

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“*Stored Up Your Treasure*”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 5:1-6

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-9.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 10.** Today we continue in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #25. I have titled today’s message “*Stored Up Your Treasure*” (5:3).
-) IMHO, this is another example where the chapter breaks are placed in questionable positions. Why do I say that? Because I feel certain that the wealthy people James is referring to in these six verses are the same businessmen he was talking about in 4:13-17.
-) Remember from last week those businessmen who were planning profitable business excursions without giving any glory to God or including God in their business plans? If the Lord wills? And James tells them, “*You are just a vapor.*”
-) In today’s text we find yet another test of one’s Christianity. And today’s test deals with this: where do our possessions and our money and our wealth stand in our lives?
-) **SLIDE 11.** What was the problem? JAMES 5:4. The laborers were not getting paid what they should have been paid. The owners were withholding what the laborers deserved.
-) **SLIDE 12.** Why was this happening? JAMES 5:3. Because the owners wanted to store up treasure on earth. The rich in this passage were after one thing: more wealth. Their thought process was that if they don’t pay the laborers what they should, that would leave more for them.

-) **SLIDE 13.** And what would be the consequence of these actions? James lists three interconnecting consequences. #1. JAMES 5:1. Unless there is a change, there will be miseries come upon them. What miseries could that be?
-) **SLIDE 14.** #2. JAMES 5:5. All the worldly treasures they have built up has fattened them. But they are just like fattened cattle today. Cattle like getting fat, but they have no clue they are about to be taken for slaughter.
-) **SLIDE 15.** #3. JAMES 5:3. All their worldly possessions amount to nothing. Their gold and silver rust. And this rust will be what they take to the grave with them only to be consumed by the flames of the eternal fires of hell.
-) So, there's the test. If you say you are a Christian, where does Christ stand in regards to your possessions, your money, and your wealth? Is Christ a priority over those things?
-) Let's face it. Americans love their stuff. But the bottom line question is this: Do we own our stuff or does our stuff own us?
-) It is not unusual in America to turn on the TV and see 3 commercials. The first commercial is encouraging you to get a credit card that promises the more you spend the more rewards you get back. The second commercial is telling you to buy this product or that product because its better, its faster, it makes you look younger, and you just have to have it. The third commercial is a toll free phone number to call where someone will help you get out of credit card debt.
-) **SLIDE 16.** Back in the 80s female pop singer Madonna had a hit song called "*Material Girl.*" Some words from that song are: "*Cause the boy with the cold hard cash is always Mister Right, 'cause we are living in a material world and I am a material girl.*" That pretty much sums it up for a large percentage of narcissistic Americans. We are materialistic people.
-) Do we own our stuff or does our stuff own us?

-) So do we need to give up everything we have to be a true disciple of Christ? Are possessions bad? Can I have nice things and still be a Christian? Let's put this in proper perspective by looking at other Scriptures that deal with possessions, money, riches, and stuff. Trust me. There's plenty there.
-) **SLIDE 17.** DEUTERONOMY 8:16-18.
-) **SLIDE 18.** Our **ABILITY** to honestly produce wealth comes from God, not us. God makes it clear that it is not our power or the strength of our hands that produce our wealth. It comes from God. Among us today are people with diverse abilities and talents and all that comes from God.
-) OK. So now we have wealth (some more than others). Now the question is: What do we do with this wealth? These treasures we have? We certainly don't want to be like these people in JAMES 4:13 - 5:6.
-) Let's talk about the heart. What is the heart? The heart is that place where we hold our thoughts, our values, our beliefs, our morals, our desires, our feelings, our hopes, our dreams, and our loves. It's the center of all our emotions.
-) **SLIDE 19.** PROVERBS 4:23.
-) **SLIDE 20.** PSALM 26:2.
-) **SLIDE 21.** 1SAMUEL 16:7.
-) **SLIDE 22.** And those verses bring us here. MATT 6:19-21. This is the exact terminology James uses in our text today.
-) **SLIDE 23.** Where our **TREASURE** is, there our heart will be also. And we can reverse that statement too.
-) Jesus tells us to store up our treasures in heaven, not on worldly stuff. James tells us to store up our treasures in heaven, not on cheating our workers out of their pay.

-) Worldly stuff comes and goes. Why? Because rust and moths destroy and thieves steal. But treasures in heaven last for eternity. Treasures in heaven can never be destroyed nor can they ever be stolen.
-) What are our thoughts, our values, our beliefs, our morals, our desires, our feelings, our hopes, our dreams, and our loves? In other words, what is in our hearts? Is what's in here God-centered or stuff-centered?
-) **SLIDE 24.** Jesus has a dialog with a rich, young ruler. Most of us are familiar with the story. LUKE 18:18-23.
-) There are many different lessons to be learned from this story. This morning I'll just give one. Jesus knew that this man's wealth and his possessions (his stuff) were standing between him and eternal life and the rich ruler couldn't let them go.
-) **SLIDE 25.** The cost of discipleship means our **STUFF** is not a priority in our life. Jesus is. But stuff was a priority for the rich ruler. It is for most people today. We live in a material world. And people like the rich young ruler, and like the people in JAMES 5:1-6 prefer their stuff over Christ.
-) **SLIDE 26.** MATTHEW 6:24. Who or what do you love? Is it God or is it money? You know in your heart what that answer is. And so does God. Because God looks at the heart.
-) Let's face it. Americans love their stuff. But the bottom line question is this: Do we own our stuff or does our stuff own us?
-) The people in JAMES 5:1-6 who had the riches were not being honest with their laborers. They were withholding their pay. These people were greedy. They only wanted more. They were storing up their treasures on earth.
-) And I think there's a good chance that if you're not honest with your pay to your laborers, you may not be honest with your priorities with Christ.

-) And James tells these rich people in this passage about eternal consequences for storing up treasures on earth. Those same consequences should grab our attention.
-) Is Christ your treasure or is stuff your treasure? James presents us with another test. I hope we all pass the test.

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