

James 5

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[0 : 0 0] James chapter 5 and just as we go there let's pray for a moment Heavenly Father we thank you for your word through us and we pray that as we open your word that you would open our hearts to your word we pray that you would give us ears to hear we pray Lord that you would be ministering to us and through us Lord that you would be at work in this place in our company Lord as a gathering of your people and we pray that you would be at work in each of our individual hearts that we would be coming to see and know and trust Jesus and Lord that we would be coming to know him better we thank you for the words of the the psalm the paraphrase of the psalm that we have sung and Lord we pray that truly our hearts desire would be to to know you that we would truly have a a longing which we know is only satisfied when we come in faith to Jesus so enable us Lord we pray to come in faith to Christ and Lord we do pray not only for ourselves we pray especially for those who met over this weekend and who continue to meet this evening at Scaladale we pray for these teenagers as they open your word this evening we ask Lord that you would be ministering to them that you would be amongst them we pray that the word that has been shared with them by Hugh Ferrier over the weekend

Lord that it would find a straight path into their hearts we pray that they would remember their creator in the days of their youth we pray for them Lord and ask Lord that you would take hold of them and Lord that you would begin a work which will be completed on the day of Christ Jesus and we pray Lord that for our own young ones as well pray for those who are here those in primary school we thank you Lord for them and we ask that they may hear just a word or two even as we open your word that we'd find a root in their hearts and we pray for those in secondary school as well the teenagers where we're conscious there are so many pools and so many distractions where we know Lord that there can be so much rebellion rising and Lord we pray that you would take hold of them as we ask Lord that you would take hold of each one of us

Lord that you would save us that you would sanctify us that we would become more and more like Jesus and we thank you for this book of James where that work of sanctification is pressed upon us where the way that we spend our time and the way that we spend our money the way that we live our lives the way that we use our tongues all these things Lord we are addressed in the way that we live and sometimes it can be stringing sometimes it can be hard for us to take but we know that as a father disciplines his children in love you're the God who addresses us in love and who speaks to us these strong words that we would come to you or that we would return to you so minister to us Lord we pray and we ask this in Jesus name and for his sake Amen James chapter 5 and we look at the first six verses of this chapter this evening hopefully I'll be finished for about 10 to 7 because after that we're going to hear from those who are going to Nepal just a word about what they're off to do so James chapter 5 and these six verses will give consideration to this evening and I'll begin just by sharing with you a memory that came into my mind as I was reading the verses over the course of this week

I was taking back in my memory to walking along the shore in Nets where my mother's from and where I spent a fair bit in my childhood we'd go there at the weekends there was never anyone to play football with which was a huge stress and even if you did have a football on the nicest day in all of summer there was always at least a 65 mile an hour wind blowing so the ball you could never kick in a straight line so we would take off and we'd go down the shore we spent most of our time doing and sometimes we would decide that we were going to take one of these is it cockles or limpets that are fastened on the side of these rocks and if you wanted to get a bag of these things and take them roll then the way that you had to get them off was you'd take your welly boot and you'd one sharp kick one sharp kick no warning and it would come clean off but if you miskicked and then you started trying to push and pull and twist then the harder you worked the more stuck it was and there was no chance of getting it off and if it did it came off broken so to be dislodged there had to be a short sharp knock and the reason I share that memory is it's almost as if James in his tactic in the way he addresses us in this chapter uses that same kind of approach this blast that comes in this point in

James' letter and you could say it extends from chapter 13 of verse 13 of chapter 4 but especially at the beginning of chapter 5 this blast comes without any real warning if you go back to the previous chapters it's a blast that the commentators say come with Old Testament prophet force it's a similar kind of tone to the way that the Old Testament prophets spoke to God's people in the Old Testament in verse 1 we hear it now listen it's the same word as used in verse 13 of chapter 4 we were thinking about the boardroom meeting as they were plotting to make their money James bursts open the door and says now listen come now put everything down this is the priority give me your full attention listen listen he says you rich people weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you you might say why why so forceful

