

The Poverty Of The Rich

Text : **James 1: 9-11 ; 2: 1-13**

A. Our previous lesson dealt with the sin of prejudice and observed that :

S#1.

S#2.

1. Our faith is tested by our attitude toward people who are different.
 - a. The Christian's attitude is different from the cultures of this world.
 - b. It is also different from human nature. (*even from animal nature*)
2. There are many kinds of prejudices and a variety of reasons for those prejudices.
 - a. Some social prejudices are institutionalized. (*4 cast system in India*)
 - b. Physical differences cause prejudices ... color, height, weight, defects ...
 - c. Economic prejudices are common everywhere. (*rich -vs- poor, esp. 3rd world*)
3. Prejudice is an illogical emotion and unjust.
 - a. It is judging without the facts ... It's like judging a book by its cover.
 - * *Rod was ridiculed for wanting to buy a set of books with a white cover.*
 - b. Prejudice is judging people on things that are temporary, w/o considering eternal.
4. Christians must not harbor prejudices in their hearts.
 - a. Prejudice is part of the "old man" which must be buried at baptism.
 - b. Prejudice is sin.

James 2: 9 – But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

S#3.

5. Prejudice is direct rebellion against God
 - a. God alone has the authority to judge.

James 4: 12 – There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?
 - b. God alone can know the hearts of men.

I Cor. 4: 5 – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.
 - * c. Thus, to judge another is to usurp the authority of God.

S#4.

B. The goal of this lesson is to zero in on the particular prejudice James addresses, that of giving special consideration to rich people.

S#5.

1. We should never be prejudice against the poor.
2. It is not wrong to be wealthy.

3. Being wealthy is a dangerous trial.
4. The Christian should never envy the wealthy.
5. The Christian has wealth beyond anything on this earth.

I. We must never be prejudice against the poor.

S#6.

A. God has established the poor as a “protected class.”

S#7.

1. By law, our government has seven protected classes.
People may not discriminated against by :
 - a. Race
 - b. Color
 - c. Religion
 - d. National Origin
 - e. Sex, Sexual Orientation
 - f. Disability
 - g. Familial Status
2. **Psa. 12: 5** – “Because the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the Lord; “I will place him in the safety for which he longs.” (ESV) S#8.

B. God loves all mankind, but He has a special care for the poor and protects them.

1. Jesus came to preach to the poor.
 - a. **Luke 4: 18** – The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.
 - b. This is a quotation of ... **Isa. 61: 1** ... Fulfillment of prophecy.
2. The poor are often more receptive to the gospel.
 - a. **James 2: 5** – Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? S#9.
 - b. **I Cor. 1: 26** – For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; S#10.

C. God takes one’s attitude toward the poor personally – if you love Me, love them.

1. **Prov. 14: 31** – He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.
2. **Prov. 19: 17** – One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, And He will repay him for his good deed.

II. It is not wrong to be wealthy and not all rich people are evil.

S#11.

A. We understand that we are talking about ourselves “*all Americans are rich.*”

1. Some are just a lot more wealthy than others.
2. I doubt any of you have missed a meal because there was no food.

3. The word translated “**poor**” does not refer to one like an American on welfare.
 - a. Poor : (*ptochos*) 1 reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms. 2 destitute ...
 - b. If these people did not get paid daily, they did not eat.

James 5: 4 – Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and **S#12.**
 which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of
 those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

B. The scriptures show how God has approved of rich men and used them.

1. **Job 1: 3** ... Job was the greatest / richest man of all the men of the east. **S#13.**
2. Abraham was a very rich man.
Gen. 13: 2 – Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.
3. Isaac was very rich.
Gen. 26: 12 – Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a
 hundredfold. And the Lord blessed him, **13** and the man became rich,
 and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy;
4. There were many other very rich people that God blessed and used.
 - a. Jacob and Esau ... Gen. 36: 6-7
 - b. David .. I Chron. 29: 8 , Solomon .. II Chro. 9: 22, Hezekiah .. II Chro 32: 26
 - c. Jesus was buried in the tomb of a rich man .. Matt. 27: 57 .. Joseph of Arimathea

C. God providentially blessed all of these men with the ability to get wealth. S#14.

1. **Deut. 8: 17-18** – Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the
 strength of my hand made me this wealth.' **18** But you shall remember
 the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make
wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your
 fathers, as it is this day.
2. If riches were evil the Lord would not give them or even call them a blessing.

