

Audio file

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Transcript

00:00:00

Please turn with me in the New Testament to the Epistle of James in chapter one.

00:00:08

James chapter one, verse one.

00:00:14

James chapter one.

00:00:17

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

00:00:29

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that thy trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

00:00:54

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,

00:00:58

that give it to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.

00:01:06

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

00:01:11

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

00:01:17

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

00:01:22

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

00:01:28

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.

00:01:38

Because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away.

00:01:43

For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth, so also shall the rich man.

00:01:57

fade away in his ways.

00:02:01

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

00:02:16

The Lord will bless his word to our hearts.

00:02:20

Now this morning we're going to focus on verses 9 to 11.

00:02:26

9 to 11, James chapter 1 verses 9 to 11 and the title is Give me poverty nor riches.

00:02:37

Give me poverty nor riches.

00:02:41

Now in this epistle, James is introducing us to certain themes.

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He'll pick up these themes again throughout his epistle.

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That's why it's so important that we just don't read the Bible piecemeal.

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We read it in its context.

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We read it in its entirety.

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So if you're one who's got a devotional and you've done that for maybe a year and it's got various verses in it, might be good to take a little project in this new year and read through books of the Bible.

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I suggest you start with some of the gospels and then move on from there.

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And what that does, it gives you an understanding of the writer's intention in the scriptures, but more significantly, it gives you an understanding of God's intention in each part of the Bible.

00:03:52

James

00:03:53

is very practical and very pastoral.

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And sometimes he'll surprise us with illustrations and practical examples of how to apply New Testament teaching.

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As I've said already, James, we believe,

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heard the Lord Jesus from time to time.

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And we'll see that as we go through this epistle.

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There are occasions where the scriptures are directly out of the Lord Jesus' mouth.

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But we know this, or we're sure of this.

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It's very unlikely that James was converted until after the resurrection.

00:04:42

And just before we launch into the text, I want us to note

00:04:47

that not every conversion is the same.

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We all come to Christ as our Saviour, but some take a lot longer than others, especially those who may have grown up in a Christian environment and heard Christian truths from a very young age.

00:05:09

Like James would have heard some words from the Lord Jesus in his own family home.

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He certainly would have heard teaching from the Bible, from the synagogue in Nazareth, where the Lord Jesus, of course, would have attended as well.

00:05:25

And most likely, he would have heard quotes from the Old Testament, maybe in conversation, or certainly with Joseph and Mary in the home.

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But now he looks to come up to this.

00:05:42

Give me poverty, nor riches.

00:05:46

Now, if I was to preach a sermon on the fact that we should all give up our belongings and our possessions and give them to the poor, you'd think that was very strange.

00:06:04

And you might have thought that that's what this title is concerned with.

00:06:08

No, it's not.

00:06:10

I know of 1 man.

00:06:12

In his young years, he was converted in the 1970s, and he wasn't from a Christian home, he was from a very worldly home.

00:06:21

He was very involved in the acting profession, and he was going places in drama.

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They may have ended up on the silver screen or even

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on the television screen in time, but the Lord arrested him, convicted him of his lifestyle and his living and his attitude, and he was wonderfully converted.

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And he read a text in the New Testament saying, go sell all you have.

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And do you know what?

00:06:46

He went out and he sold all that he had.

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And he ended up on the streets in one of the cities, and I won't say which continent even.

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And he ended up in the streets in a very large city.

00:07:00

And the poor people, the beggars, looked at them and said, how on earth did you end up in this situation?

00:07:08

And he said, well, I took the Lord Jesus' words to heart and I did exactly what the Bible told me to do.

00:07:16

Go sell all you have.

00:07:18

And the beggar said to him, he said this.

00:07:22

He says, if I had to have what you had, I wouldn't have sold all I had.

00:07:28

I would have read the rest of the text.

00:07:31

Go sell all you have and follow me.

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In other words, be willing to give it up.

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This beggar was teaching him things that he hadn't thought of.

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You give up, you put a, you see your riches as not to be held on to, but you follow Christ as primary.

00:07:49

And by the way, if I had all that wealth, or if I had that

00:07:55

those possessions, I would have given them to someone like me rather than sell them all, to share and share alike.