[7 : 24] James why so aggressive in your tone and maybe the answer is he needs to shock them and he needs to shock us out of the the hold that this world can have on us and the suck that we can have on the things of this world maybe we need sometimes to be shocked into seeing where we might have gone wrong in order that we will come weeping and wailing if necessary back to Christ if we've stayed from him so if you want a first point you can see there's a warning and that's verse 1 and then the two points I have for the remainder of our time are as follows first of all

James speaks to us about wrong calculations and secondly he speaks to us about wrong choices so first of all wrong calculations verse 2 just follow this through he says your wealth is rotted and moths have eaten your clothes your gold and silver are corroded their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire I think it was in October of last year that the old pound coins were phased out there's all this news coverage and these government advices over the months in advance but the old round pound coins they were going to be phased out so we were told that we had to get rid of these we had to cash them in before October came and every now and again I put my hand in the pocket of an old jacket and I find one of these old round pound coins when you're hoovering under the seat in the car there's a clunk what is it it's one of these old round pound coins and you take it and you've got to put it in your pocket and then you think why am I doing that it's not worth anything imagine you'd spent years and years collecting these coins and stashing them away under your bed in a chest feeling more and more rich as the weight of the chest accumulated and the coins went from 500 to 1000 to 2000 to 2 million big big big big maybe but just imagine run with it you have all this wealth under your bed you're saying 2 million of these pound coins

I'm set forever and then one day someone comes along and says don't you watch the news haven't you heard the advice over all these months you may have 2 million of these coins but not one of them is worth anything imagine the weeping and the wailing that would follow James is saying to us here in simple terms your wealth may get you places in this world your wealth you may think it gives you security and prestige the clothes you wear they might get you noticed for a while the car you drive might turn heads all that stuff you may think is making you very wealthy but

James is saying think again in terms of eternity it's worthless your money, your coins your precious metals they're all going to rust lose their shine your clothes will disintegrate over time if you've ever gone into an old wardrobe and you see a beautiful piece of clothing that hasn't been touched for 30-40 years you touch it it falls apart off it the moths have been looks actually very robust but you touch it it comes away in your hands your clothes says James will disintegrate over time he doesn't say this but your cars they'll turn to scrap and all these things that you think made you so wealthy all these things these things that you thought were going to make you look so good on the day of judgement they'll count against you they won't make you look good they'll be brought forward and shown but not to your credit to your loss all the time all the energy that was employed into accumulating these things it's not to credit it's to debit remember a friend of a friend in Edinburgh and he lived in a really posh area and he used to buy these old prestige cars

Jaguars and Rolls Royce and all these kind of vintage things you know the MGs he always had great intentions of restoring them but he almost never did so he'd accumulate these cars that if they were restored to pristine condition would have been of great worth and would have brought great prestige as others on that posh street looked at them but what actually happened was they sat there and over time they deteriorated and they got more and more rusty and ugly and eventually what was happening was the neighbours in the street were coming to the door and saying will you please get these ugly machines off our drive they were bringing the tone of this street down the family actually they were nicknamed Steptoe and so on what they thought was going to bring them prestige actually brought them shame and in the eternal scene all the stuff that you and I accumulate all the stuff that we work so hard and make sacrifices to get and keep all the stuff that we think is going to make us look so good it will be to it will be to our shame not to our credit so if our lives here are about desperately trying to accumulate to get and to keep wealth

[14 : 23] James is saying you're making wrong calculations you've got this all wrong wrong calculations secondly wrong choices finally wrong choices we're always making choices whether it's what we wear or where we go or who we go with what we eat what we drink who we'll marry what we'll work at what we'll study we're always making choices and we have choices to make concerning what we'll do with the things that the Lord has given us the money the talents the time that the Lord has given us we have a choice to make every day about what we do with these things some of us may have a lot of money some of us have very little some of us may be very gifted in lots of areas some of us less so all of us have the same amount of time we all have 24 hours in a day and so whether we are given a little or whether we are given a lot in terms of these other things in terms of all things we have choices to make about what are we doing with them are we making right choices or wrong choices

