty !**
and while silver will tarnish ~ and go black,
it, doesn't go rusty ~ either.
But in Isaiah, we find an explanation:

Is.40.vs19-20:

**As for an idol, a craftsman casts it ... and a goldsmith,
overlays it with gold, and fashions silver chains for it.
A man ~ too poor ~ to present such an offering,
selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman,
to set up an idol that will not topple over !**

Amongst these rich people ...

Some were holding tenaciously ... to their pre-Christian **idols**.

No one wanted a **small** idol ~ of course !

It must be as large as possible ...

So ... to **suitably surprise** ... those you wanted to **impress**,

You had a large idol ~ cast in **iron** ~ or, if that was too costly
made of wood ~ but either way ~ it was **overlaid** with **gold**.

The Greek says: **there's rust showing through !**

Their ploy ... to look more wealthy than they really were.

Was being exposed, as the iron rusted, or the wood rotted !

Damage appearing ~ on their most treasured possessions ...

Like moth holes, in their best clothes,

These things **crept** up on them ... **silently**.

Exposing the deceptive character ... of the owner !

And they can creep up on us ... too !

Mis-representation and deception, **can seem such clever tools**,

But sooner or later ... we'll be exposed and shamed.

The phrase in v3 '**the very wealth you were counting on ...**

Is explained in v4: which says:

**'For listen ! Hear the cries of the field workers,
you have cheated of their pay.**

**The cries of the reapers ~
have reached the ears ... of the Lord Almighty.**

So: v3 reveals ... that their sham ... will lead to their shame !
& v4 reveals ... their: **deliberate & planned ~ exploitation**
Expecting the field staff ~ to pay for their self-indulgence.

As in the parable that Jesus told ...
daily paid labour ~ would wait in the street ~ or at the gate,
hoping to be chosen ~ for work that day.

When the foreman came out ~ he'd select the men he wanted,
and state the daily rate ~ By walking on to the job,
the worker accepted ~ that rate.

But these rich men ... were hoarding their wealth ...
by deferring to pay ~ and then deferring **again** ~ and **again** !
The workers had given their labour and couldn't get it back

James says: "**You**, may have **ignored** their desperate pleas,
But God ~ has **heard** their cries ... & not forgotten them.

In, vs 5&6: There was both self-indulgence ...
and gross luxury ~ at other people's expense.
Their total lack of any **conscience** ~ and their methods
of exploitation ~ were the **very opposite** of the ...
'Royal law' **'Love your neighbour ~ as yourself'**

Years ago ~ my son David wanted to buy a new computer,
As a teenager ~ he'd been saving & saving ... **for months**.
I went with him ... on a Saturday morning,

We went from shop to shop, until ... eventually we found, what seemed to be 'a good deal' ~ and he handed over **\$2,300.00 in cash.** (computers were a lot dearer, back then)

They explained that to give such a good price, they bought in the required parts from overseas ~ and assembled them to order. Hence, all orders must be accompanied by the full cash price. Some ten days later, the Company went into receivership ! Owing around **8 million dollars !** David was just one ... of many 100's of 'unsecured creditors' ... who got nothing !

About 2 weeks later ~ I heard a radio interview, with the owner ~ of the now defunct company.

He was planning on starting up a new company ! And was totally heartless, about the millions he still owed. He said... 'I can't afford to pay out ~ that sort of money That's a risk people take'!

When you are one of the victims ... There's a temptation to want some **revenge !** **James** addresses this subject ~ as he changes focus now ... to those in the church, who hadn't been paid for their labour.

v 7. **Dear brothers & sisters you must be patient as you wait...** (for a month ? for a year ?) - (until you see them punished?)

No ! ~ patient ~ as you wait for the Lord's return !

Or ... until the Lord sorts it out.

To re-live our hurts ... and wish we could 'get our own back'

Only hurts **us** ... and damages **our character** !

Paul, writing to the Romans, in Chpt.12.v19, says:

Dear friends, never avenge yourselves.

Leave that to God ... For it is written:

**I will take vengeance, I will repay those who deserve it,
says the Lord. (Paul is quoting: Deut. 32.35)**

When we are **patient about the past, & commit it to the Lord**

Then we're free to **concentrate** on the **present** ...

and work towards the **future** !

Last time... We concluded **chapter 4. at v.12**

Let's **read** on from **Ch.4.** vs13, to 16.

James challenges those who are '**too confident**' about
their future, and are rushing in ... *where angels fear to tread.*

He says: 'remember your mortality ...

& the shortness ... of life.'

And remember your **accountability**,

You have entrusted your life to the Lord,

So you need ~ to **deliberately** seek His will, for it.

He's still encouraging **enthusiasm & forethought & planning**
but with due **dependence** on the Lord's guidance.

Quote: The 'will' of God comes from the **heart** of God,
And so '**His will**' ... is the expression of '**His love**'
There's no reason for me to be afraid of that. (see Wiersby p.138)

4.v16 read ~ Surely a little bit of **boasting and bragging** ~
seems a fairly trivial thing ! Why is James calling it EVIL ?

