

Session 6 - The Pressure of Retaliation | James 5:1-11 | 10/6/13

- Today's lesson talks about the pressure of retaliation.
 - In chapter 5 James addresses several things the first which is the unbelieving rich who were oppressing other Christians.
 - As a human our natural reaction can certainly want to get back to others, so James gives us guidance on how we can sustain from retaliating.
 - This is patience and endurance.
 - These traits though apply to our entire Christian life not just how to keep calm during a time when perhaps we might want to get even.
 - So were going to go through these verses and we'll not only talk about how they can relate to keeping ourselves together but we'll also look at what else James was telling us in these passages of scripture.
- A warning to the oppressive wealthy un-believers | James 5:1-6 | Page 61
 - The people that James is addressing in these verses is different than the rest of the book which addresses the Christian these verses were seemingly written to the lost who were wealthy and were using their wealth to oppress other Christians.
 - James specifically addresses the attitude and behavior of these non-believers and what the calamity they were doing to others and themselves.
 - Now James doesn't say that it is wrong to be rich or wealthy but it's more of an attitude and a behavior that is wrong in the type of people that he is addressing.
 - The attitude that is described here can affect us all even Christians.
 - Regardless if we associate us with the word "rich" because their problem was they put all of their stock into their worldly possessions.
 - Misery awaits those who only live life for worldly things. (James 1)
 - James tells the seeming non-believer who puts all of their hope, their satisfaction into their possessions, their money that they will cry out in misery because of what is awaiting them.
 - The person who does not know Christ that lives for the world regarding their possessions has nothing but misery waiting for them because hell is where they are going.
 - You may think life is grand now but you wait for what happens when you die.
 - Treasures on earth will not last forever (James 2-3)
 - He tells them that their cloths will be moth-eaten and ruined their silver and gold will be corroded.
 - These people had put so much stock into their possessions and were obtaining just to obtain.
 - James tells them that their stuff will eventually just get ruined anyways as it isn't permanent, nothing lasts forever.
 - Moth would eat the clothes, silver and gold would become corroded.
 - James is showing them their folly in thinking that their life's purpose is based on the amount of "stuff" that they have obtained.
 - Jesus spoke a parable that explains this.
 - Luke 12:13-21
 - The parable begins after someone wanted Jesus to be the judge to tell his brother to give him what may have been his share of an inheritance.
 - But Jesus seeming saw the man's heart that it was greed in the man's eyes.

- So Jesus then speaks the parable with the intent so speak towards his attitude regarding his earthly treasures not just the fact that he had possessions.
 - We can see this in verse 21 “That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”
 - This person had so much stuff that he had to build a bigger barn to store his grain and goods.
 - So at first you may think well what’s wrong with that?
 - So Jesus is referring more to the attitude of the person as opposed to the action.
 - Putting money or food away for a rainy day is a good thing, but the rich person in this case was storing up his abundance in excess in a way that it was never going to be used and he put his faith and stock in his possessions.
 - He measured his status by that.
 - The attitude of the rich man is revealed in verse 19
 - “You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy, eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.
 - This is the outlook of life for someone who does not know God.
 - If you are an atheist for example then all that is valuable to you is your possessions and eat drink and be merry, because what else is there?
 - Paul referenced this in Corinthians speaking to the importance of the resurrection and the hope of spending eternity with Christ.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:32
 - “If I fought wild animals in Ephesus with only human hope, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”
 - Paul knew that if Christ wasn’t who he said he was and there was no hope for us to go to Heaven, there was not afterlife then what good is there in life but to eat, drink and be merry?
 - But in reality it is such folly to think that all a person has to live for is to satisfy their appetites, whether it is for food, wealth or pleasure.
 - As Christians we are called for so much more.
- If your treasure is in heaven then that is where your heart will be.
 - Matthew 6:19-21
 - “Don’t collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But collect for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
 - We are only going to be here on this earth temporarily.
 - We must put our focus on our treasures that we will have forever in Heaven as opposed to the treasures on earth that WILL be destroyed.
 - This is why James stated so sternly regarding the possessions that the wealth had put their hopes on.
 - As Jesus said in verse 21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” the people that James is speaking to obviously have their heart in their earthly treasure.
 - We as Christians know better and need to make sure we keep ourselves focused on the treasures we will have in Heaven and not the ones on this earth.

