

Oppression! What to do

TEXT: James 5:7-13

INTRODUCTION:

- A. SO MUCH OF JAMES DEALS WITH **SUFFERING**.
1. As a **temptation** or trial (**ch. 1**).
 2. As a result of **discrimination** (**ch. 2**).
 3. As a result of **worldly wranglings** (**ch. 3-4**).
- B. FAITHFUL BRETHREN ARE OFTEN THE OBJECTS OF OPPRESSION (**vs 6**).
1. We have here a warning to the oppressor (**5:1-6**).
 2. And we have **encouragement** and **instruction** for the oppressed (**vs. 7-13**).
- I. CONDEMNATION OF THE RICH OPPRESSOR (vs. 1-6).**
- A. THE RICH HERE ARE PROBABLY NOT CHRISTIANS, AT LEAST NOT FAITHFUL.
1. They aren't called "brethren" as in other verses (**1:2, 19; 2:1, 14; 3:1, 10; 4:11**).
 2. There is no call to repentance in this passage, **only condemnation!**
 3. The brethren are not addressed until **vs. 7**, in which THEY are told to be patient.
- B. WHAT WAS THE OPPRESSOR GUILTY OF?
1. **vs. 3**. "Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days" (**Luke 12:16-21**).
 2. **vs. 4**. "... the hire of laborers ... you kept back by fraud ..." (**Col. 4:1**).
 3. **vs. 5**. "Ye have lived delicately ... taken your pleasure" (**2 Tim. 3:4; 1 John 3:17**).
 4. **vs. 6**. "Ye have killed the righteous one" **Jesus or one of his** (**Matt. 25:40; Acts 9:4**).
- C. THIS TIRADE OF JUDGMENT HAS PURPOSE.
1. Christians may take **comfort in God's justice** (**vs. 7**).
 2. The Lord has heard their cries (**vs. 4; Matt. 10:29-31**).
 3. Paul gives a similar promise (**2 Thess. 1:4-10**).
- D. WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THESE RICH OPPRESSORS?
1. Miseries that will cause them to "weep and howl" (**vs. 1-3**).
 2. The inevitable loss of wealth (**Matt. 6:19-21**).
 3. It will serve as a witness against them (**vs. 3**), and it will eat their flesh like fire.
- II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE OPPRESSED (vs. 7-13).**
- A. **DON'T RESIST** (**James 5:6**).
1. Those of James' day were like Jesus, they did not resist (**Isa. 53:7; 1 Pet. 2:21-23**).
 2. **What does the Bible teach** (**Rom. 12:19-21; Luke 6:27-30**).
 3. Human nature moves one to react in "justifiable anger" to "stand up for one's rights."
 4. Not resisting is based on two things:
 - a. Our suffering will **be over soon** (**James 5:7-8**).
 - b. The **Lord will be both judge and avenger** (**vs. 9**).
- B. **BE PATIENT** (**James 5:7**).
1. **makrothumia** "It is a patient holding out under trial; a long-protracted restraint of the soul from yielding to passion, especially the passion of 'anger.'" (**Vincent**)
"to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart ... to persevere patiently and bravely." (**Thayer**)
 2. Three Examples (**vs. 7, 10, 11**). The FARMER, The PROPHETS, JOB.
- C. **ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS** (**James 5:8**).
1. **sterizo** "to fix, make fast, to set" – its use in **Luke 9:51**, 'steadfastly set.'" (**Vine**)
 2. Here, it means to **resolve** to be patient and not resist the evil being done.
 3. Other passages (**1 Pet. 1:13; 3:15; 4:19; Col. 3:1-2**).

4. The foundation of that resolve – **TRUTH (2 Pet. 1:12; John 17:17)**.
5. Through constant and careful study of **God's Word...**
 - a. Our faith in God and His eventual justice is made stronger (**Rom. 10:17**).
 - b. Patience and strength to not resist is developed (**Rom. 15:4**).
- D. **MURMUR NOT (James 5:9)**.
 1. Suffering makes us grumpy, and we vent on one another.
 2. “Do not grumble against one another, brethren, **lest you be condemned.**” (NKJV)
 3. **1 Cor. 10:10**. Jesus will judge those who murmur as well as the oppressor!
- E. **DON'T SWEAR (James 5:12)**. Likely to do when in trouble.
 1. **God will hold you to your word (Ecc. 5:1-7; Psa. 15:4)**.
 2. You are no better than your word! (**Col. 3:8-9**). **Tell the truth, Keep commitments!**
- F. **PRAY (James 5:13)**.
 1. When we pray, **God hears (1 Pet. 3:12)**
 2. **God cares (1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:4-7)**.

CONCLUSION:

- A. FAITH IS THE KEY TO OVERCOMING.
- B. FAITH WILL LEAD TO COMPLETE OBEDIENCE.