

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

December Memory Verse, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

Now in chapter five he takes on the rich. So this doesn't apply to many of us.

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days ([Jam 5:1-3](#)).

So he speaks of the rich and heaping up treasure for the last days, talking of their gold and silver. And to me it is extremely fascinating how that the rich people have to worry about the security of their money. What is safe, what is a safe investment? You know, how safe are the banks? What if Mexico and Argentina default on their loans, what's that going to do to the whole banking community? Is it going to bring it down like a row of dominos? Oh but it's guaranteed by an agency of the federal government. Read the fine print. You know if the whole banking system goes down, there isn't enough in that agency to bail out American savings and loans.

So where can I put my money so that it can really be safe? How safe are T-bills, how solvent is the government? Man, it's the greatest debtor of anything in the world; I guess 300 billion dollars. Well, buy gold buy silver. A lot of people bought gold and silver, and they bought gold and silver for 900 dollars, gold for nine dollars an ounce, and now they can get 349 dollars an ounce. But that is all an artificial value. I mean what can you do for gold, with gold, except to say, "Well, I've got so many Krugerrands." It's all an artificial system. Diamonds, buy diamonds, invest in diamonds, you know. It's all artificial value. It's just a stone. Hey, when things get really bad you can't eat it. You know when things are really bad that's what you think about, "what am I going to eat?"

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

The Bible tells us that there's coming a time that it'll take a bag of gold to buy a loaf of bread. So when it really gets down to it and you really need something to eat you're going to have to get rid of that gold, and who knows what value will be placed upon it at that time I mean.

"Weep and howl," James said, "for the misery that is coming upon them," cause you've tried to set yourselves up for these last days, you've tried to hedge against inflation by getting into gold, by getting into silver but now they're worthless.

Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped your fields, which is of you kept back from them through fraud, they cry: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and killed the just one; and he did not resist you ([Jam 5:4-6](#)).

So the Lord or James speaks out against the oppression of the poor or the oppression of the laborer by management, cries for inequity.

Verse seven he changes and now he is exhorting us to

Be patient for the coming of the Lord. For behold the husbandmen waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh ([Jam 5:7-8](#)).

Now it is interesting to me that so many places in the scripture we are exhorted towards patience, as far as the return of Jesus Christ is concerned. Peter, exhorts towards patience for much the same reason, that the long suffering of God is the salvation of the lost. Here exhortation to patience because the Lord is waiting for the precious fruit of harvest.

If the Lord had come ten years ago where would a lot of you been tonight? Five years ago where would a lot of you been? So the Lord is waiting for the latter rain, that is the final harvest of souls. And I believe that we are beginning to see a tremendous harvest of souls through out the world that I do believe is the foreshadowing of the return of Jesus Christ. I think that the Lord is giving the final opportunity to man. We've come just about to the end of the rope and God has thrown out for the final time the opportunity of people to get right with God, and I think that it will soon be over. But have patience establish your hearts. The Lord, the husbandman is waiting for the precious fruit of harvest.

Grudge not on against another, brethren, unless you be condemned, because the judge is standing at the door. Take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering affliction, and of patience ([Jam 5:9-10](#)).

So look what they endured, the prophets. Look what Jeremiah endured, look what Isaiah endured and others of the prophet, Elijah and Elisha, the things that they suffered

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

because of their stand for God. They are an example of suffering, affliction and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. You've heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very full of pity and He's of tender mercy ([Jam 5:11](#)).

God is full of pity. And in the Psalm, 103 the Lord is full of pity. "For He knows our frame that we are but dust" ([Psalm 103:14](#)). God, when He looks at you, doesn't expect to see a superman, or a super saint. He knows you're dust anyhow. That's why He's so merciful, because He knows your frame. That is why we are not so merciful so many times on ourselves, because we think we are more than dust. "Well I'm a rock, I'm strong, I'm able, you know I can do it." And then we get fractured, and we get discouraged and disappointed and we think that God is all upset with us. No, no, no. He's not upset. He's merciful. He knew all the time you were but dust. It was you that made the mistake, you that over estimated your capabilities, not God. You didn't disappoint Him. He knew all the time. It was important that you know what He knows and so He lets you fall on your face. The Lord is full of pity and tender mercy.

But above all things, my brothers, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yes be yes; and let your no, be no; lest you fall into condemnation ([Jam 5:12](#)).

Now a man often times, if he is a liar, is constantly swearing that he is telling the truth. And that is why I am often suspicious of the person that is constantly affirming, "Oh, this is the God's honest truth man." I become very suspicious when they are constantly affirming that what they tell you is true. If it is true, than you don't need to constantly affirm it. And James is actually saying don't swear. "I'll do it, I'll do it, I promise I'll do it, you know. Swear by Heaven, I'll be there." No, no, no. Just let your yes be a yes, and let your no be a no. Jesus said the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount. Be a man or a person of your word. If you say yes, mean yes, and if you say no, mean no. And don't be the kind of a person that you have to swear to cause someone to believe you are telling the truth.

[Now] is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any happy? let him sing psalms. Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of the faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up ([Jam 5:13-15](#));

Now it is interesting a distinction is made between afflictions and sickness. And I don't always know that we can discern between is this an affliction or is this a sickness. But it would seem that afflictions are used by God for the purposes of correction. That when afflictions come than I need to pray, I need to find out from God what He's trying to teach me, what He's trying to tell me.

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

You see our problem is that we are not often sensitive to the things of the spirit. There seems to be a spiritual dullness that is quite prevalent among the church. It's like Romaine said, "He's gotta beat you over the head with a two-by-four to get your attention before He can talk to you." If God has to beat you over the head with a two-by-four and you're afflicted then you need to pray and find out what God is trying to say. And so if you are afflicted than it says, "let him pray." That is, God is probably trying to get your attention in some area of your life, and He sometimes has to use rather harsh or painful means.

