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WEEK FIVE – TRUE CHRISTIANITY: EXHIBITS PATIENCE, PRAYER, AND LOVE

Reading: James 5:1-20

The first six verses of this chapter are a stark warning to those rich people who have not rightly used their wealth and treated their workers badly. Their actions are going to catch up with them on the day of judgement. This treasure they have accumulated will stand as evidence against them.

This is not about being wealthy, but how people use their wealth. In chapter 1 verses 8-11 it says: *Christians who are poor should be glad, for God has honoured them. And those who are rich should be glad, for God has humbled them. They will fade away like a flower in the field. The hot sun rises and dries up the grass, the flower withers, and its beauty fades away. So also, wealthy people will fade away with all of their achievements.*

- What lessons do we need to learn in relation to this?
- In the Lent Study we looked at money and its place in our lives. Have we given it more thought?
- 1 Timothy 6:10 tell us that the **love of money** is the root of all evil. **Not** as many people quote: money is the root of all evil. It's all about what's important in our lives.
- Luke 12:18 is often called the parable of the rich fool. What is Jesus teaching the people through this parable?
- It isn't about how much money we have but how we use it. Do we ask God about giving? Remember, giving is more than just money.

The Bible talks a lot about money: how we use it and how we give it away. That being the case, we must take note of what it says. This book of James teaches/reinforces the meaning of practical Christianity. Remember verses 14-17 in chapter 2. *Dear brothers and sister, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions. That kind of faith can't save anyone. Suppose you see a brother or sister who needs food or clothing, and you say, "Well good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat well" – but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that*

do? So, you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all – it is dead and useless.

In the second part of the chapter, it talks about patience in waiting for the Lord's return. Again, it's not something that is preached about very much nowadays. Some scripture on this issue is not always easy to understand, for example in the book of Revelation. However, Jesus talks about it, as does Luke in Acts 1, and Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians. Put simply, the truth is that one day we Christians will be taken up into heaven. The scripture clearly states that Jesus will return. In Mark 13:31-33 Jesus says: *Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. "However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!"*

In Acts 1:11, following the ascension of Jesus, two angels tell those watching: *"Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!"*

- What must we do in relation to the second coming of Jesus?
- Do we believe this will happen even though we may not understand it?

Another very practical is in verses 10-11: we are told to have patience in suffering, giving the example of Job.

Read verses 13-18

- These few verses are about prayer, and its importance in our lives. Do we keep on praying when we are going through difficult times?
- Do we remember to be thankful and continually sing praises to the Lord? Remember when Jesus healed the ten lepers but only one returned to give thanks. ([Luke 17:11-19](#)). Do we find it hard to show gratitude, not just to God but to others?
- The scripture says that if we are sick, we should call for the elders of the church (those in the ministry team) and have them pray over us and anoint us with oil.
- What do you understand by verse 16?
- Are you encouraged by verse 17? We look to Elijah as a mighty prophet of God and someone through whom God worked miracles. Yet, this scripture says he was a man with a nature like ours.

Read verse 19

Sometimes, Christians can be very judgemental about people who walk away from the things of God. Here we are told how good it is to bring such a person back to once again, walk with Jesus.

- I believe that James is encouraging us to show love rather than being judgemental. How might we be able to do this?

At the beginning of this study, I said that James was not about teaching new doctrines, as God called others to do, but rather was concerned about how we live out our Christian life on a daily basis. He gets down to the nuts and bolts of how to make it work. I pray that we will be encouraged to put these teachings into practice.

Prayer

Thank you, Father God, for the clear instructions given to us in this book of James. May we become doers of your word and not just hearers. Help us to endure trials, show wisdom and humility and exhibit patience, prayer, and love.

Amen

