

MAKE THE MOST OF THE TIME

AUTHENTIC FAITH: GROWING WITH JAMES THE APOSTLE · JAMES 4:13-17 & JAMES 5:1-6 · FEBRUARY 23, 2025 · JENNY ELLEFSON

James 4:13-17

¹³Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Context

The context of this passage is that many Jews had left home to start business in the prosperous Hellenistic cities. So, merchants making plans and traveling among the cities was a normal business practice to make profits.

Challenge

James is not challenging the fact that these people are making money. He is challenging and admonishing the arrogant independence and presumption that they "boast in their own plans." Or "arrogant schemes."

They basically leave God out. The time that they have on this earth is theirs to live independently. This independence manifests itself by pressing on with our plans with an unspoken attitude that we can live without God.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see in your life that you are operating in independence and not dependent upon God?
2. Are there areas in your life where you are in control rather than trusting God?
3. What is God saying to you through this passage?

James 5:1-6

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. ²Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. ⁴Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

Context

We don't know for sure as it's a general letter to all the Jewish believers but James is probably confronting the wealthy landowners who made their money through rents from tenant farmers. There are 2 charges against them:

- Oppression of the poor (they are cheating their field workers by holding back their wages)
- Spending their wealth on themselves

Challenge

We may not be wealthy landowners but the challenge that James confronts us with is that we will all have to give account for what we did with the resources we were given. When we think about making the most of our time here on earth—how we use and invest the resources which we have been given is an important question to think through.

Discussion Questions

1. Do we use our money in any unjust way that we may gain and others lose?
2. Do we spend our wealth on ourselves?
3. What scriptures can guide us as we evaluate our handling of the resources that God has given us?
4. Am I engaging with the poor?
5. Do I have an attitude of thanksgiving and generosity in regards to money?