

The Pride of Possessions and Final Judgment
James 5:1-6

I. Introduction:

- A. The topic of money and possessions is a big issue in the Bible-mentioned some 2,350 times (Randy Alcorn).
 - 1. Why is the way we handle money and possessions such a big deal with God?
 - a. Because the way we handle money and possessions exposes our heart.
 - 2. Why is talking about money and possessions in church such a big deal with us?
 - a. Because we don't want our hearts to be exposed.
- B. The BIG Christian lie: You can serve God and serve money (Luke 16:13).
 - 1. Truth that counters the lie: There is no greater joy than being satisfied with Christ.

II. Proposition

- A. God works for your joy, and I want to work for your joy.
 - 1. John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Romans 14:17; 2 Cor 1:24; 2:3; Philippians 1:25
- B. Since this is my desire, I must tell you that amassing wealth for the purpose of luxurious and indulgent living will not bring you joy; it will bring grief and ultimately, judgment.
 - 1. ILLUS: The working rich & the immediate rich (lottery winners)
 - 2. James reminds us that what we do with our money and possessions in this life will be a testimony either for or against us in the final judgment.

III. Exposition

- A. **The Charge: You have amassed wealth for yourselves on earth in the last days (5:3d).**
 - 1. The biblical admonition: Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV) "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. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
 - 2. How do you lay up treasures on earth?
 - a. By hoarding and amassing wealth and letting it sit somewhere, where it does no kingdom good.
 - 1). Your wealth has rotted (5:2a).
 - 2). Your clothes are moth-eaten (5:2b).
 - 3). Your gold and silver have rotted, corroded (5:3a).
 - b. Peter Davids (176): "The garments which are food for moths and the money which is tarnishing are not being used by their owner, and yet they could have been used by the poor."
 - 1). THIS is the charge against them!
 - a). ILLUS: Seminary – two storage units!
- B. **The Evidence:**
 - 1. **Exhibit A: You amassed wealth by fraud (5:4a).**
 - a. You withheld wages.
 - 1). These wages cry out against you and have been heard by God (5:4b).
 - 2. **Exhibit B: You amassed wealth for luxurious living (5:5a-b).**
 - a. You have lived on earth in luxury (5:a).
 - 1). ILLUS: Lifestyle Spending
 - 3. **Exhibit C: You amassed wealth for personal indulgence (5:5b-c).**
 - a. You gorged yourselves with food (5:5c).
 - 1). ILLUS: \$25,000.00 Sundae
 - 4. **Exhibit D: You condemned and killed the righteous ones who stood between you and wealth (5:6).**
 - a. More than likely this is legal condemnation (see James 2:6-7).
 - 1). ILLUS: Rich taking advantage of the poor through legal channels:
 - a). Courts, even something like gentrification.

C. The Verdict: You will be consumed as a fire (5:3).

1. Luke 12:16-21
 - a. James command them to weep and wail now for the judgment that is about to come (5:1).

IV. Conclusion: How to be happy in God by giving away your wealth!

A. Repent for laying up treasure on earth for yourself.

B. Lay up your treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

C. What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven?

1. If you lay up treasures on earth by hoarding it and amassing it for yourself. . .
2. . . . Then you lay up treasures in heaven by releasing your earthly wealth and generously investing it in kingdom building activities.
 - a. 1 Timothy 6:18-19 (ESV) “[The rich] are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

D. How do you begin laying up treasure in heaven?

1. By faith! Trust that Christ will be all-satisfying, not earthly treasure!
 - a. Unwillingness to give comes from a lack of faith in God to be your provider.
 - b. Faith (satisfaction) leads to anxious-free living, which leads to generosity – Luke 12:22-34.
 - c. Faith (satisfaction) leads to joyful living, which leads to generosity – 2 Corinthians 8:1-2.
2. Give regularly – 1 Corinthians 16:2 (ESV) “On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”
3. Give as needs arise – Acts 4:32-37.

E. What areas does the Bible identify as heavenly investments?

1. **The poor in general (Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22):**
 - a. ILLUS: The Storehouse – But we can do so much more!
 - b. ILLUS: Operation Christmas Child
2. **Christian brothers and sisters in need (Acts 4:32-37)**
 - a. ILLUS: Benevolence – The Luzzo family
3. **Missionaries (including church planters) (1 Corinthians 9:13-14)**
 - a. We do this through Whole-Hearted Commitment and direct missions giving.
4. **Local church ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18)**
 - a. We do this through regular giving to the operating budget.

F. The joy of being satisfied in Christ!

1. I am fighting for your joy!
 - a. It only comes by being satisfied in Christ!!!
2. Luke 9:25 (ESV) For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

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