

James 1:9-12

Counseling James
Thinking About Poverty and Riches

Sermon Audio Blurb: James has much to say about persecution being a great equalizer between rich and poor and much to say about our attitude towards wealth as well.

Key Words: Wealth, rich, poor, persecution, humility pride

Scripture: James 1:9-12, misc.

Introduction

Read James 1:2-12

A. Review

1. Discipleship\Counseling Themes in James

a. trials, endurance, doubt, wisdom, prayer, desire, faith/works, sickness, slander, planning, God's will, favoritism, rich\poor, anger, the tongue, j
jealousy, strife/conflict, humility and pride

b. James 1:9-12; the major themes are rich\poor, pride\humility contrasts

c. The rich\poor contrast speaks to the attitude a Christian should have regarding stewardship.

2. James: Pastor of Realville

a. Persecuted church

b. loss of homes and possessions, shunning, courts, slander

c. trial upon trial...

B. Divine Purpose in Trials (2-4)

1. The Divine purpose in a trial is that faith may be proven to be genuine; in that there can be joy when one perseveres in a trial.

C. The Need for Divine Wisdom to successfully navigate the Trial. (5-8)

1. God gives this wisdom generously and without a scolding thus illustrating God's love for those that love him. Think about that for a second-no matter how many trials come our way we can be sure that God loves us with an everlasting love and is willing to give us wisdom so that we navigate the trial in a way that proves our faith genuine.

D. Rich and Poor Responding to a trial (9-12)

E. Preliminary Important Observations

1. Is the rich person in the passage a believer?

- a. Pastor Jame's main concern has to be for those within the church and not outside of it.

- b. The attitudes of the heart within the church matter!

2. trials as great equalizers

3. Vs 9-12 have a great deal to do with one's attitude toward wealth in the first place and it's relative importance in light of eternity.

- a. "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. "Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. (1 Chronicles 29:11-12, NASB)

- 1) The issue here is ownership versus Lordship. There are a great many verses that say the same thing as 1 Chronicles 29:11-12. God owns it all.

- 2) What we need in the first place is to transfer ownership of all "we own" to God. In other words change our thinking to Biblical thinking rather than "it's an all mine kind of attitude"

- 3) What this means is that every spending decision is a spiritual decision. (Lord, what shall I do with [my} your money?)

- b. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. (1 Cor. 4:2, NASB)

- 1) Paul is talking about the stewardship of the gospel-that is being faithful to the gospel that Paul says is of first importance, (1 Cor. 15:3)

2) to be gospel-centered means to be gospel centered in all areas, working hard, being honest, saving money, spending wisely, training children, giving generously, avoiding debt and seeking sound biblical counsel especially when you are in a hole.

3) Since God owns it all in the first place our attitude needs to shift from “this is what I give to the church and missions” to “I need to be faithful in what I do with the other 90%.

4) The point is God gives us wealth to manage for His glory. The Bible says so much about wealth because it is a primary competitor with Christ for the lordship over our lives.

c. “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true *riches* to you?...13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Luke 16:11, 13, NASB)

1) How we handle wealth has a major impact on the quality of our spiritual life.

2) Do not have the “crusader” mentality

I. Glorifying in High Position (v9)

A. the brother of humble circumstances

1. poor destitute man, crushed, oppressed, humble circumstances lost everything.

2. among the readers of James would be those who were beggars, lame or blind saved by Christ with no earthly future, esp persecuted because they believed in the hated Christ.

B. glory in his high position

1. play on words between “humble circumstances” and “high position”

2. Yes, you have humble circumstances but you also have a high position

3. Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? Ja. 2:5 NASB

4. who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials. (1 Pet. 1:3–6)

II. Glory in humiliation (vs 10)

A. To glory in humiliation sounds like madness.

1. Think Job
2. Have you ever seen a hearse pull a U-Haul?
3. All is havel.

B. Why glory in the humiliation?

1. For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, 1 Pe. 1:24 NASB

2. A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. Isa. 40:6-8

C. Yeah, life is short (vs11)

1. Trusting in wealth is a waste of time and effort.
2. You can lose everything in a heartbeat.
3. by loss the rich guy is driven to the Lord and given a greater spiritual maturity because of it
4. Take aways
 - a. Having faith in Christ raises the believer of humble circumstances beyond his trials. He is an adopted son in the eternal kingdom and i that he is rich and may rejoice.
 - b. Faith in Christ works a blessing for the rich believer as well. By reminding the rich it's all temporary James hopes to create a lowly

spirit within the rich and a resulting humility as they realize every good gift comes from God. (James 1:17)

III. Crown of Life (vs12)

A. Blessed is the man

1. The man is blessed (happy) who perseveres under trial...because they find their happiness in their relationship God who loves with the steadfast love.

B. Approved

1. To be approved means to have passed the test (trial) with faith intact.

2. Consider Matthew 13:4-9; esp vs7

C. Perseverance = the Crown of Life

1. The Crown of Life as the Wreath of Salvation

2. To persevere in a trial gives evidence of salvation and eternal life.

3. Remember that to persevere in a trial proves that one has faith this genuine.

4. Perseverance is the result of salvation and testifies to the gospel at work in us. (Php. 1:6)

D. The Crown goes to those who love God.

1. Will I still love God even if _____

2. Consider 1 John 4:8