

# The Book Of James: Keeping It Real

## James 2:5-9

### **James 2:5**

*(KJV) Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

*(NIV) Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?*

Continuing on the heart issue of favouritism and partiality toward the rich, James is calling to account those who ought to know better—those who know how the rich roll with all their physical, legal, and spiritual oppression over the poor. The poor here could be an obvious metaphor for all believers who have forsaken the world (1 John 2:15-17) in favour of following their Saviour, whose riches—far greater than Satan could offer (Matthew 4:8-10)—reach throughout eternity:

### **Ephesians 1:11-14**

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Listen, beloved, to be poor in the eyes of the world is to be rich in God's eyes!

**Matthew 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Dearest believer, what do you think Jesus' first beatitude is saying to the world? Could it be that those who have become poor in spirit—lowly, broken, and contrite before our holy God through most humbling of circumstances—are now best positioned for blessed salvation and eternal riches?

### **James 2:5**

*Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Don't be deceived follower of Christ: our best life is not now, not even close. Any prosperity we reap on earth is to bless others, and we have only to pass it along to others in obedience to the Great Giver—for it is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35). We ourselves are abundantly cared for as God's own children and there is nary a breath He wouldn't supply to hear our grateful praises on this earth. Don't forget it: we are most blessed among God's creation on earth and mankind is most wealthy when he seeks riches that neither moth nor rust can destroy.

### **Matthew 6:19-21**

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: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

\*STUDY POINT: Find three passages both in the Old and New Testament that stand as definitive life lessons on forsaking the world in favour of God's spiritual riches.

### **James 2:6**

**(KJV)** *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*

**(NIV)** *But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?*

Ever the logical and just black-and white thinker, James brings the pockets of Jewish believers to recall the legal wrangling initiated by the prominent rich pagan sect. There is great oppressive evil hidden in the world of exploitive lawsuits that expose and ultimately extinguish all hope for the vulnerable poor—and that erase any and all goodwill in the human race:

### **Genesis 6:5-7**

*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

I hope and pray, beloved, that we would feel just a tear from the eye of God cried over the grievous sins of mankind—tears he poured over the cross of His Son Jesus.

\*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: When was the last time you grieved over your sin? In a grace-drenched Christian landscape, we sometimes forget what makes grace so great. Take time today to sit before your holy Father and allow Him to investigate the sin areas that still linger in your heart.

### **James 2:7**

**(KJV)** *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?*

**(NIV)** *Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?*

The context here is important. Judaism had much to say about *belonging*, and the name that one took on became the name to which one belonged. This was more than an association with God—this was God the Great Purchaser and Possessor of His children.

### **1Corinthians 6:19-20**

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

### **James 2:8**

**(KJV)** *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*

**(NIV)** *If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.*

I love this! You know when I was a professional musician honing my craft, I was told by my mentors that if I was experiencing problems with regards to my physical technique—I need only to go back and readdress the fundamentals! There was probably a hairline crack in my foundation. James here reminds the Jewish diaspora that they need to examine their faith (2 Corinthians 13:5) and discern as to if they were still hanging their hearts off the two big laws of love:

### **Matthew 22:37-40**

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

### **James 2:9**

**(KJV)** *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

**(NIV)** *But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.*

And back to our theme for this passage from last week and this week. Playing favourites. It's sin, folks! It has nothing to do with God. In fact it grieves His heart. *You commit sin!* Never mind the rich taking the poor to task and to court—the verdict is GUILTY! For the rich and for anyone who harbours favouritism and partiality in their hearts against another called by God's name.

Amen.

~ Reverend Darren McClelland