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WHEN THE SOUL ROTS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES
NUMBER 38
JAMES 5:2-3

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JAMES 5:2-3 "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."

The Book of James is designed to make you realize that as a believer you can't stand still. You can't stay where you are. You will either go up or down, you will grow in grace or you will slip into reversionism. You will be under divine discipline or you will be under divine blessing. God certainly agrees with you at least on one thing--You want to be happy and he wants you to be happy all the time. The way where we so often disagree with God is how to reach that happiness. The reversionist says, "I will make my own happiness. I know what I want in my life and I'll go out and get it." The believer in reversionism actually says this to God. This reversionist says, "I know what's important to me and I'll get it. With my great ability and my great agility and charm, I'll go out and get what I want." But God says, "But there is only one way you can achieve this kind of life I want you to have and this is the path I call super grace." The super grace life frees God to give you everything he wants to give.

The Illustration Of Money

James could have used many things to illustrate this truth, but the Holy Spirit just happened to pick out money as the thing he would use in the illustration of this truth. There is only one right way to deal with money. If money ever becomes your master instead of your servant, then you are headed for disaster. The reason James used money as an illustration here is this: Most every person in the earth at some time has thought that having money was the solution to all problems. I believe God wants you to have money, but he also wants you to have the capacity for handling money. Super grace brings the capacity for happiness, for freedom, for life, for love, for grace. All of these capacities make it possible to have a lot of money and also to enjoy it. On the other hand, reversionism goes after money and says, "I can make myself happy in my own way with my own ability." And sometimes God let's the reversionist have the money just to prove to him how wrong he is. There are two kinds of reversionists in this chapter. The reversionist with money and the verbal reversionist. Both of these illustrations present two great principles. Verses 1-6 presents monetary reversionism and then gives the solution in verses 7 and 8. In verses 9-12 we have verbal reversionism and the solution in verses 13-20 and along the way we have the greatest dissertation on prayer in all the Word of God. Prayer is designed to redeem the time. There are times to pray and there are times to work. This passage will teach us when prayer is to be operational. We will study this prayer section very closely. We will discover that one man can deliver a whole nation if he knows how to pray. So James, Chapter 5 is like a diamond with many facets and we will look at all these facets before we have concluded this chapter.

JAMES 5:2 "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten"

To get a running start, let's look again at a correct translation of verse one. "Come on, now, you rich ones, burst into weeping and continue screaming from your miseries that keep coming upon you." They tried to get happiness from money and they failed.

Now here in verse two we have "ho ploutos humon" and it means "The wealth of yours." So the problem is not the money, not the wealth, but the spiritual status of the one having the wealth. The problem is the man, not the money. There is nothing wrong with wealth.

Free enterprise is from God.

God so designed free enterprise so a man can achieve wealth and there is nothing wrong with this achievement. But when money is not made but doled out by the government, then it produces parasites. The laws of divine establishment are so designed to protect free enterprise. It is quite amazing to realize today that millions are being brainwashed into believing that the making of money in free enterprise is of the Devil and therefore free enterprise ought to be taxed out of existence. In reality, it is government interference with free enterprise that is about to destroy our free enterprise system in this country. If a man can legitimately make millions, then he should be free to do so. And the man who legitimately makes millions in free enterprise today should not be criticized by the Christian or crucified by the government.

Labor Unions May Destroy Our Economic System

There is a point to which labor can go to protect the workers and be sure that the worker is given a fair chance. But in this country today, the labor movement is moving into a dangerous position and they may be the final destruction of our economic freedom. I read the following demands that were made recently in America by a certain Labor Union--

- A thirty-five hour work week with forty hours pay.
- All overtime to be double pay for first two hours, then triple.
- A thirty minute paid lunch period.
- Two fifteen minute rest periods each day.
- Ten minute paid wash-up period.
- Fourteen holidays during the year.
- No reduction in pay when worker is demoted.

Conditions for lay-off:

- Four to six months seniority-----40 hours pay.
- Six months to a year-----80 hours pay.
- One to five years-----120 hours pay.
- Five to ten years-----2,080 hours pay.
- Ten to fifteen years-----4,160 hours pay.
- Fifteen years or more----Paid 35 hours a week until 65.
- Thirty days without tardiness or absence shall receive two additional days pay.
- Five days paid funeral leave for members of immediate family.
- Three days paid funeral leave for other relatives.
- \$900 college tuition for each child of college age (per year).
- Six months at full pay for sick leave.
- After six months sick leave, 75% pay until age 65.