00:08:04

Well, this gave me poverty nor riches.

00:08:07

The scenario is this.

00:08:09

In every congregation, there are rich believers and poor believers.

00:08:14

Now, why is this only about believers?

00:08:16

Well, as I said, we need to be aware of the context.

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And notice how James introduces this theme.

00:08:25

in verse 7.

00:08:33

Sorry, verse 9.

00:08:34

Let the brother of low degree.

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The brother.

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James is not speaking about his family.

00:08:44

He's not speaking here about his own brothers.

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He's speaking in a general sense.

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We read a little earlier in verse two, my brethren, and ladies often feel what that should say, something else, but my brethren in the New Testament always includes ladies and gentlemen.

00:09:07

It always includes men and women.

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It always includes all believers.

00:09:14

My brethren.

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When you say to somebody, the brethren are praying for me, they're not speaking just of the men in the church.

00:09:23

They're speaking of the congregation, of the members of the church.

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It's very important.

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So James is not here giving us teaching about how the worldly rich and the worldly poor should act, because they won't be able to.

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It's impossible.

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for a worldly rich person to have the attitude that we have in this text.

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So let's look a bit further.

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My brethren, well, that's a beautiful term, but in the Bible, there are different names of believers.

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Of course, at Antioch, the first name that these new believers were given was Christians.

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But the Apostle Paul, before he was converted, he was Saul of Tarsus, was looking for those of the way.

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The Puritans we read about, we read their books, we learn much from them.

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They didn't invent that name.

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That was a nickname, maybe an insulting name, given them by their opponents.

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But James here speaks of brethren.

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The apostle Peter speaks of brethren.

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John speaks of brethren in his epistles.

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Peter speaks of the brethren.

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This is a lovely term.

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It shows how precious believers are to one another.

00:10:48

They are joined together in the family of God.

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And they are all looking to the elder brother, the one who is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

00:11:02

The Lord Jesus refers to his people as brethren.

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In Luke chapter 8, verse 21, he says this, And he answered and said unto them,

00:11:12

Now he had been approached and his mother Mary and some of the family, maybe even James was amongst this, came to where Jesus was preaching and they said, behold your mother and your brethren outside.

00:11:26

And he turned to the crowd and he said this, my mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it.

00:11:45

A true Christian is not just a Christian by lips or even in thought.

00:11:52

A true Christian is one who has heard the word of God, received the word of God, believed the word of God, and is living according to the word of God.

00:12:07

And if only more Christians knew this.

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This is basic Christianity.

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You don't need to be a great theologian to know this.

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But sadly, in our generation, people don't realise this.

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You hear it, you receive it, you believe it, and you do it.

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And that's why Christians have always been different.

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Christians have always been different, true Christians, because of their attitude to the Word of God.

00:12:48

It has changed their lives because the Word of God brings life and power, and it's referred to as dunamis.

00:13:02

There's an inner power in the Word of God that does not reside in any other literature.

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And this book has transformed many of us here, because this book teaches us who we are, what we are, and who we need for salvation.

00:13:25

Now, let me be very brief this morning.

00:13:29

We'll probably come back next week and look at it a bit further, but let me remind you that last week we looked at 4 steps.

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We recognize

00:13:38

about seeking godly wisdom.

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First of all, we recognize we need it.

00:13:43

Secondly, we ask God for this wisdom.

00:13:46

Third, we believe God will give us this wisdom.

00:13:48

And 4th, we learned how to apply this in prayer.

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The structure of the sentence here, my brethren, or sorry, let the brother of low degree, also applies to the rich.

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It's one whole sentence.

00:14:07

It speaks of the plural.

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This isn't speaking just of rich, sorry, poor Christians and rich non-Christians.

00:14:18

This is speaking to both.

00:14:21

And there are rich and poor in every church.

00:14:24

In every congregation there are rich and poor.

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The structure of, let me tell you why this is important.

00:14:30

The structure of the sentence demands this.

00:14:34

The word brother is associated with both rich and poor.

00:14:38

Second, the word glory or exaltation speaks of, if James was just speaking of the poor, speaking about glory and speaking of a crown of life, then that would be very strange.

