

#### IV. You condemned, you murdered the powerless righteous! (5:6)

- A. You have condemned. (James 2:6)
  
- B. Who is “the righteous one” (lit.)?
  - i. These poor were powerless against them.
  
  - ii. James 4:6 The powerless may not be able to resist, but God will resist them... in the day of slaughter!

#### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Read James 5:1-6. What stands out? Are there any indicators of structure in these verses? (Parallels, similarities of lines or ideas?)
- Do have either the tendency to think this text is irrelevant or to just feel guilty as you read this text? After examining this text and considering the message, has that changed for you? Explain.
- The rich of these verses hoarded their wealth... pouring it into their own pockets. What have you poured your wealth into?
- Are we indicted by this text just because we are Americans? Are there ways it speaks to us because of our wealth? Are there ways we are not automatically guilty because we are “rich” Americans?
- You may not pay wages, but what are some ways you can apply the call and warning of these verses? What is it calling all of us to consider regarding our possessions?
- What are some of the ways the powerful of our day condemn and murder the poor?
- Most of us are not the poor of this text, nor the powerful rich. However, we can have an impact for good. How might we do this? Why must our potential for success not be a determining factor for action?

#### Faith that Turns Your World Right Side Up (Part 14)

##### *Fat Cats in a Day of Slaughter*

Jerry Cisar — August 14, 2016

Text: James 5:1-6

#### Introduction

- A. These verses may have one of two effects on you:
  - i. Guilt
  - ii. Irrelevance
- B. James turns immediately from the call to *do good* in 4:17, to *calling out* those who *do evil* – who oppress the poor.

#### I. Who is James speaking to in this text?

- A. “Who is James speaking to?” rather than, “Who is James speaking about?”
  - i. He is speaking *to* the church. (1:1; 5:7-12)
  
  - ii. There is another potential audience. (1 Corinthians 1:26)
  
  - iii. *Why no call to repentance if these could be Christians?*
    - a) The call to *weep* (see 4:9)
    - b) An implied call to repentance.
    - c) Strong rebukes are a means of grace (Hebrews 6:4-9).
    - d) If we doubt that rich professing Christians *could* act this way, we should get out more.
- B. Don't let the prophetic language and tone which James uses cause you to miss the point.

*Sin corrupts. Corruption spreads and kills. Hence the note of urgency, even of desperation, in many of the biblical prophecies. The prophets rebuke sin in Israel not just because it breaks God's law but ultimately because it breaks the peace, because it breaks even the people who do*

it....In the prophetic view, sin against God is therefore outrageous folly: it's like pulling the plug on your own resuscitator.... [The prophet] sees that in sin the stakes are higher, the reverberations wider, and the corruption deeper than people suspect. And he tells them so, often in disagreeable ways.<sup>1</sup>

## II. You have stored up for yourselves in the last days! (5:1-3)

- A. Why are these rich people to weep and wail?
  
- B. The evidence against them? The very wealth they have hoarded! Their riches have already begun decaying.
  - i. This decay testifies against those who hoarded wealth and didn't use it for God's purposes. It not only mocks us, it speaks of the waste, the good we failed to do (v17).
    - Matthew 25:42-43
  - ii. Even that which the world deems as lasting has corroded in reality, for it will pass away.
  
  - iii. Your garments are moth eaten.
    - a) James 2:3
    - b) Matthew 6:19-21
- C. Hoarding wealth in the last days!
  - i. "You have treasured up in the last days". (cmp. Luke 12:21)
  
  - ii. The *last days* is that period of time in which old is still passing away, and the New is still coming... but as Christians we understand the inevitable.

Blomberg: *The condemnation is not for owning wealth per se, but for hoarding rather than using it for kingdom purposes. As Johnson observes, "the last days'... are not the anticipated retirement years of the rich, but the time of God's judgment."*

- iii. To live as if this age is central, or ultimate is to live against the faith we profess.

## III. You have fattened yourselves at the expense of others! (5:4-5)

- A. The wages you *defrauded from them* are crying out against you.
  - i. Habakkuk 2:9-12
  
  - ii. We don't know if they were defrauding the workers of wages promised, or if they were just underpaying them.

*The Bible never calls for equality of wealth distribution, but it does deal with the attitudes and issues that lead to this great a disparity.*

- B. You have fattened yourself in the day of slaughter.
  - i. This *fattening* themselves is literally *feeding* (implied, *over feeding*). It is frequently used in the context of providing and keeping alive others. Feeding our enemies, feeding the least of these. Feeding the persecuted prophets. Feeding in the sense of keeping alive.
  
  - ii. It draws to mind the rebuke of Judah in Ezekiel 16:49.

<sup>1</sup> Plantinga Jr., Cornelius. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (pp. 125-126).