In [psalm 32](#), as the Lord speaks to the psalmist, He said, "look, I want to guide you with my eye, don't be like a mule who you have to put a bit in its mouth to lead it around" ([Psalm 32:8-9](#)). Now the bit is very painful and the reason the mule will turn when you pull on the reins is because it pulls the bit up against his mouth. It hurts. So he will turn his head, because it hurts.

Now God is saying to you don't be so stubborn like a mule that I have to use painful processes to get you to turn. I would guide you with my eye, I want you to be sensitive to my will and my plan, and I'll be glad to just guide you with my eye. God doesn't want to guide us with painful processes, but He loves us so much that He will, because it is that important that I be guided by the spirit of God, and He knows it is for my best welfare that I walk in this path. And if I start to stray and it I won't listen, He'll use the bit or the bridal. He'll pull me back into position. It maybe a painful experience, "Oh Lord what's happening." Well, you were off track. I wasn't listening, I was headstrong, I was gonna do it my way.

Paul the apostle, the Lord used the bit and bridal with Paul because he was so headstrong so many times. But if you are afflicted, pray. If you're merry, sing psalms, rejoice. If you're sick, then call for the elders of the church. The elders of the church meet here on Saturday nights to pray for the sick.

The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up; and if they have committed sins they shall be forgiven ([Jam 5:15](#)).

It is interesting that there seems to be a correlation here between sickness and sin at least in the deliverance of sickness and in the forgiveness of sins. And it is interesting how many sicknesses can be related to sin in a very direct way. And yet on the other hand, let me say that I think that it is a very dangerous error to try to relate all sickness to sin. And you are then putting yourself in the position of a judge and you're judging wrongly many times, saying, "well they've got it coming to them." And I think that is cruel and dangerous to say that all sickness is the result of sin in a person's life. Not at all.

[Now] confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed [that is of your faults.] ([Jam 5:16](#)).

I think that...you notice it doesn't say confess your sins, it's confessing your faults one to another. We confess our sins to God, and He's faithful and just to forgive us. I may have

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

a weakness in my life and I am very often confessing my faults to you. Not for you to just laugh at me, which you often do when I tell you of my problems on the freeway. Hey, but freeways are coming along. I'm improving. On the way to church this morning, two cars pulled out in front of me and I counted it all joy. I passed the test today, but that doesn't guarantee tomorrow, but pray for me. "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another."

We each of us have our faults our failures, those areas in our lives where we need to yield more to the Spirit of God and find His strength and find His help. It's good to have a prayer partner that you can just open up to and say, "Hey, I'm having a problem in this particular area pray for me will you."

Confess your faults one to another, pray one for another, that you may be healed. For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much ([Jam 5:16](#)).

Our son in law was getting after our little three-year-old granddaughter, because her prayers seem to be developing sort of a rote. And he said, "Now Kristen, when you pray, you should pray not just quick little prayers, and the same prayer every time, but really start praying from your heart and really mean your prayers. Think about them and really mean your prayers when you talk to God." Because she was usually just praying, "God bless our food, strengthen our bodies, in Jesus name, Amen," and then start eating. So dinnertime came and they called on her to pray and she said, "Lord, bless our food. I mean really bless our food Lord."

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. And this is the thing that I always get a charge out of.

Elijah was a man subject to the same things that we are ([Jam 5:17](#)).

He was just like you. A man of like passions just like us. We usually read of these people in the Bible: Elijah, Elisha and Joshua and Moses and Paul and Peter. We usually think of them in a category that is sort of up here and I am down here. And we sort of think of the things that they did as completely unattainable by the common ordinary person. But Elijah was a man of like passions just like you, no different from you.

And yet he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it did not rain on the earth for the space of three years and six months ([Jam 5:17](#)).

Now can you imagine that? A man just like you praying and earnestly saying, "God don't let it rain. Let these people learn through a draught to call upon Your name and all and cut off the rain." A man of like passions just like you.

And yet he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit ([Jam 5:18](#)).

Here was a man controlling the weather with his prayers. A man just like you. That amazes me.

Commentary on James Chapter 5 by Chuck Smith 12.8.24

But Elijah was a man of like passion and he prayed it would rain not and he prayed again and it rained. We so many times are guilty I think as the children of Israel of limiting that which God would do just by our unbelief.

[Now] if any of you err from the truth and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins ([Jam 5:19-20](#)).

Now if one errs from the way and you convert him, you don't convert him by confirming him that everything is all right. "Oh go ahead. God is merciful. God is gracious. It doesn't really matter." But you convert him by bringing him away from that sin, not giving him assurance in his sin. I don't think we should ever assure anybody in sin. I don't know that the Bible assures anybody who is in sin. It assures those that are in Christ. And all the scriptures that speak of assurance are to those that are in Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ" ([Romans 8:1](#)). But if you are not in Christ there is condemnation.

So if a person errors seek to turn them back to the walk of faith in Christ, for you will save their soul from death and you will hide a multitude of sins.

And now Father, even as James has exhorted us, help us that we might be doers of the Word and not hearers only. And as we have heard these exhortations from Your Word tonight, and as we were listening Your Holy Spirit spoke to our hearts about different areas, to some of us about our tongues, to others about envying and strife, to others about lust, to others about the friendship with the world and the desire for worldly things. Lord, even as Your Spirit has spoken to our hearts tonight, let us give heed to the Word and be doers of the Word. Help us, Lord, that we might indeed love one another, pray one for another, encourage and strengthen one another, use our tongues to bless and to strengthen each other and to encourage each other that we might indeed be the children of God and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. In Jesus name, Amen.