The vacation schedule:

Three weeks after five years work.

Four weeks after ten years work

Five weeks after fifteen years work.

Six weeks after twenty years work.

Seven weeks after 25 years work.

Eight weeks after thirty years work or more.

Fully paid dental plan for all members of the family.

Major medical insurance of \$150,000.00.

Surgical benefits of \$1,500 and \$2,000 hospital expense.

Paid out patient psychiatric care.

Fully paid life insurance on the basis of three times annual wage.

In my judgment, this is one reason our country is on the way to destruction.

Now in this passage before us, wealth is not being criticized, but it is the reversionist believer being criticized for the way he handles his wealth.

This verse says, "The riches of you are corrupted." Notice that back in verse 13 of chapter 4 the reversionist decided to go negative toward Bible Doctrine. He neglected doctrine but was positive toward money. Money was the object of his life.

The Attitude Of Government Today.

Today our government, in substance, says this to the rich man or the rich corporation. We will fleece you of all the money we can and will give it to the parasites and political leaders so they can pull you down to their level. Now there is nothing wrong with being rich legitimately. The parasites in this country are on the increase and if we continue to support these parasites, we will destroy this nation. We will destroy the goose that lays the golden egg, namely, big business.

A Great Depression Needed

In time of economic depression, men learn again the value of hard work. But millions are being taught today if you will go and sit down and fill out a lot of papers that "Uncle Sugar" will soon be by and will give you all you want. Don't work as long as "Uncle Sugar" will come along and take care of you and buy your food and take care of the necessities of life. The people who built big businesses have saved this country up to now. It may be that a first class depression would teach people the value of hard work and the importance of a hard day's work for an honest day's pay.

Our Scripture is about a wealthy man out of fellowship.

Now grace can give to grace but grace has no responsibility to reversionism. God grant that if some of you ever become wealthy that you will have enough doctrine in your mind to hold you in line with the great principles laid down by Christ. The super grace capacity for life includes the ability to enjoy wealth. But in the verse before us we have what is called "corrupted wealth."

Free Enterprise designed to bless.

Money in free enterprise provides joys and makes it possible for the hard worker to get ahead. Free enterprise has brought this country to the highest economic level of any nation in history. It provides motivation for better living. But it is the money made by free enterprise that is now being used by the government to turn around and break

the back of the system that produced it in the first place. Much legislation today is making it harder and harder for big business to survive. In this way our country is fast playing right into the hands of the Socialists and the Communists.

Two Saving Factors

Two of the saving forces in our society have been big business and the military. Big business has saved us from revolution and the military has protected our freedom. These two forces have helped make us a great nation. But today we have government by mediocrity and we have anarchy just around the corner. I know that some of you think I am too severe in this analysis, but you will remember these things after freedom is gone from our shores. I want you to look back and remember that these things were said here. If you can't stand some straight speaking from the pulpit, you will never be able to stand the revolution.

What Makes For Corrupt Riches?

This second verse of James 5 says, "Your riches are corrupted." The word for corrupted is the perfect, active, indicative of "sepo" and it means "rotted." Your wealth has rotted.

Illustration: Just suppose God has designed that this believer be a millionaire by the time he is 35. (That makes the illustration a little more interesting.) But if he is a reversionist, if he is out of fellowship, then his mission will be rotten. But if he gets it and has super grace, it will be a beautiful vehicle for fantastic happiness. Reversionism rots the soul. The money isn't rotten, it is the soul that is rotten. It is the soul of the reversionist who doesn't know how to let God guide him in the proper use of that money. So this passage says this--"My dear Mr. Reversionist, your riches have rotted because your soul is rotten." And many reversionists have allowed their rotten souls to rub off on others. That's what we call rotten by association. That's the same excuse Adam used in the Garden. He said he fell because of the woman. And the woman said she fell because of the serpent. The perfect tense of this word "corrupted" is a summative perfect and it means you have finally arrived at your destination and have produced a rotten soul. The money didn't get corrupted just the soul. It was the person on the way to reversionism that got the dry rot. And anything the reversionist touches, it is corrupted. He touches money and it is corrupted. He touches others and they are corrupted.