00:14:56

It's for rich and poor.

00:14:58

And it doesn't fit the context.

00:15:01

This is what it was like in churches, and it has been ever since.

00:15:05

All through time, there'll be rich and there'll be poor.

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In the world, the rich and the poor are divided, not just in monetary terms, but in status in society.

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You see how many rich people are given prominence, even if they're not necessarily

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more gifted than the poor, they'll be given the prominence.

00:15:32

They'll be given platforms.

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Some of them don't speak very much sense at all, but they're still given that platform.

00:15:39

Some of them raise up their own platform.

00:15:42

But that's the world's way.

00:15:44

The world will always exalt the rich.

00:15:49

And it will always humble the poor.

00:15:54

You look at false religion.

00:15:56

The rich and false religion always have the prominence.

00:16:01

The poor are despised.

00:16:04

Sometimes they use religious terms and say, well, they're cursed, or they're abandoned, or they deserve it.

00:16:13

But not in the Christian church.

00:16:16

The Christian church is unique.

00:16:19

The Christian church is not a communist outpost.

00:16:26

It's not a place that everyone, as it were, is, there's an elite in a communist country, in a communist economy, and there's the rest.

00:16:40

And I know the arguments and I've read the books and I've heard the theories, but in practice there's always an elite.

00:16:48

Not in the church.

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The church is unique.

00:16:53

It's astonishing, really, when you think about it, that in the true church of Jesus Christ, rich and poor sit beside each other.

00:17:07

They talk to each other.

00:17:11

They visit each other.

00:17:15

They help each other.

00:17:19

They pray for each other.

00:17:23

They encourage each other.

00:17:26

This is the miracle of the Christian church.

00:17:31

This is the difference that the true church makes in a community.

00:17:36

It's not a social club.

00:17:40

It's not just a collection of people who are randomly gathered together.

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It is an organic,

00:17:50

group of people gathered by Almighty God from different walks of life.

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And there are rich and poor found there.

00:18:06

Now, there's a man called Mr.

00:18:09

Mayor.

00:18:10

He's a pastor of Melbourne Hall in Leicester.

00:18:14

And he wrote this.

00:18:17

In this little phrase,

00:18:19

As the despised poor learn self-respect, so the proud rich learn self-abasement.

00:18:31

When it comes to suffering, suffering is not choosy.

00:18:37

Persecution does not discriminate, and particularly when it comes to believers.

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During the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917,

00:18:48

The communists designed and organised prison labour camps.

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These were called gulags.

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This is history.

00:18:57

This is not theory.

00:19:00

The communists, the Bolsheviks, had decided that a certain group of people, particularly the merchant class and the upper class, were to be humbled and to be sent to these prison camps.

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Some of them, of course, were executed.

00:19:16

Tsar at the time was taken with his family and executed simply because he had been the leader of the country.

00:19:24

He wasn't a great leader, but he wasn't the most wicked leader.

00:19:29

And some would say that some of his own members of his court and even some of his advisors were believers, true believers.

00:19:38

And they had been living in a very wealthy, lavish lifestyle.

00:19:43

And the peasants,

00:19:45

were equally treated.

00:19:47

But when it came to Christians, the communists didn't care.

00:19:52

They took the rich Christians and the peasants and the poor Christians and put them all in the same labour camp together.

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And it was forced labour.

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It didn't matter what background they had, they were both subjected to physical labour in horrific conditions.

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They suffered terrible deprivation, starvation, disease, abuse.

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Some of this abuse has never been recorded, but it's been recorded by God.

00:20:27

This camp system ensured that every member of this labour camp lost their status.

00:20:36

They were all equal.

00:20:39

Some of them were treated worse than animals.

00:20:43

Those who had...

00:20:45

lived wealthy lifestyles, some of them, as I said, in the upper classes, and social standing, it was stripped away upon arrest and imprisonment.

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Now the poor and the rich of Russian society, of which I've said some of them were believers, they pressed on with the Lord, even though they were so mercilessly treated.

00:21:13

And if you read some of the accounts, you will read about believers, rich believers and poor believers encouraging one another to go on.

