

Patience: A Virtue that Helps

James – God's Work in Us and through Us

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

July 18, 2010

Pastor Michael McCall

Time and money. In [James 5](#), both are addressed...in particular, those who love money and those who have no patience. We begin with the topic of money...

Know as we begin that God is not opposed to wealth - many of the people in the Bible were wealthy - Abraham, Job, David, Solomon, Barnabas, Joseph of Arimathea – for example. Rather God is opposed to the misuse and abuse of wealth. God wants us to use our wealth wisely, no matter how much or how little we have. And know, by the very fact that we live in America, we are wealthy.

[James 5:1](#) **"Now listen, you rich people..."** Strong words. Back then, people were either rich or poor...there was no middle class. You were either a have or a have not. The system caused the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. And the rich tended to oppress the poor. James lashes out at such non-Christian use of money. James addresses four areas where errors are made.

ACCUMULATION * [James 5:3](#) **"You have hoarded wealth..."** God says that money is not to be stockpiled or collected in piles just for the sake of having it. God wants his money in circulation. God is not talking here about saving. Here the issue is getting more and more simply for the sake of getting more. Where accumulating becomes the goal of life. Back then you could hoard: food, clothes, or precious metals and jewels. This is the way wealthy people showed off their wealth in New Testament times. [James 5:2](#) **"Your wealth has rotted, moths have eaten your clothes and your gold and silver are corroded."** Instead of stockpiling, Christians are to be into saving. Save 10%, give 10%, live on 80%. Why? It prevents impulse spending. It gives us the resources to help others. It teaches contentment. It makes our money work for us...instead of our working for money.

APPROPRIATION * [James 5:4](#) **"The wages you failed to pay...are crying out against you."**

God is not only concerned with what we've got but also how we got it. Like now, back then you could hire day laborers...no contracts, no unions, no laws to protect workers. If the boss wanted to rip you off, he could...this is what James is criticizing. If I charge too much, if I sell a used car and don't tell about major repairs, if I cheat on taxes, if I waste time and I'm being paid for it...these are wrong and no different than the unscrupulous employer. Christians are to work hard with honesty and integrity.

ALLOCATION * [James 5:5](#) **"You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence."** We are not to waste our wealth. We tend to say things like: "I'm worth it" or "I can afford it, so why not?" Our yearning capacity always tends to exceed our earning capacity. Instead of self-indulgence and impulse spending, [Proverbs 21:5](#) tell us: **"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as sure as haste leads to poverty."** Spending money wisely means having a budget. God wants us to make money honestly, save it faithfully, spend it wisely.

APPLICATION * [James 5:6](#) (Living Bible) **"You have condemned and ruined innocent men, and they are powerless to stop you."** Don't abuse your wealth. Richard Foster in [Money, Sex and Power](#) wrote "...money can give you influence and authority." Evidently in James' time, the rich were buying off judges and circumventing justice. Christians need to recognize the influence of wealth and use it for good. How? By being wise stewards and by giving money generously. [Proverbs 11:24-25](#) **"It is possible to give away and become richer. It's also possible to hold on too tightly and lose everything. The generous man shall become richer; by watering others, he waters himself."** This principle is taught throughout Scripture. Give and it will be given unto you. Just like seeds, the more we sow the more we reap. There are more promises in the Bible related to giving than on any other subject. God wants us to learn to be givers because God is a giver.

[James 5:7](#) **"Be patient, then, brothers..."** From saving for eternity to waiting for eternity...which can seem like waiting for an eternity. James gives us examples and reasons for this virtue.

BE PATIENT LIKE A FARMER * [James 5:7](#) **"See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its**

valuable crop and how patient he is ..." When circumstances are uncontrollable – remember the farmer who has no control over the seasons, the weather, the growing cycle, the economy. Planting a seed and worrying about it makes no sense...we can only wait.

BE PATIENT LIKE THE PROPHETS * [James 5:10](#) **"As an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the**

prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord." When people are unchangeable – remember the prophets whose duty was to bring people back to God. People resist change. Even when they agree that change is needed.

BE PATIENT LIKE JOB * [James 5:11](#) **"You have heard of Job's perseverance ..."** When problems are unexplainable remember Job who persevered through losing everything but his faith.

BE PATIENT BECAUSE GOD IS IN CONTROL * [James 5:8](#) **"Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."** The Lord's coming is the ultimate proof that God is in control of history. History is His-story. So we wait on the Lord.

BE PATIENT BECAUSE GOD REWARDS PATIENCE * [James 5:11](#) **"As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered."** The second half of Job's life was more blessed than the first half as God doubled everything Job had and lost. There are all kinds of rewards to patience such as it builds your character, you get along with people better, you appreciate what you have, you are happier, you enjoy better health, and you experience God's help. [Isaiah 40:31](#) says **"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles..."**

BE PATIENT BECAUSE GOD IS WORKING THINGS OUT * [James 5:11](#) **"You have heard of Job's perseverance, and have seen what the Lord finally brought about."** All the time Job did not know what was going on, God was at work. We have to learn the difference between "no" and "not yet". A delay is not a denial. All of Job is "why, why, why?" And God finally responds with "who?" "Who are you?" and "who am I?" We wait because we trust, not because we understand.

With time and money, the main point is trust and stewardship. Do we trust God enough to give? Do we trust God enough to wait? For those who don't, a warning: **"The Judge is standing at the door!"** ([5:11](#)) For those who do, a promise: **"The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."** ([5:11](#))