

# Day 44, James 5

by David Servant

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*James emphasizes the importance of stewardship, faith, and righteousness in obtaining healing and pleasing God.*

**Scripture:** James 5:7

**Topics:** "Wealth And Stewardship", "Faith And Healing"

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## Description

David Servant preaches on James' condemnation of the unrighteous rich who gained wealth through unjust means and failed to steward it according to God's will, living luxuriously on earth. He emphasizes the importance of laying up treasures in heaven and the hope of Jesus' return for deliverance. The sermon also touches on the power of faith in healing, attributing healing to prayer offered in faith, faith in God's will for healing, and the qualifications of faith and righteousness for healing.

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## Transcript

I think it is important to note that James condemns, not the rich in general, but the unrighteous rich. They gained their riches by not paying laborers who mowed their fields, and they "condemned and put to death the righteous man" (5:6).

The unrighteous rich, however, are not only condemned by how they gained their wealth, but also because of what they did with the wealth they gained. One might gain his wealth without sin (like Job and Abraham of old), but if one does not steward his wealth according to the will of God, he is still in the category of the unrighteous rich. Those whom James condemned did exactly what Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, forbade His followers to do, namely, they laid up their treasure on the earth (5:3). They "lived luxuriously on the earth and led [lives] of wanton pleasure" (5:5), typical of many modern professing Christians who ignore Jesus' stewardship commands. If you are reading these words, there is a very good chance that you are very rich. If you make \$50,000 annually, you are in the top 1% of the world's wage earners (see [www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com)). You should be laying up lots of treasures in heaven!

It seems likely that some of those unpaid laborers who mowed the fields of the rich were among James' readers. They would have taken comfort in his condemnation of those who exploited them. Their circumstances were so dire that Jesus' return was a source of great hope of deliverance (5:7-8). James wrote that the Lord's coming "is at hand" (5:8). No one in the early church dreamed that Jesus would not return for at least 2,000 years.

Another theme from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount surfaces in today's reading, that of the sin of swearing with an oath. Just as Jesus taught, a simple "yes" or "no" is sufficient when we give our word. There is nothing wrong with making promises. But swearing by an oath is an admission that one's simple promise is not trustworthy.

Clearly, the early church believed that the Lord was still in the healing business. Notice that it was not the elders or their oil that effected healing, but the "prayer offered in faith" (5:14). Jesus often credited people's faith as the reason for their healing, and nothing has changed. If we believe, however, that it may not be God's will for us to be healed, then it is virtually impossible to pray in faith for healing.

This healing promise in James 5:14-15 ought to be enough to convince any sick believer of God's will in the matter! The only qualifications for healing, according to James, are faith and righteousness, qualifications that can be obtained by any and all Christians. And if one is lacking in righteousness, forgiveness is available to those who repent, a forgiveness that places one in the righteous category! And don't be among the deceived dunderheads who try to claim that they are "righteous in Christ" while living unrighteously! That kind of alleged righteousness is not an asset in getting prayers answered. John wrote, "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).

There is little doubt that Scripture teaches that sin can open the door to God's discipline in the form of sickness (Ex. 15:26; Num. 12:1-15; Deut. 7:15; 28:22, 27-28, 35, 58-61; 1 Sam. 5:1-12; 1 Kings 8:35-39; 2 Kings 5:21-27; 2 Chron. 16:10-13; 21:12-20; 26:16-21; Ps. 38:3; 106:13-15; 107:17-18; Is. 10:15-16; Jn. 5:5-14; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 11:27-34; Rev. 2:20-23). James also makes this clear, pointing out that the sick may need to confess their sins committed against other believers. If our relationships with other believers aren't right, our relationship with God is not right, just as Jesus taught in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:23-24). Verse 16 does not say we ought to confess all our sins to other believers as a regular practice. It must be read in context. Don't forget that James was writing to Christians who had been complaining against each other (see 4:11; 5:9).

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