

Greater Pleasant Branch Baptist Church

Connect Learn Grow

Wednesday Bible Study -Theme: Pathways to Spirituality

Review of the Book of James-Chapter 5-May 26,2021

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I. Central Focus

You were created to become like Christ- Romans 8:29-30-Message Translation

II. Big Idea

Believers must avoid the selfish pursuit of wealth, demonstrate patience in trials, pray at all times and practice the grace of restoration.

III. Overview

James, in chapter 5, continued to expose the dangers of a person having a worldly spirit. James begins the chapter with a strong denunciation of the wealthy for the misuse of their wealth (James 5: 1-6) . He then wrote words that would encourage and equip believers to respond to social injustices in a godly fashion (James 5: 7-11). In verse 12, James warns believers about making oaths and James 5:13 -20 deals with the subject of prayer and the practice of restoring a wayward believer.

James continues to utilize commands, spiritual principles and spiritual disciplines to motivate believers to become like Christ, to achieve the ultimate goal: “ Spirituality”

A. Misuse of wealth- James 5: 1-6

1. In verses 1-3 James warns the wealthy who are apparently unbelievers (James does not address them as “ Brethren”, which was his normal greeting) for abusing the power of their wealth and for oppressing the poor.

2. James does not teach that wealth is evil, but he warns that abusing wealth by selfish living and harming people who are dependent on them is in fact evil.

3. James concludes in verse 3 that these evil people will hoard their wealth rather than depend on God. While collecting wealth, they should have instead prepared for eternity.

B. Obtaining wealth the wrong way- James 5:4-6

1. The wealthy obtained wealth by holding back wages for those who worked for them.
2. The wealthy even controlled the courts so laborers were never able to receive a fair hearing regarding their complaints of lost wages.

C. The folly of wealth- James 5: 1-4

1. Wealth will vanish-verses 2-3.
2. Misuse of wealth corrupts character- verse 3.
3. Misuse of wealth will result in both present and future judgment-verse 3.
4. Practical advice regarding wealth: Psalm 62:10, Proverbs 22:1, I Timothy 6:10.

D. The power of patience-James 5: 7-12

1. James appealed to the “brethren” to be patient while they waited for correction of injustice.

2. James provided examples of how patience should appear in the life of a believer, including the examples of a farmer, Job and the prophets.

3. In verse 7, James indicates that the farmer “waitheth” for the precious fruit, which means to look forward with eager expectation. The farmer knows that there must be a “seed time” before a “harvest time” and no amount of complaining will change that process.

4. James also teaches that believers can develop patience by focusing on the return of Jesus and all the promises he will fulfill upon His return-verse 8.

5. In verse 9 James points out that a “complaining attitude” can hinder a believer from developing patience. James concludes that “grumbling” involves the development of criticism and fault finding against fellow believers. In other words, believers do not blame other believers for their troubles, but in patience, wait on God’s deliverance.

6. James presents the example of Job’s patience as a source of encouragement for believers in verses 10-12. Job was consistently obedient under trial, endured misery and yet exhibited great patience and trust in God.

7. One writer said the following about Job: The God who tested Job in the furnace of hardship finally brought him to an experience of compassion and mercy. Through enduring trials, Job received a more complete insight into God’s divine purposes, and he was able to show deeper repentance (Job 42:5-6).

8. Tucked into this section of Scripture in verse 12 is an appeal for reverence for God. James appeals to believers to avoid using God’s name disrespectfully. Bible

scholars generally agree that this prohibition refers to the use of profanity. The prohibition also points to the use of a hasty irreverent oath involving God's name during a time of suffering and hardship.

E. The power of prayer-James 5: 13-20

1. In this section of Scripture James focuses on prayer in all of life's situations including sickness, confession of sin, seeking God's will and reclaiming a wandering believer.

2. James teaches in verse 13 that believers should pray in times of trouble and in times of joy,

3. James 5:14-15 regarding prayer for the sick can be misinterpreted, the following explanation is provided for clarity regarding this Scripture:

Though God often heals through medicine, the use of oil in verse 14 is mainly symbolic because it is applied in the name of the Lord and it is the Lord who will raise up the sick person, if it is his will.

The prayer of faith entails both the prayer of the sick person and the prayer of the elders who in faith must meet the requirements of this passage, that is their prayers must be effectual. In the Bible some sick persons had little faith, yet were healed(Acts 3:4-8);others like Paul had great faith yet have not been healed(2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Further, those who possessed the gift of healing in the early church were at times unable to perform healing as they may have wished (2 Timothy 4:20). The prayer that results from true faith is effective. Faith is acting in accordance with God's known purpose (I John 5:14) . The prayer of faith does not include a gift of healing. It does not exert extraordinary spiritual strength (Acts 3:12) ;otherwise all spiritual Christians would be healthy. Nor does it merely involve the ritual of verse 14. The prayer of faith discerns God's will and perseveres until it is accomplished. God's will is not to heal in every case, and true faith can discern and accept that (Romans 8:26-27).

4. Understanding verse 16 is also critically important, this verse reveals two facts regarding effective (effectual) prayer:

***Effective prayer comes from a righteous person, who possesses living faith demonstrated by an obedient life.

*** Effective prayer must have energy or persistence , that is from the heart of a believer whose passion is to see the will of God worked out in life.

5. In verse 19-20 James gives reasons why believers should seek to restore a fellow believer who has wandered from the truth either in an error concerning biblical doctrine or Christian living, in other words has suffered a “ spiritual lapse “

6. Bringing the wayward believer back involves restoration not conversion.

7. Those who return wayward believers can count on two promises:

*** The wayward believer is saved from death.

*** The wayward believer is forgiven a multitude of sins.

IV. Questions

1. What is the biblical view of wealth ?

2. How can believers guard against materialism ?

3. What do we learn from the examples of patience described by James ?

4. James teaches that those who endure will be blessed, why is that so ?

5. What does James teach about taking an oath ?

6. James refers to prayer that is “offered in faith” what is the meaning of this phrase ?

7. Why does James stress the need for confessing sins to each other in verse 16 ?

8. Does God only hear and answer the prayers of the righteous ?

9. When should believers pray ?

10. How should believers restore a fellow believer who has strayed from the truth ?