

February 18, 2024 – Pastor Kevin Olivier
James 1:9-11 – “Glory and Humiliation”

- A. Please pray for your pastor to be careful and faithful in his preaching.
- B. James is a book that uses a great deal of OT wisdom literature.

You are to glory in your inheritance in Christ.	I. WHAT YOU ARE TO GLORY IN II. THE HUMILIATION OF THE RICH
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I. **WHAT YOU ARE TO GLORY IN** → **v9** “**But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position**”

- A. The prior mention of the audience of this general epistle is something we should consider when reading **v9**.
 - 1. In **v1**, James addressed his epistle to “**the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad.**”
 - a. There were dispersions of the Jews because of Assyria conquering the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC and then Babylon besieged Jerusalem in 597 BC. After being restored to the promised land, the Jews were ruled by the Greeks and then the Roman empire.
 - b. In **Acts 8:1**, after Stephen was stoned to death, we are told that a “**great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.**”
 - 1) This was the Jewish persecution of the Christian church.
 - 2) It was at this time when Saul of Tarsus was “**entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, . . . [to] put them in prison**” (**8:3**).
 - c. The Jews sought to persecute the followers of Jesus in other regions of the known world as well. In **Acts 14**, the Jews that did not believe the apostles’ preaching in Iconium, “**stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren**” (**v2**). Together they sought to stone them, so they fled that city as well (**vv5-7**).
 - 2. When James spoke of the “**brother of humble circumstances,**” he was likely speaking to many Christians who lost homes and businesses because of persecution.
 - a. Jesus prepared His disciples for these trials by saying in **Mat 19**, “**Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.**”
 - b. There was outright, life-threatening persecution [as mentioned before], yet there was also economic persecution.
 - c. Both Jews and gentiles opposed Christians by refusing to employ them, to use their services, or to buy their goods.
- B. **Ja 1:9** is not saying that every person of meager or “**humble circumstances is to glory in his high position.**”
 - 1. In other words, poverty is not a virtue in and of itself. A poor unbeliever has nothing to glory in at all.
 - 2. The key word in **v9** is “**brother.**”
 - a. The brother in Christ is to glory in his high position as a son of God and co-heir with Christ.
 - b. Christians are not to glory in their position of being poor.
 - 1) In light of believers suffering poverty in this life, they should glory in having their eternal inheritance— treasures in heaven where Christ is seated.
 - 2) After the resurrection, believers will rejoice in having a place prepared for them in the New Jerusalem which will be the glory of the new heavens and new earth.
 - c. Paul said it another way in **Rom 8:18**: “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**”
 - d. Look at what James later said in **chapter 2, v5**,
- C. Every Christian person— no matter what their station in life— whether rich or poor— should glory in their eternal inheritance in and through Jesus.

II. THE HUMILIATION OF THE RICH → **vv9-10**

A. Normally we think of humility as being a Christian grace which is the opposite of pride. That is not how it is used here.

1. The **“brother of humble circumstances”** is the brother having “meager circumstances” or the “poor brother.”
2. When James said that **“the rich man is to glory in his humiliation,”** the word here may best be translated as being brought low. This fits with the illustration of flowering grass which follows. → **vv10-11**
 - a. Notice that James does not call the rich man a brother.
 - b. The contrast being made here may be to a poor Christian who has eternal riches to a rich man who only has worldly riches. Which one would you rather be?
 - 1) Although the rich man seems to flourish in this life, he and all that he has will eventually fall away like grass that withers under the sun during a drought.
 - 2) The flower of riches will wither and fall off. Its beauty will be destroyed.

B. Letting Scripture interpret Scripture, God encourages His people to be good stewards of their money.

1. **Prov 22:7** says that **“the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.”** Being strapped with debt should be avoided at all costs.
2. In His parable of the shrewd manager in **Lu 16:1-12**, Jesus concluded that one ought to **“make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness.”**
 - a. When God has given a person wealth, it can be used to help those in need outside of the church.
 - b. God can and has used this to bring some people to come in to hear the gospel and later to be received in the church.
 - 1) Using money for the sake of the kingdom is a key way to be **“faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth” (Lu 16:11).**
 - 2) The work of the deacons is to help those in need yet to do it for the sake of the kingdom.
 - c. In that same parable Jesus also warned that, **“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (v13).** Wealth is a tool to be used and not to be exalted as an idol.
3. What are we to do with passages such as **Lu 18:22** when Jesus told the rich young ruler, **“sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me”?**
 - a. This man was extremely rich and his wealth was an idol that he had to deal with.
 - b. That is why Jesus gave him this hard command because that is what he needed to hear.
 - c. In **Lu 19**, the wealthy tax collector, Zaccheus, said to Jesus **“Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much” (v8)**
 - 1) The reply Jesus gave him wasn’t, “You have not given enough. Sell all that you possess distribute it to the poor, and come, follow Me.”
 - 2) Jesus told Zaccheus, **“Today salvation has come to this house” (v9).**
3. In **1 Tim 6**, Paul taught Christians who were rich how they ought to live. → **1 Tim 6:17-19**

Review, further application, and conclusion: