

# PLEASANT VIEW PROCLAIMER

May 1, 2022

## James: A Faith That Works The Case Against the Rich (James 5:1-6)

In verse one of today's lesson, James instructs the "rich" to "weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you."

### Who are the Rich? (1)

When we read about the "rich" in scripture, who do we think about? It is likely many of us are not thinking about ourselves, but instead are thinking about others we may know or be aware of who have a super amount of wealth (by our standards). However, let's consider this scenario. If you live in a home with 2 adults and 2 children and have a total household income of \$35,000 annually, you make more money than 83.8% of the population of the world and are within the richest 16.2% of the global population. Think about that for a minute. By the standard of the world, we are all rich!

### The Case Against the Rich (2-6)

A consistent message of scripture is that we will only seek God if we believe that we need him (Mt 5:3). This isn't just a one-time thing but is something we must understand throughout our lives. Our need for God doesn't go away. One of the dangers of wealth is that the more that we have of the world's goods, the harder it is for us to perceive a need for anything beyond ourselves. Our riches can become the object of our faith and can blind us of our need for God. If this happens, then we truly should "weep and howl."

In the first part of this chapter, James is building a case for how the rich can see they have chosen faith in their wealth over faith in God. He offers four exhibits into evidence for consideration that support his case.

**Exhibit 1: C\_\_\_\_\_ (2-3)** - The first piece of evidence is that we have hoarded so much of the world's goods that they have corroded (Mt 6:19-21). While there is nothing wrong with using what we have to take care of our family and prepare for the future, God expects us to use what He has entrusted us with to further His kingdom. If instead, we hoard these things thinking that they will bring us happiness, their decay becomes a testament to our misplaced faith.



*"Let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them."*

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Stand tall, even when you stand alone,  
For alone you will not be.  
Speak truth, even when no one listens,  
For someone always hears.  
Walk straight, even when you see no path,  
For the path is always there.  
Seek light, even on the darkest night,  
For one light always shines.  
Love true, even when your heart is breaking,  
For one love is deeper than you could ever know.

**Exhibit 2: C\_\_\_\_\_ (4)** - This second piece of evidence are the cries of those who have been defrauded by our uncontrolled greed. The more that we believe that wealth will bring us happiness, the more we are tempted to mistreat others to keep more for ourselves.

**Exhibit 3: C\_\_\_\_\_ (5)** - Further evidence against the rich is that in our desire for pleasure we use their wealth as an opportunity to pursue fleshly desires and live indulgently. This is something that James had strongly warned against back in chapter 1:21, 27. When we live this way, we are figuratively fattening ourselves up like an animal headed to slaughter (i.e., the day of judgment).

**Exhibit 4 - C\_\_\_\_\_ (6)** - Much like Exhibit 2, this final piece of evidence comes from letting our uncontrolled greed cause us to mistreat others. In this instance it is taking the poor to court, where they are being declared guilty and possibly condemned to death even though they are innocent.

### So, What Do We Do?

First, we must recognize that we have turned our wealth into the object of our faith (and worship), and that this path will only lead to destruction (5:1). Next, we must go back to mourning our sinful condition (4:9). James had earlier told the rich to “boast in his...humiliation” that comes from suffering (1:9-11). Our trials can show us the true nature of wealth, that it will not last or save us. Finally, Paul’s instruction **1 Tim 6:17-19** concerning the rich should be a guidebook on how to use what we have in the way that God intended:

*As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

### PRAYER LIST

- **Randy Baker** leaves May 13 to visit the Jos School of Preaching in Nigeria
- **John Hayes** is scheduled for cataract surgery May 10
- **Nick Phifer** is responding well to treatment for leukemia.
- **Isabel Johnson** is at home recovering from a stem cell transplant.
- Mamie Hamilton’s son **Kendall** is recovering from eye surgery
- **Faye Waller** is in Ahava Healthcare in Clarksville
- **James Craig** is home undergoing rehab
- **Ethan Pennington** has brain cancer
- Continue to pray for **Delores Coleman, Ann Reed, Rosemary Douglas, Gaynell Walker, Rebecca Brown, Kristine Garrett** and **Jim Sims**

### SERVING TODAY (May 1, 2022)

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

**Read:** E. Walker  
**Prayer:** L. Gregory

#### WORSHIP

**Read:** J. Baker  
**Wait On Table:** R. Mayo  
**Serve:** D. Demonbreun, J. Buchanan  
**Prayer:** D. Billingsley