

"JAMES" SERIES

#9: "Warnings"

SCRIPTURE: James 4:13-5:6

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

5 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴ Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵ You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

There are two warnings in this section:

1. A warning concerning making plans for the future; and
2. A warning to the rich.

First, let's consider...

...WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT MAKING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE (VV. 13-17).

Is he saying not to make plans for the future, not to plan ahead? Not exactly. The key words are *"carry on business and make money."* He's warning about being motivated by worldly ideas.

I can't help but think about the recent collapse of FTX crypto currency corporation. Investors have lost billions of dollars. They said, "We'll invest in this crypto currency corporation and make lots of money down the road." Little did they know what the morrow held!

James is saying, “Don’t be motivated by a desire for riches and don’t stake your future on get-rich-quick schemes. You may not even be alive when it’s time to collect.”

Paul warned in his 1st letter to Timothy: *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”*

Is there anything wrong with making money? Is there anything wrong with saving for retirement? No. But we must always keep in mind the fact that, as James says, *“What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”*

Steve Jobs founded Apple and became one of the richest men in the world, but before he got to retire and enjoy his riches, he got cancer and died.

Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla, and recent purchaser of Twitter is one of the richest men in the world. It will be interesting to see if he lives to enjoy it all.

James reveals what we need to do when it comes to making plans for the future. He says that we ought to say, *“If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*

Next,

HE HAS A WARNING TO THE RICH (VV. 1-6).

J. Vernon McGee comments here:

“The Roman world of James’ day was not like the modern world in which we live. The lifestyles were entirely different. There was no middle class in the days of James. There were the very rich, the filthy rich, and the very poor, the filthy poor. The majority of the Christians of that day came from the very poor and slave classes. They had no great cathedrals on boulevards, and they were not building kingdoms as are many of these great churches which are spending millions of dollars these days. The early church just wasn’t that kind of church.”

Is James condemning riches here? Certainly not. He’s pointing out the fraudulent way their riches were accumulated. Apparently, the wealthy landowners were cheating their labor force. They weren’t paying them all that they were due. James is condemning the way they got their money and what they did with it after they got it.

Jesus told a parable in Luke 12 about a rich man who kept building bigger barns and hoarding his riches. He never got to enjoy his riches because he died while he was building bigger barns.

Jesus never condemned that man for being rich. He condemned him for hoarding his money; He condemned him for what he did (or didn’t do) with his riches.

While there is nothing wrong with saving for retirement, where do we draw the line between saving for retirement and hoarding? Can we save for retirement without hoarding?

I think so. Although it is said that old man Rockefeller was once asked concerning money, "How much is enough?" His answer was, "Just a little bit more."

As I pointed out earlier, in 1st Timothy 6:10, Paul told his young associate Timothy, *"...the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."*

Robert Gilmour LeTourneau (November 30, 1888 – June 1, 1969), born in Richford, Vermont, he was a prolific inventor of earthmoving machinery and the founder of LeTourneau Technologies, Inc. His factories supplied LeTourneau machines which represented nearly 70 percent of the earthmoving equipment and engineering vehicles used by the Allied forces during World War II, and more than half of the 1,500-mile Alcan Highway in Canada was built with LeTourneau equipment. Over the course of his life he secured nearly 300 patents relating to earthmoving equipment, manufacturing processes and machine tools.

The LeTourneau name became synonymous with earthmoving worldwide. LeTourneau was largely responsible for the invention and development of many types of earthmoving machines now widely used. He designed and built machines using technology that was years, sometimes decades, ahead of its time and became recognized worldwide as a leader in the development and manufacture of heavy equipment.

In 1953, LeTourneau sold his entire earthmoving equipment line to the Westinghouse Air Brake Company for \$30 million. It was later sold around to Marathon Manufacturing Company in 1972, to Rowan in 1994, and to Joy Global in 2011 which was acquired by and renamed to Komatsu Mining Corp. He then applied his ingenuity to the development of the electric wheel drive concept. In 1958, at the age of seventy, LeTourneau re-entered the earthmoving equipment manufacturing business, offering contractors a range of high capacity earthmoving, transportation, and material handling machines based on the revolutionary electric wheel drive system he had developed. An electric wheel drive is also called an electric wheel hub motor.

LeTourneau set aside 90 percent of his salary and company profits for religious donations, living on the other 10 percent. "You have made the word of God a glorious, practical reality," radio program host Robert Ripley told LeTourneau, then turned to the audience with his own trademark flourish. "And of such is the work of faith... believe it or not."

LeTourneau was a firm believer in the effectiveness of practical instruction combined with classroom studies; and, in 1946, he purchased an unused military hospital, accompanying land and buildings in Longview, TX. There he established the LeTourneau Technical Institute at the site of the former Harmon General Hospital to provide sound technical and mechanical training, traditional college courses, and training for missionary technicians, based on the philosophy of combining work, education, and

Christian testimony. The LeTourneau Technical Institute became a college in its own right, in 1961, and eventually gained "university" status to become LeTourneau University.

In 1953, LeTourneau began a development project in the country of Liberia, West Africa, with the diverse goals of colonization, land development, agricultural development, livestock introduction, evangelism and philanthropic activities. In 1954, a colonization project with similar objectives to those in Liberia was established in the country of Peru, South America. The project in Peru was called "Tournavista."

Brethren, this was a rich man who, instead of storing up treasure in barns, used his riches to the glory of God.

IN CLOSING...

Few of us, if any will have to worry about our accumulation of riches, but that doesn't mean that we can't *crave* riches and let that become our motive in life.

Next week: "Patience and Prayer."