

Series – Part 18: How to Live as a Christian:

Be Responsible With Your Wealth!

James 5:1-6 ESV

Sunday, August 25 at 9:00; Monday, August 26 at 7 PM

14th Sunday After Pentecost / 13th After Trinity – 2013

Our Regular Sunday Schedule Resumes Next Sunday

Sunday, September 1 at 8:00 & 10:45

Monday, 9/2 is Labor Day – NO SERVICE!

Monday Services Resume on 9/9 at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, let's think about our eternal and temporal blessings:

- God has saved us from our sins through faith in Jesus!
- God has given us much wealth, *so we have many possessions and even some extra money.*

So we have great blessings from God *as well as His call to be responsible with our wealth!*

1. **Our Riches CANNOT Save Us:** Deep down we know that is true, *yet we are ever-tempted to trust in our riches rather than in God!* Think about the wealthiest in the world, *very few of them know Jesus as Savior (Mark 10:25)!* But why? They THINK they have everything they need, but – *if they continue without Jesus* – these words will be true for them: **1 Come now, you rich [ones], weep and howl** [lit. crying out loud¹] ~~for~~

¹ The Greek version of the OT “uses the verb [όλολύζοντες – crying out loud] exclusively in the context of laments in response to the disasters visited on the people by Yahweh for their apostasy [abandoning their belief in Him as their Savior].” (LTJ, 298-299)

[over] the miseries [distresses, troubles] ~~that are coming upon you.~~ // The Bible says: “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf” (Pro 11:28 ESV). *We are righteous in Jesus!*

2. **Earthly Riches are TEMPORARY:** **2 Your riches have rotted and your garments ~~are~~ [have become] moth-eaten.** // Think about something you really wanted; *then you finally bought it* – like clothing or a car. Is that item getting better and better OR is it declining more and more with each passing day? Our wealth is nice, *but it is fragile, temporary, and not worthy of our trust!* Instead, we **+**trust in God, **+**thank Him for our blessings, and **+**use them as He guides in His Word!
3. **HOARDED Riches Will Cry Out against Us:** **3a Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire.** // In James 2:6 we learned that the rich oppress the poor and drag them into court. Why? To take even the little they have, *but what will eventually happen?* Those temporary riches will corrode and cry out against their owners, *even as the blood of Abel cried out to the LORD from the ground* (Gen 4:10)! LTJ wrote: “**Since the rich have placed their trust and their very sense of worth in their gold and silver, the same poison/rust that destroys the metals destroys them as well.**” (300) As James wrote: It “**will eat [their] flesh like fire.**”
4. **Let Us Understand THE TIME:** **3b You have laid up treasure in the last days.** // We are living in the last days, *so were those to whom James had originally*

written! What does that mean? It means that Jesus could return at any time, *so we are not to be laying up earthly treasures for ourselves; instead*, we should diligently use all that God has given us to honor Him and help others know Jesus! The “last days” are NOT a time to lay up earthly riches, *but heavenly riches!*

5. **Our UNREPENTANT Sins are Not Silent:** ⁴ **Behold** [look], **the wages of the laborers who mowed** [reaped, cut down your grain] **your fields** [cultivated land], **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. //

- a. The LORD gave these instructions: “...The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning” (Lev. 19:13 ESV). “You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin” (Deut. 24:15 ESV).
- b. The cry of unrepentant sins: “During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God” (Exod. 2:23 ESV). What about us, do we have unrepentant sin? → Have we stolen and not repaid? → Are we living in opposition to God’s Word, but have no sorrow? → Have we injured or ended a relationship and not sought reconciliation? Let us repent before those against whom we have sinned cry out to the LORD of Armies!

6. **Let Us NOT Be Selfish:** Since God has given us more, *we are responsible to share more with people in need!*
 - a. ^{5a} **You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence.** // It’s not wrong to have some nice things, *but it is wrong to hoard them when others are in need!* Most Americans live beyond their means, so they struggle to pay their bills and feel forced to rob from the LORD. *He is calling all such people to repent!*
 - b. ^{5b} **You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.** // LTJ: That is “Equivalent to ‘stuffing’ or force-feeding an animal to fatten it for the slaughter. The rich oppressors’ self-indulgence is perceived ironically as preparation for self-destruction ‘in the last days.’” (304)
7. **Let Us NOT Take Advantage of Others:** ⁶ **You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.** // Those who are friends of the world (4:4) have identified **being** with **having**. “To take away a neighbor’s living is to murder him.” (LTJ, 305)

Conclusion: Wow! Super-strong words for *unrepentant* sinners! So let us ✓ be honest with God’s Word, ✓ be sorry for our sins, ✓ be absolutely certain of God’s full forgiveness through Jesus, and ✓ strive to use our wealth according to the LORD’s good and gracious will.

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**