D. Wealth is not sinful; it is the desire to be rich which is called sin. S#15.

1. **I Tim. 6: 10** – For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by
 longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced
 themselves with many griefs.
2. The man of God does not work to gain wealth.
Prov. 23: 4 – Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, **S#16.**
 Cease from your consideration of it.
3. The Christian’s goal is to be able to minister to others.
Eph. 4: 28 – He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor,
 performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have
something to share with one who has need.

III. Being wealthy is a dangerous trial.**S#17.****A. Riches are seductive; one tends to fall in love with their wealthy lifestyle. S#18.**

1. Would you be satisfied driving a car like you had as a teenager ?
2. You were happy in your first apartment, but would you go back to something like it ?

B. It is the nature of man, there is never enough .. just a little more.

1. "The more one gets the more he wants." ... Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*
2. My uncle used to say, "*I don't want it all, only the land which borders my farm.*"
3. **I King 21** ... Remember King Ahab's lust for Naboth's vineyard.

C. The pursuit of wealth takes increasing amounts of time.

1. Money doesn't chase you, you have to go after it.
2. One starts off thinking things will settle down and he'll have more time for ...
3. No one can serve two Masters and the pursuit of wealth will not be denied.

Luke 16: 13 – No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

D. Prosperity breeds corruption.

1. Each time Israel prospered they became unfaithful to God.
2. Even today prosperity affords more things to compete with God.
 - a. Bigger house, Bigger pool, Vacations, ...
 - b. Fancier cars, Boats, Motorcycle, ...
3. **James 4: 3** ... warns us not to pray for things to be used on our own pleasures.

E. Wealth supplants faith in God.

1. Man tends to take credit for having produced his own wealth.

Deut. 8: 17 – Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'
2. The rich tend to trust in their own ability and their own resources to solve issues.
3. Farmers tend to be more trusting of God because they know they cannot make rain.

F. These trials and more make it very difficult for a rich man to enter Heaven.

- a. **Luke 18: 23-27** – But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a **S#19.**

needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

b. **I Cor. 1: 26** – “not many mighty, not many noble”

Sis. Embry responded, “*Thank God for the ‘m’ without it there would not be any.*”

IV. The Christian must never envy those wealthier than himself.

S#20.

- A. Their wealth is temporary. (**Eccl. 2:18-20** ... All is left to a successor) **S#21.**
- B. Their judgment is certain. (**Isa. 10** ... God will avenge all wrongs.)
- C. Their misery will be eternal. (**Matt. 25: 46** ... Both Heaven and Hell are eternal)

V. The Christian has wealth beyond anything on this earth.

S#22.

A. We should be satisfied with enough, not in search of prosperity. **S#23.**

- 1. “*Enough is as good as a feast*” ... Ben Franklin
- 2. **I Tim 6:6-8** – But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷ For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **S#24.**
- 3. Let us pray the wise man’s prayed :
Prov. 30: 8-9 – Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, ⁹ That I not be full and deny You and say, “Who is the Lord?” Or that I not be in want and steal, and profane the name of my God. **S#25.**

B. We have an eternal home in Heaven prepared and waiting for our arrival.

- 1. **I Pet. 1: 3-5** – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **S#26.**
- 2. Our eternity is bought, paid for and waiting for our arrival.
- 3. The God who purchased it is protecting both it and us until we arrive home. **S#27.**

C. All we have to do is surrender to Him in obedience and keep our faith in Him. **S#28.**

INVITATION : Have you surrendered to Him ? Are you continuing in Him ? **S#29.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 1: 9-11**

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; **10** and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. **11** For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

James 2: 1-13

2 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. **2** For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, **3** and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? **5** Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? **7** Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. **11** For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. **13** For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.