God has given us free will he has given us the ability to make choices this is the world this is the scene in which we are tested to see whether we will trust God and obey him and live in a way that pleases him and honours him or whether we will determine that we will live in a way that just pleases ourselves and feeds ourselves so what kind of choices are we making well James gives us three bits of advice three things that we if we are God's people should decide not to do day by day we determine not to do this first of all no hoarding and the second thing we are to be careful of is that we do not use hard practice and I'll come to that the final thing is no hubris that's the way you say the word

I'll explain it in a wee bit first of all no hoarding verse 3 and a charge hits us James says you have hoarded wealth in the last days flick for a moment to Exodus chapter 16 please Exodus chapter 16 the context here is God's people are in the wilderness they're hungry they needed food to eat they're complaining because they don't have food to eat and so God hears their complaints and if we read in from verse 2 of Exodus 16 in the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron the Israelites said to them if only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt there we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death and the

Lord said to Moses verse 4 I will rain down bread from heaven for you the people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day in this way I will test them and see whether they follow my instructions verse 11 the Lord said to Moses I heard the grumbling of the Israelites tell them at twilight you will eat meat and in the morning you will be filled with bread then you will know that I am the Lord your God that evening quail came and covered the camp and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp when the dew was gone thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor when the Israelites saw it they said to each other what is it for they did not know what it was Moses said to them it is the bread the Lord has given you to eat this is what the Lord has commanded each one is to gather as much as he needs take an omer for each person you have in your tent the Israelites stood as they were told some gathered much some little and when they measured it by the omer he who gathered much did not have too much and he who gathered little did not have too little each one gathered as much as he needed then Moses said to them no one has to keep any of it until morning however however some of them paid no attention to Moses they kept part of it until morning but it was full of maggots and began to smell so Moses was angry with them so there's a test that God set his people he tested them to see if they would trust him he promised that he would give them what they needed each day and he told them to go out and collect enough for the day take no more no hoarding says the

Lord but they failed the test they hoarded the manna why did they hoard the manna well we're not sure maybe they wanted to be manna rich maybe some thought they could set up a stall in hard times and sell the manna at a profit maybe some of them just wanted to get one step ahead of the Joneses in the next tent say we have more supplies than you maybe they just didn't trust God to send the same supplies the next day that they had this day so they hoarded more food than they needed just to be safe for tomorrow and the following day it was rotten what they thought was so valuable what they thought was going to be to their advantage in their tent that following morning proved to be stinking out their tents and exposing their wrong choices and that can be applied to this world's wealth too sometimes we hang on to it so tight because we think it's going to give us security for tomorrow because we think it's going to give us an advantage over our neighbors because we think it's going to give us added value in terms of our net worth so we hang on to it when we get it and we worry about not having it in the tomorrow so we hang on to it tight and very often what that reveals is a rot that's settling in in our hearts very often it reveals a lack of faith in

[21 : 47] God to give us what we need now this is not to say that you spend all your money at the end of every day it's not against sensible wise planning but this is a word against thinking that the things of this world will give us security and contentment and added value the Lord has told us that as our father he knows what we need and he will give us what we need today and all the tomorrows that we may have ahead of us he's told us don't worry about these things Jesus said in Matthew 6 do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also no hoarding secondly no hard practice and what I mean by that is simply no employing schemes and methods whereby we trample over other people and we use unfair means to get an advantage over them no exploitation of other people whether that's in terms of world trade or whether that's in terms of office dynamics

Lucy's been asking us as a session at Deacons Court for a while to consider the fair trade stuff for a fair trade church now what is that?

