**Hold on to Jesus We Can Make It**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**James 5:5-9**

**Wednesday Evening**

**May 7, 2021**

**James 5:5-9**

5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. 7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

**5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.**

Saints, the lifestyles of the rich and famous may make interesting media fodder, but they are noxious to God. These rich, who have taken the land from the poor and then refused to pay their deserved wages, have shown gross lack of concern and selfishness.

To this they have added an attitude of wastefulness and self-indulgence that God detests. A life of luxury and satisfying every whim is essentially worthless. Money will mean nothing when Christ returns, so we should spend our time accumulating treasures that will be worthwhile in God’s eternal Kingdom.

Money itself is not the problem: Christian leaders need money to live and support their families; missionaries need money to help them spread the gospel; churches need money to do their work effectively. It is the love of money that leads to evil and causes some to oppress others to get more.

**1 Timothy 6:10**

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Saints, this is a warning to all Christians who are tempted to adopt worldly standards rather than God’s standards (Romans 12:1-2) and an encouragement to all those who are oppressed by the rich.

**Romans 12:1-2**

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Saints, for these rich people, their treasure is worldly wealth. They have enjoyed life, feasting as they would on the day when an animal is slaughtered. Ironically, James says that they are like fattened animals ready for the slaughter when the day of God’s judgment arrives (see Jeremiah 12:1-3).

**Jeremiah 12:1-3**

1 Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?

2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth But far from their mind.

3 But You, O LORD, know me; You have seen me, And You have tested my heart toward You. Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, And prepare them for the day of slaughter.

 **6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.**

Saints, the condemning and killing of good people probably was both active and passive. Inconvenient people may indeed have been murdered; but more likely, the poor people who could not pay their debts were thrown in prison or forced to sell all their possessions.

With no means of support and no opportunity even to work off their debts, these poor people and their families often died of starvation.

**2 Timothy 3:10-17**

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God also considered this murder. Either way, in the unjust system, it was legal.

Saints, it is no difference that today our legal system has allowed 70 million babies aborted through our ungodly legal system!

The poor had no power to defend themselves. Their only recourse against the evil rich was to cry out to God. The conditions that James is describing may seem hopeless. Many of the rich will not repent. Believers can live with hope, however, because Christ is coming back.

He will bring judgment and justice. It is to Christ’s return that James now turns.

**7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.**

Saints, believers are to be patient even in the midst of injustice. The believers need to endure, trust in God through their trials, and refuse to try to get even for wrongs committed against them.

**Psalm 37:1-17**

1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. 12 The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. 13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct. 15 Their sword shall enter their own heart, And their bows shall be broken. 16 A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, But the LORD upholds the righteous.

Saints, patience does not mean inaction. There was work to be done—serving God, caring for one another, and proclaiming the Good News.

There is an end point, a time when patience will no longer be needed—the Lord’s return. At that time, everything will be made right. The early church lived in constant expectation of Christ’s return, and so should we. Because we don’t know when Christ will return to bring justice and remove oppression, we must wait with patience.

**2 Peter 3:8-13**

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Saints, as an example of patience, James talks about the farmer who must patiently wait for the precious harvest to ripen. Patience must be exercised and developed between the rains. Even non farmers have plenty of opportunities to develop patience.

The waiting for the arrival of a baby, starting a new job, finishing school, waiting for a loved one’s visit, slowly improving health during a prolonged illness—all these situations try our patience. We will exercise patience as we concentrate on the end result of our waiting. God’s way is seldom the quick way, but it is always the complete way.

**8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.**

Instead of being like the rich people of verse 5 who have “fattened” their hearts on the wealth of this world, believers are to allow the assurance of Christ’s return to help them be patient and take courage.

**Psalm 112:4-8**

4 Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. 5 A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he will never be shaken; The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. 8 His heart is established; He will not be afraid, Until he sees his desire upon his enemies.

Saints, whatever the circumstances, James encourages us to be rock solid in our faith and to have a faith-inspired joy that permeates every part of life. Like the farmer, we invest a long time in our future hope.

The farmer is at the mercy of the weather—it is outside his control. But we do know that the coming of the Lord is near.

**9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!**

Saints, these believers, facing persecution from the outside and problems on the inside, may naturally find themselves grumbling and criticizing one another.

James doesn’t want them to be filled with resentment and bitterness toward each other—that would only destroy the unity they so desperately need. Refusing to grumble about each other is part of what it means to be patient.

**Psalm 133**

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing--Life forevermore.

**Ephesians 4:11-16**

11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Grumbling against one another indicates a careless attitude of speech. Because of the dangers created by our speech, we cannot afford to be lax in the way we speak to and about each other. James has already mentioned the great Judge.

This Judge is not far away, but standing at the door. James is warning believers not to be in the middle of judging, quarreling, criticizing, or gossiping when the one they should be serving returns. Knowledge of Christ’s presence is not only comforting; it can also be convicting—especially when we begin behaving as if he were far away.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**