- Our heart needs to be in the right place and it will be if we take the focus off of the world.
 - God will provide what we need
 - Luke 12:29-31
 - “Don’t keep striving for what you should eat and what you should drink, and don’t be anxious. For the Gentile world eagerly seeks all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek His kingdom, and these things will be provided for you.
 - So God knows that we do need “stuff” okay we need food we need shelter we need income. He will provide.
 - But notice Jesus doesn’t say to pursue those things and you will have “stuff” he says to seek His kingdom, to seek God and then these things will be provided to you.
 - It’s about faith and obedience.
 - **Do you find it difficult to focus on the kingdom as opposed to worldly “stuff”? Do tend to seek possessions before seeking God?**
- The rich oppressed the righteous. | James 5:4-6
 - In these verses James notes how these rich ungodly people would oppress or treat harshly their workers.
 - They were living the worldly “good life” and were oppressing the Christians.
 - And yet he says the righteous man does not resist
 - This would of course require a lot of patience to get through this to no want to retaliate.
 - It is natural for someone to retaliate when they are treated poorly, but it takes s patience to hold your tongue.
 - We are going to take a look at a gift that God gives us to be able to resist the desire to want to retaliate against those that do us wrong.
 - We want to be a righteous person who does not “get even”
- The role of patience in the life of a Christian | James 5:7-8
 - James speaks to us about the importance of having patience in these verses.
 - **How does patience keep us from retaliating against others?**
 - Patience causes you to think before you act.
 - Normally actions taken out of anger are never good.
 - Patience allows you to calm down emotionally.
 - We are rewarded in the end if we have patience.
 - In these verses James uses the example of the farmer as an example on patience.
 - The farmer wants to have a harvest, but there is a process for this to work.
 - He has lots of work that he has to do to prepare the ground and plant the seed, but he cannot control everything.
 - The farmer has to wait for the rain and since he cannot do this himself he must patiently wait.
 - The farmer waits patiently knowing that in the end when the rain comes he will benefit from a fruitful harvest.
 - Likewise with the coming of Christ we are to patiently wait.
 - Like the farmer who has no control over the rain, we as Christians have no control over when Christ returns.
 - We must patiently wait knowing that our reward will be great when the harvest for our souls takes place.
 - Be patient knowing that you WILL spend an eternity with Christ in Heaven.

- **When we show patience in the midst of conflict and we abstain from retaliation, what is our reward?**
- Patience is a gift from the Holy Spirit.
 - Patience is a gift given to us from the Holy Spirit.
 - Galatians 5:22
 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,”
 - When you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior and you receive the Holy Spirit patience is one of the many gifts that God give you.
 - This is something we all have as Christians weather we know it or not.
 - Or weather we choose to realize that we have it 😊
- Patience is a character trait of God.
 - Not only is patience a fruit of the spirit that God gives us but being patient is a trait of God.
 - God’s character trait of patience and the example he shows us should give us Christians a strong desire to use the gift that God has given us.
 - **I don’t want us to overlook the significance of this trait to have patience.**
 - You see we may sometimes think oh well I’m just not a patient person I just can’t
 - Well if we look at patience that God has we can quickly see the importance of having patience.
 - People today as they did in Biblical times always ask the question: When will Jesus come back? When will he return to take me home?
 - Why does God seem to delay?
 - Well the answer this question is that God is patient and we should ever be so thankful that he is.
 - God is patient for our Salvation.
 - **You see the character trait of patience is what has allowed all of us to become Christians.**
 - 2 Peter 3:9
 - “The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”
 - So the Lord does not delay in the way we might think that a delay means.
 - But the LORD is patient so that we will not perish so that we will have an opportunity to hear God’s call in our hearts so we can repent and spend an eternity with God in Heaven.
 - You see if God was quick to judge us then we may have not of had the opportunity to repent and become a Christian.
 - **What if God didn’t have any patience and the first time he called on us we ignored him that he gave up?**
 - **What if God took us out the first time we sinned?**
 - I doubt any of us would still be here today.
 - God is patience because he wants all to come to him and to know the truth.
 - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
 - “This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. “
 - God is patient so that we might be saved and have an opportunity to know the truth.
 - Sometimes we may wonder why God doesn’t just take someone who is evil out why are they allowed to still be on the earth.
 - **We usually want to retaliate** and we want to seek revenge or we want God to seek revenge on those that are evil.

- Well perhaps God is giving time for this person (evil as they may be) to turn around.
- Look at Paul! He persecuted Christians and was anything but a follower of Christ and here today he has writing a majority of the New Testament.
- I'm thankful that God was patient with me...
- God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked.
 - Ezekiel 33:11
 - “Tell them: As I live”—The declaration of the Lord God—“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways! Why will you die, house of Israel?
 - So if patience plays such a key role in God's character to allow us to receive our Salvation.
 - And God then chose to give us this very same gift, then do you think it might be equally as important that we make use of the gift of patience?
 - **How does patience help you in your Christian walk?**
- Methods to help us maintain our patience. | James 5:9-11 | Page 64
 - Strengthen your heart
 - Keep your faith firm and unwavering.
 - Be mindful of what God has promised.
 - Stay positive in your attitude.
 - Stay positive! 😊 It's so simple!
 - Being content is key to staying positive
 - Philippians 4:10-13
 - Stand with the prophets
 - Job's example
 - So Job in brief was a man of God and of perfect integrity who never turned on God.
 - Yet he suffered greatly because he was being tested by God who had allowed the Devil to take away everything from Job.
 - Job even though suffering never turned from God, he wasn't perfect and he had questioned God on a few things but he never cursed God and denounced him.
 - Even though Job did cry out he was patient he did not retaliate as his wife had told him to do which was to “curse God and die”.
 - Job endured through his trial and he was rewarded in the end.
 - What if Job didn't have any patience, what if he had given up and cursed God?
 - We'll things wouldn't have turned out so well for Job had that been the case.
 - We can learn that patience is truly a virtue and very rewarding.
 - So if Job and others in the Bible could go through tough time weather they were persecuted or something else.
 - Don't you think we could and do go through the same similar situations?
 - When we are backed in a corner or we are treated poorly what is our natural reaction?
 - To retaliate.
 - But as we can see from Job's example he was blessed because he was patient, he didn't retaliate.
 - So likewise we can take comfort knowing that if we are patient and have endurance to get there our tough times when we are wronged that God is merciful and he will have compassion on us.