That's just buying coffee and tea and biscuits where we know that the people who have produced that stuff received a fair price for their labours that's what fair trade is we know that if we buy that kind of stuff those who have been involved in producing it have got a fair price for their business and have been treated fairly in the way that they produce it because the reality is there's lots and lots of people in this world who are not rich because there are people who are not getting what they should be getting and James is saying whether it's global economics or whether it's our own purse strings he's saying you rich people may think that you're getting away with this kind of business practice you might think that no one sees that God sees

God sees and he hears the cries of every person you've ever trampled over for your own selfish gain and mine look at verse 4 look the wages you failed to pay the workman who mowed your fields are crying out against you the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord almighty you have condemned and murdered innocent men who are not opposing no hard practice says James this is not acceptable says James especially for God's people and we need to live with that awareness you and I need to live with that awareness every day God sees it's not about what we can get away with it's not about what other people see and don't see as Christians we need to remember

God sees he sees how we do business he sees our text messages he sees our social media profiles he sees what we post online he sees the private messages he hears the way that we speak to perhaps our less popular friends in the playground yes he is invisible but as we sang he is all wise he's all seeing he's all not he's all but I remember it from time to time God is always near me hearing what I say knowing all my thoughts and deeds all my work and play God is always near me in the darkest night he can see me just the same as by midday light

[26 : 49] God is always near me though so young and small not a look or word or thought but God knows it all so no hard practice no hoarding and finally no hubris I don't know if that's how you say the word there's a commentator that I've been reading a fair bit over the last while keeps using this word hubris so I thought let's look that up see actually what it means it seems to connect with us so when I looked it up it says in the definition of the dictionary hubris is excessive pride or self confidence hubris is arrogance and James speaks to people who are full of that verse 5 he says you have lived on earth in luxury and self indulgence you have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter that was back then you might say and they're thousands of miles away from us but all we have to do is look around and we see that we live probably more so than ever today in a culture that's very self-centered it's all about me go on buy it you deserve it you're right go on treat yourself pamper yourself enjoy a little luxury it's harmless we live in an age where we are encouraged constantly to indulge ourselves death but as

God's people we are taught in the bible that our calling is to put self to death every day and to live for Christ Ephesians 4 22 you were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires to remain new in the attitude of your minds and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness no hubris no high opinions of our self no pampering of the self no encouraging the ever growing ego of self no hard practice where I make maximum profit and I don't care what happens to the people who are affected by my profits no hoarding as if that's what's going to give me security in the long term these are bad choices says

James so as we just take this on board as we come to a conclusion we need to see that we who in many ways are rich we need to use that richness we need to use all that God has allowed us to have in terms of our time and talent and money not to indulge self but to glorify Christ and to bless those around us so our stuff is not to be hoarded but it's to be used and it's to be used in a way not to batter down those around us not to get one up on those who are around us but to bless those who are around us so that they'll look to us and we will point them away from ourselves and introduce them to

Jesus and tell them about his grace and tell them about his cross and all that he has done for us finish by highlighting two words verse 3 two words last days we are living in the last days the question is how are we living if we live for ourselves if we live not trusting Christ and we determine that we are going to continue to live that way then we're told that eternity will be a place where there is much weeping and much wailing and much gnashing of teeth Jesus said in Matthew 13 and verse 42 they will throw them into the fiery furnace where they will be weeping and gnashing of teeth then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father he who has ears to hear let him hear and that's what James is saying to us he's saying listen listen you're in the last days and if this is how you're living then weep and wail now as God shows you your sin and then turn in repentance to Jesus who died to forgive you for your sin turn to Jesus who will be your saviour turn to

Jesus who will enable you to have your life transformed that your life will no longer be about self than I with the apostle Paul as you listen to this teaching you will be able to say for me to live is not self it's Christ and when I die it will not be loss but it will be great gain heavenly father we pray that you would give us ears to hear we pray that we would listen that we would look in the mirror of God's word and father if we are feeling under conviction from these verses as to varying degrees Lord we will be we pray that you would enable us to do as we are called to and that is to repent sometimes that involves weeping and wailing as we repent but we thank you that as we confess our sin as we turn from our sin we are promised that we will be forgiven so Lord we pray that you would forgive us that you would cleanse us from sin that you would be the Lord of our lives and Lord that truly we would live for Christ in such a way that we know that when we come to the end of our days we will not suffer loss but we will through the righteousness of Christ enjoy the game that is set aside for those who trust and obey hear our prayers in Jesus name we pray

[34 : 44] Amen to He■ where he donc