A bad decision in the soul.

The soul made a bad decision back in verse 13 of chapter 4 and now as a result everything the reversionist touches is corrupted. Reversionism has no capacity for happiness in wealth or in any other realm. So the rot is in the soul, not in the money. It is equally true that your victory is in your soul, not in your circumstances. James 5 is going to lay it right on the line and is going to classify us for what we really are. James levels with us and we better listen.

Love Of Money Produces The Rot

The love of money is what produces rotten money. Money isn't rotten, only the rotten people who sometimes handle money. Principle--The wealth of a person is no greater than the soul of that person and his soul-capacity. When money becomes the object of pseudo love fanaticism, then the soul rots. When money becomes a man's objective, his soul always rots. And a rotten soul corrupts everything it touches.

Now listen to this--there is no excuse for anyone having a rotten soul. The rotten soul is a synonym for reversionism. When money or success or fame or position becomes more important in your life than Bible Doctrine, then rot sets in in the soul. When you turn your mind away from Bible Doctrine, the fun is over and rot sets in. The word rot used here is better because it suggests a bad smell. A bad odor always spreads easier than a good odor. You neutralize everything around you with your soul rot. The capital for redeeming the time is Bible Doctrine. If you have capacity for truth, then your riches will never rot.

Moth-eaten Garments

This verse goes on to say that "your garments are moth-eaten." The words are "ta himatia humon" and it means "The garments of you." The reason he uses garments is this: We usually associate fine clothes with wealth. The word for "are" is "ginomai" and it means they became something they were not before. This is a perfect, active, indicative and it means this is the end result. You can wear the most beautiful garments in the world but if your soul is rotten, this verse says the garments are moth-eaten. The moths are in the soul. It doesn't mean they are eaten by literal moths, but eaten by your selfish rotten soul. Nothing wrong with the beautiful clothes. The word for moth-eaten is "seto brotos." "Seto" means moth and "brotos" means to eat.

JAMES 5:3 "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." Gold and silver here not only refers to money but it refers to the gold and silver things that you have. If you have a rotten soul, your gold and silver things are tarnished. They bring no enjoyment to you. I would rather dine with some hobo under a railroad bridge and drink coffee out of a tin can than to sit and eat out of your gold and silver dishes if your soul is moth-eaten. I'd rather sit on an orange crate sharing a can of pork and beans with someone whose soul is in fellowship with God, than to dine in the finest palace in the earth if the people in that palace are out of fellowship with God. This is what this passage is saying. It says your gold and silver is cankered. The word is "kitioo" and it means cankered, corroded, tarnished. This is a consummative perfect, and it means they have finally arrived at this sad state.

The next word "rust" is incorrect for silver and gold does not rust. The word is "ho ios" and it means tarnish.

Venom Of The Soul

It says "this shall be" and this is a future, active, indicative of "eimi" and it means this is a certain fact. This is evidence against you, and the words are "eis marturion". In your soul is the venom of reversionism and you accumulate your own evidence and this means that divine discipline is coming tomorrow.

How did you get this venom in your soul?

You neglected Bible Doctrine and you built up negative volition in the soul. A vacuum developed and then darkness set in. Then you began a frantic search for happiness and you actually took the needle in your own hand and you started shooting venom into your own soul. You actually eat up your own flesh.

Fire In The Soul

These words "on fire" go with the last line. "Ye have heaped" is from the aorist, active, indicative of "thesaurizo" and it means to accumulate treasure. You have tried on your own to make it and now you have a big pile of rot, tarnish and moth-eaten junk and it makes a big bonfire in your soul. You actually self-destruct yourself while you are still alive. The fire refers to moving into the sin unto death. You are dangerously near self-destruction. Money, sex, power never solve your problems. Problems are solved in the soul.

The phrase "the last days" come from "en eschatos" and mean the end catastrophe. You are dying, and you turn to money and it won't help. You turn to success and it won't help. You turn to power and it won't help.

Our next study is "Three Ways You Can Wreck Things With Money."

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