

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 8TH, 2023 // BOOK OF JAMES

WICKED RICH (JAMES 5:1-6) "YOU RICH PEOPLE"

Up until now, James has been writing to his "brothers and sisters." Why would a letter written to the church directly address unbelievers?

- **Possibly to assure the church that God would still judge wickedness. It wasn't the wealth that made them wicked; it was the way they got it and used it. Still, we see applications and cautions for Believers.**

CORRODED GOLD

Clothes wear out and markets change, but gold is always a reliable standard... Wrong. Even the surest ways waste away when abused.

- **James directly condemns the wickedly rich. As Believers, shouldn't we be held to an even higher standard? Eternity will be the judge of how we handled the wealth that God allowed us to have.**

PATIENCE (JAMES 4:7-12) WAITING ON CHRIST

James has just reminded us that the wicked will continue to be wicked, and now, we must wait. Our impatience can sometimes reveal our faith.

- **Like a farmer, we must trust God with what we cannot control and honor God with what we can control. Harvest is always worth the wait!**

WHAT TO SAY

As we live our lives, we don't just sit and watch. Even though it rains, we still have work to do, and we shouldn't waste time fighting each other.

- **It's time to speak of the goodness, the greatness, the judgment, and the mercy of God. Times of suffering are often the most golden opportunity to speak a word for the glory of God.**

TRUSTWORTHY

It may seem that James is shifting gears in verse 12 to talk about oaths. A few paragraphs ago, James shared the power of the tongue.

- **He is saying faith that perseveres is trustworthy in speech. The words from our mouths and on our screens should be so consistent and dependable that they guarantee reliability. Words = Life = Truth**

PRAYER (JAMES 5:13-20) WHEN TO PRAY

Bad, good, sick, broken, lost...always pray. James reminds us that patience isn't about sitting back and doing nothing; it's about actively waiting.

- **Real patience in suffering only comes from God, and prayer is the only way to obtain it.**

OIL AND ELDERS

A variety of different interpretations are clearly possible here, but ultimately the power for healing is not found in any oil but in the God who answers prayer.

- **This is a unique circumstance for those who cannot join the assembly. No special power is reserved for the elders: the power is in God, and it is available to the praying Church.**

CONFESS

This is the only place in the New Testament where we are called to confess to one another. It's interesting that we see it right in the middle of healing.

- **Physical sickness definitely inspires prayer, but our sin sickness may be the greatest barrier to healing in our lives. Are we ready to admit our weaknesses?**

RESTORATION

Do we really expect powerful prayer when we aren't right with God? This isn't about being perfect. Elijah wasn't perfect.

- **When we finally realize that we are beggars telling other beggars where to find bread, we will begin to pray with power, in God's will, as we share the grace that we receive from God.**

WEALTH

- Those who attain and use their wealth with wicked motives will be judged for it.
- **We, too, must be aware of our motives when it comes to our wealth.**
- **We may not be in a position to judge the rich, but we can live in peace knowing that we have given from our abundance for the glory of God.**

TIMING

- Even though we see wickedness around us, we must remember that God is at work.
- **During times of trouble, our words will reveal our faith. We can't miss opportunities to share the goodness of God for the glory of God.**
- **God is consistent, and we too should be dependable. Words are important, and we should always share the truth with love.**

EFFECTIVE

- Prayer isn't an option; it's essential.
- **Powerful prayer begins with a humble heart. Humility is seen when we admit that we still need a Savior.**
- **When we confess all sin to God and to other Believers as needed, we become free to pray in God's will and share grace, mercy, love, and salvation effectively!**