Remember ~ that James readers were all converted Jews.
Once they were proud of their Judaism,
Now they've embraced Christianity ...
With the temptation to say to their Jewish friends:

'We have a new POWER now... to do anything.'
This is a dangerous '**Half Truth**'

God **doesn't** give us power ~ to do anything **we please**,
But to serve Him ... If their boasting didn't come true,
It was **the Lord's name** ... that came into disrepute !

4.v17: read ~ the true meaning of this verse ~
Must be found in the context of the preceding verses.
To handle it any other way ~ **Mis-applies** ... God's word !

So, what does it mean ?

Suppose ... I accept responsibility, for a position,
But then, never get around to fulfilling my obligations to it.
I'm not doing the job ~ and ~ I'm **preventing** others doing it !

To use an old fashioned term ~ **I'm, like a dog in the manger.**

Jesus dealt with this concept ~ in his parable of the Talents.

The man who was given ~ **only** one talent,
made no effort ~ to utilise the money ~ he simply hid it.
And you'll remember ... he was soundly condemned !

The Lord's **illustration** was in the **commercial** world,
That He knew ... they could understand.

But his **application** was to the **Spiritual** world,
and refers to our responsibility ...in God's work.

Failure in the commercial realm loses money !
but failure in the Spiritual realm ...
loses **unique opportunities** for **Eternity** !
So ... no wonder it's called SIN !

All this dovetails with what he is saying in Chapter 5.
We stopped at v6 ...
(let's come back ... & **read** v 7)

'Be patient' is the same Greek word, as **'be longsuffering'**
While the Jewish Christians in these churches ~
were mostly slaves, with just a few Masters.

The issues he raises here are relevant,
regardless of our financial assets ... or perceived status !

Patience ... is an attitude of heart and mind,
That should be reflected in our behaviour.

The farmer knows full well ~ the harvest cannot come ...
Before the **Grain** ... or **Grapes** ... or **Wool** ~ have grown !
before the time is right !

To be impatient about such things ... is pointless !
So also, in our Christian patience ~ it's important to stand firm.

V8 & 9.read, All around us ~ are secular, non-Christian people,
eager to tell us that **we're wrong**,
& that we'd be much happier ~ if we'd just copy their lifestyle.

Why is the farmer patient ~ as he waits for the crop ?
Because he's seen the harvest ... '**in his mind's eye**'.
He knows he must wait, He knows he can't hurry it up !
But, he also knows, there's work to do, in the meantime.

The **KEY** to this ~ is looking **Forward** ~ not **Back** ! Remember
the **Children of Israel**, on their journey to the Promised land.
They were provided with **mana** ~ as food for their journey.
Even at the slow **walking pace**, of their children and animals,
It shouldn't have taken them ... more than 40 days.

It should have been: 'Hey, we're going to the Promised Land,
and we've got this food to keep us going, till we get there.'
Instead ... their rebellious attitude said:
'We had ... **better food, than this** ... in Egypt'!

When they failed, to **look forward**, to their **goal** ~ that was
When they fell into sin, firstly in attitude ~ and then in action !

Scripture never suggests that we should be...
long suffering and patient ... about our own sins !
We can do something about them !

But when we become impatient ~ about what others should do
Then we can easily become **bitter, & critical, & grumpy** !

To conclude ~ let's briefly review ...
what we've considered this morning:

We've examined our scripture in 3 segments:

Firstly ~ We looked at those ... whose wealth
Had tended to keep them from faith in God.

**Their race for riches, was so urgent ~ there was no time,
to think outside of their ~ 'money hungry' ~ square !**

And if some people got hurt ~ along the way ...
Well ... that just couldn't be helped !

The Lord has a very pertinent statement for these sort of people

**In: Luke 12:v20 'You FOOL, you will die this very night,
then who will get it all' ?**

Secondly ~ was the section in ch. 4 ~ regarding Christians who want to rush in ~ **without any thought** as to ... what the Lord wants them to do !

They're often ~ **impulsive** ... and **over confident that:** God will follow behind, and fix up their dumb decisions. As though ~ they don't need to learn from their own mistakes.

Notice ... that James (as the Lord's mouthpiece) didn't discourage **their enthusiasm**,

Only ~ their thoughtless impulsiveness !

And their attitude ~ that God should be their divine servant !

Thirdly ~ We came to those verses that say:

We must be patient with those circumstances ...
that we're not meant to be ~ in charge of !

Just as the farmer has to wait for the harvest time, so do we.

Finally

We have a natural human reaction ...
that wants **revenge** for bad treatment ~

Or what we feel ~ is **unfair** 'justice'.

This section includes the warning:

Don't grumble about each other

The Greek word ~ for grumble, has nothing to do with ...
constructive criticism ~ or of challenging an idea ~
as to whether it will serve the desired purpose ~ or not.

This word ~ for Grumble: means ... 'to be quarrelsome,
& judgemental ~ & jump to unreasonable conclusions' !

Next week we will **re-address** some of these subjects,
As James ties up ... some loose ends !

Our Key verses ... to take away with us ~ this morning...
Are from: chapt.5. vs7&8

**Dear brothers and sisters, you must be patient
as you wait for the Lord's return
Consider the farmers.
They patiently wait for the precious harvest to ripen.**

**You too, must be patient and take courage,
For the coming of the Lord, is near.**