

the reason Paul wrote, (1 Timothy 6:9) "*But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*"

4. God's Solution

Though James does not mention it here, God's Word gives us several solutions for the dangers of riches.

- 1) Trust God: (1 Timothy 6:17) "*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*"
- 2) Be content: (1 Timothy 6:6-7) "*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*" (7) "*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*"
- 3) Tithe: (Proverbs 3:9-10) "*Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*"
- 4) Invest in eternity: (Proverbs 13:7) "*There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.*"
- 5) Flee greed: (Proverbs 23:4) "*Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.*"
- 6) Be generous: (Acts 20:35) "*I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

Conclusion: Riches often bring much heartache. Riches corrode themselves and those who hoard them. Riches often corrupt one's character. We must flee the dangers of riches and then follow God's solution **above**.

The greatest treasure a person may obtain is God's forgiveness and a home in heaven. Are you 100% positive you have that treasure? If not, I would be very happy to show you from the Bible how you can be.

Chorus: Seek ye first the kingdom of God (sing twice)

The Danger of Riches

18 December 2016 AM - James 5:1-6 - Jas16 - Scott Childs

Introduction: The Bible records the biographies of many rich people. Job was very rich. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were rich. David was rich. Solomon was extremely rich. Jehoshaphat was rich. Joseph of Arimathaea was a rich man. Being rich is not evil, but it brings with it many dangers.

Compared to many people of the world we are all rich. However, if God has allowed you to have a sizable income it brings with it many dangers.

Transition: This morning we are going to note three dangers of riches then we will note God's solution.

The 1st danger of riches is ...

1. The Calamity of Riches, Jas 5:1

a. The devil claims that riches bring happiness.

- 1) Achan thought that riches would make him happy and he stole from the spoils of Jericho. This led to the death of several soldiers and eventually to his own death.
- 2) When Gehazi, Elisha's servant, thought that riches would make him happy, he lied to get riches from Naaman. As a result, he got leprosy.
- 3) After listing all the riches that he had accumulated, Solomon said, (Ecclesiastes 2:11) "*Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*"
- 4) The devil is a liar. Riches do not make a person happy.

b. The truth is that riches often bring miseries.

- 1) That was clear in the lives of Achan and Gehazi.
- 2) The word translated "*miseries*" can also be translated hardship, trouble or calamity.
- 3) James warns the rich that miseries *shall come* to them. Those miseries may be severe or they may be a feeling of empty vanity as Solomon described.
- 4) Because of coming miseries, James commands those who

are rich to weep and howl or mourn with a loud cry. By taking this humble approach they may be able to avoid some of the heartache that lies ahead.

The 2nd danger of riches is ...

2. The Corrosion of Riches, Jas 5:2-3

a. Riches do not last

- 1) Riches (e.g., house, car, big toys) will rust, rot and decay (v.2). Nice clothing will get holes in it.
- 2) Things made of gold or silver will tarnish (v.3). They will lose their beauty and value.

b. Riches often ruin good people

- 1) The word translated "*rust*" literally refers to poison. The poison of riches will witness against the rich person. His riches will often haunt his conscience.
- 2) The rust or discoloration shall bear testimony against you that the money is not used as it should be, either in paying those to whom it is due, or in doing good to others. ^{Barnes}
- 3) The rust which once eats your riches shall then gnaw your conscience, accompanied with punishment which shall prey upon your bodies forever. ^{JFB}
- 4) Rich people often heap treasures for the last days. In other words, they are laying up treasures on earth rather than investing in eternity. Jesus said that was not wise.
- 5) (Matthew 6:19-20) "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*"
- 6) In the next verse Jesus said, (Matthew 6:21) "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" If you are living for the prosperity, pleasures, or prestige that earthly success promises, that is where your heart is. If you are trying to impress people with what you have, that is where your heart is. You are laying up little or nothing in heaven.
- 7) Paul wrote the believers in Colosse saying, (Colossians

3:1) "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*" (Colossians 3:2) "*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*"

- 8) Beware! Riches will corrode physically and they will corrode you spiritually.

The 3rd danger of riches is ...

3. The Corruption of Riches, Jas 5:4-6

a. Riches may be obtained honestly.

- 1) Many of the rich in the Bible obtained their wealth honestly.
- 2) Hard work, frugal spending, wise investments and honouring God can increase one's wealth honestly.

b. However, riches are often obtained corruptly.

- 1) James describes the practice of many rich who refused to properly pay their workers.
 - a) He said that the stolen **hire** money crieth. That word means to caw like a raven, to cry loudly, or to cry and pray for vengeance.
 - b) He also said that the cries of the **cheated reapers** entered the ears of the Lord of sabaoth (i.e., host, armies of heaven).
- 2) Read verse 5 again. James was saying, "You have lived luxurious lives upon the earth and you have lived in self-gratification, you fattened your hearts as in day of slaughter." Here he is rebuking them for their selfishness.
- 3) In verse 6, James says that they were hurting others to gain for themselves. Many today do the same thing.
 - a) They take a high paying job that robs them of time with their family so they can work more to get more money.
 - b) They rob God of tithes and offerings and make the excuse that they cannot afford to obey God in this area.
 - c) They may cheat others like the tax department, their employer or employees to gain more.
- 4) Riches often corrupt one's good character. I believe that is