

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

James – Living Rightly as God’s People

Sermon Series

06, 13 March 2022	James 4:13 – 5:6	Living Rightly with Right Treasures
20, 27 March 2022	James 5:7-20	Living Rightly with Faith

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James 4:13 – 5:6

Living Rightly with Right Treasures

Making plans for the future, both for our lives in general and for our wealth, is something that we take for granted today. Have you ever heard anyone say that Christians should not do this? If you have, share their reasons for saying so.

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

Read James 4:13-17.

1. What is the difference between the speech in v.13 and the speech in v.15? Why is this difference important? Consider also the difference this makes in how we live.
2. What does James say in v.14? In what way does this explain why James rejects the speech in v.13?
3. Why does James say that the speech in v.13 is boasting and bragging (v.16)?
4. What does James say ought to be a Christian's frame of mind when thinking about the future?

THINK FURTHER

- Who is James addressing here? Are they Christian? (Consider the implications of v.15.)
- Does the content of the plan matter (vv.13-14)? If I plan to do spiritual things, is it acceptable according to James?
- Is the point simply to add "if it is the Lord's will"? Why or why not?

Read James 5:1-6.

5. James tells the rich to weep and wail because of the misery that is coming to them. What is this misery (vv.1-4)? What makes this a misery for the rich?

6. Consider Matt 6:19-21. What does this tell us about where the hearts of the rich are placed?

7. What will witness against the rich on the day of judgement (vv.2-4)? In what ways do they lead to the pronouncement in vv.5-6?

THINK FURTHER

- Does this mean that it is not okay for us to be rich? (Consider Abraham, Job, and Solomon.) – note that it is not wealth per se that is the problem, but love of wealth and trust in wealth instead of love of God and trust in God, leading to godless actions to secure more wealth.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

8. According to James, what should the Christian's attitude towards wealth and the future be? How does this link to what he says in Jas 4:1-12?

9. Do the scenarios that James writes about in Jas 4:13-5:6 still happen today? What does it look like in our lives and the society around us?

APPLICATION

10. What does a life characterised by love and trust in money/self look like, versus one that is characterised by love and trust in God? Consider what this looks like in both poverty and wealth.

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Share:** Tell your group about your current struggles between submission to God and self-reliance in the areas of planning for the future and in wealth.

PRAY FOR ORPC - VISITATION

- As the Visitation Ministry is a front-line ministry, pray for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and love of Jesus Christ to be on the Visitation Team.
- May the love of Christ be extended to the visitees by those who are called to this ministry.
- Pray that as the members of the Visitation Team extend the love of Christ to the visitees, they themselves will be blessed as well
- Pray that eventually, every congregant will be involved in this vital ministry of mutual care.

20, 27 March 2022

James 5:7-20

Living Rightly with Faith

What advice would you give to a fellow believer who is suffering?

OBSERVATION AND INTERPRETATION

Read James 5:7-12.

1. James gives four instructions in this passage (vv.7, 9, 10, 12). What are these instructions?
2. What makes these instructions particularly important for godly living in the midst of difficulties?
3. What reasons does James give for these instructions (vv.8, 9, 11, 12; cf. Jas 1:4, 2:12-13, 3:6, 4:12)?
4. One of the four instructions binds all four instructions together. Which one is it, and why do you think this is so?

Read James 5:13-20.

5. What does James say should characterise the life of a believer (vv.13-16)? What does this show about our relationship with God?
6. Whose prayer is effective, and what kind of prayer (vv.15-16)? Why is it so?

THINK FURTHER

- How does being reminded of the steadfastness of Job encourage you to stand fast as well? How does being reminded of the “purpose of the Lord,” that is, “how the Lord is compassionate and merciful,” encourage you to stand fast?
- James’ instructions on swearing (oaths) reflects Jesus’ statements in Matt 5:33-37. Why do you think James brings this up, considering everything else he has been saying in this letter?
- God is sovereign over all – He allows trials and He also gives joy. But He does not always give us what we ask for in prayer. What is wrong with the idea that God has not given us what we asked for in prayer because we did not have enough faith?

7. Elijah's intervention and prayer is a key theme of 1 Kgs 17-18, referenced in Jas 5:17-18. Most importantly, Elijah was a man just like us. What does this tell us about what we should be doing (vv.17-20)?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

8. What is James' message in Jas 5:7-20? In what way(s) does it elaborate on James' overall message that Christians should not simply profess faith in God but also live lives that reflect the reality of their profession?
9. Do you think James' instructions in Jas 5:7-20 are relevant today? Why, or why not?

APPLICATION

10. Do you find it easy to live according to James' instructions in this passage? Share with your group an experience and a struggle you've had in this area.

REFLECTION

Write down a key lesson and a key verse from this study.

How should we pray and change in response to what we have learnt?

DISCIPLESHIP IN COMMUNITY

- **Confess and Pray:** Take some time to reflect on the week. Take turns to confess to your group a sin that God has laid upon your heart, remind each other of God's forgiveness (1 Jn 1:9), and pray for each other's repentance and healing.

PRAY FOR ORPC – PRAYER MEETING

- Pray that ORPC will make prayer our lifeline to God, which is our source of constant communication with our Father and our most important component of our spiritual lives in Christ.
- Pray that many of us will commit to praying for others by name every day.
- Pray that SG leaders and SG members will attend Prayer Meeting, and will cultivate both personal and corporate prayers.