**Faith at Work: A Study in James Series May 8, 2022**

**Dealing With Oppression**

Theme: God will deal justly with those who have oppressed Christians and will reward those who patiently persevere in Christ.

Oppression by the Rich will **End in Judgment** James 5:1-6

* Those who have financial wealth as their “god” will one day stand before the Lord in judgment
  + It will be a time where they realize the gravity of their sin against God and against others
* These people were so wealthy that their elaborate garments, symbols of their vast wealth, were rotting and the moths were destroying them (v. 2)
* Gold and silver will not rust, but they will become corroded (tarnished) if not properly cared for (v. 3)
* The wealthy also were defrauding their workers of their earned pay for work completed (v. 4)
  + The workers complained to the employer and it fell on deaf ears
  + The workers appealed to the “Lord of Sabaoth” and He heard their cries, promising justice in the afterlife
* The luxurious lifestyle of the wealthy was extreme hedonism, denying no selfish pleasure (v. 5)
  + Their total lack of concern for their workers and the impoverished demonstrate their perverse nature
* The rich oppressed the righteous followers of the Lord
  + The believers were not able to resist being oppressed but knew they would be dealt with by God (v. 6)

Where is my treasure?

* James (and Jesus) are not condemning the wealthy for their money but rather for the abuse of it and lack of use of it for kingdom building purposes
  + It calls all of us to ask the simple this simple question and evaluate how we use all of God’s resources (time, money, and ability): Am I **a good steward of God’s resources?**

Christians Endure **Oppression Patiently** James 5:7-11

* Christians are often persecuted for their faith and mistreated throughout their lives
  + God promises to one day reward Christ followers for their continued witness despite harsh treatment
  + One day every person will stand at one of two judgments
    - Judgment seat of Christ: judgment of rewards **for believers** (See 2 Corinthians 5:1-10)
    - **Great White Throne:** judgment of condemnation for non-Christians (See Revelation 20:11-15)
* “Strengthen your hearts” (v. 8b): encourage one another and walk alongside of one another who are suffering oppression and persecution for the sake of Christ
* “Do not complain, brethren” (v. 9a): withhold grumbling against fellow Christians and instead find ways to bless those who must endure the oppression

Are you being oppressed or persecuted?

* Know that the Lord sees your hardships and He will, one day, **reward your patient endurance**
* As you see Christian brothers and sisters who are under persecution, look for ways that you can encourage each of them
  + Words of affirmation
  + Prayers of intercession
  + Notes from Scripture to uplift those who are hurting

When Under Oppression **Guard Your Words Carefully** James 5:12

* When the pain of suffering is intense, it’s tempting to lash out against
  + God
  + Your persecutors
  + Friends who are not being oppressed

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