00:21:24

So never think that if somebody is wealthy and they're a Christian, a true Christian, that they'll be able to evade persecution.

00:21:35

That's A fallacy.

00:21:38

So that's why I'm talking about giving me poverty

00:21:41

nor riches, because there's something more important than poverty and riches.

00:21:46

There's faith in Jesus Christ.

00:21:49

The title has been, I took the title from Proverbs 38 to 9, chapter 30, verses 8 to 9.

00:21:56

Remove far from me vanity and lies.

00:21:59

Give me neither poverty nor riches.

00:22:02

Feed me with the food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?

00:22:11

or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain.

00:22:15

This is about a believer, of course.

00:22:18

This is for believers, written by a believer, Solomon.

00:22:23

Yes, he was a weak believer.

00:22:26

Yes, he was a fragile believer.

00:22:28

Yes, he was a tainted believer.

00:22:30

But no one else could write this.

00:22:33

Why should God give us neither poverty nor riches?

00:22:36

Because there's something more important.

00:22:38

what God provides for us day by day.

00:22:43

For the rich, the great temptation is to love money more.

00:22:51

The Bible does not say money is the root of all evil.

00:22:55

It says the love of money is the root of all evil.

00:22:58

The Bible does not say that money is an evil.

00:23:03

The Bible says that there's a misuse of money which is evil.

00:23:08

Some of the men and women of God of previous generations were very wealthy, but they held on to their wealth with a very loose grip.

00:23:21

They didn't hold on to it for dear life.

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If somebody is very rich and they're not a believer, they're usually very worried that they'll lose it all.

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The believer has the opposite approach.

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It's all come from God.

00:23:37

And how we see our riches and how we see our money and how we see our pensions and how we see our inheritance is very important.

00:23:46

And the Bible teaches us many good things.

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But let me just break this up for a moment and let's look at these verses.

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And the first thing is this.

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I want us to notice first in verse 1, sorry, in verse 9, is first thing, the exalted poor.

00:24:04

Or better, the poor that will be exalted.

00:24:07

Look at what James writes.

00:24:08

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted.

00:24:13

Low degree, literally in the Greek, it means to be a lowly one.

00:24:20

To be one who's low down in the estimation of society.

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In a sense, a Christian here could be poor and afflicted.

00:24:33

What are they to do?

00:24:35

James tells us, rejoice.

00:24:39

Now we've come across that word already, haven't we?

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In verse 2, count it all joy.

00:24:46

And then in verse 1, of course, I said that this word in the original language is rejoice.

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Perhaps though, it might be a little stronger than this.

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It could be translated as boast.

00:25:00

But not boast of us.

00:25:03

Boast in the Lord.

00:25:06

It could be translated as glory.

00:25:09

What are we to glory in, says the poor person.

00:25:12

Well, James tells him that he'll be exalted.

00:25:16

Literally, he'll be lifted up.

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James speaks of the humble being exalted and the exalted or the proud being humbled.

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This is so important.

00:25:31

How is he exalted?

00:25:34

first of all, he's exalted inwardly in his heart, in the renewal of his nature.

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A poor person in James's time, and sadly even today, sometimes a poor person has a life that they're ashamed of.

00:25:51

But when they come to Christ, they are renewed in the nature.

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They have new natures.

00:25:58

Secondly, they're outwardly.

00:26:00

There's a complete difference in their attitude.

00:26:03

and in their actions and even in their lifestyle.

00:26:05

Third, there's a difference in their rank.

00:26:09

A poor person is raised up in God's estimation.

00:26:14

He's a child of God.

00:26:17

He's a member of the family of God.

00:26:21

He belongs to the Lord.

00:26:24

Fourthly, he is exalted in his communion or fellowship.

00:26:29

That's an old word, his fellowship.

00:26:32

with Almighty God on earth and in heaven.

00:26:40

The poor person may never, even though he's a believer, be ever in rich company regularly.

00:26:47

The social status and the social stratas will still keep him quite low.

00:26:53

But nonetheless, God has exalted him.

00:26:57

God has raised him up or her up.

00:27:01

And they

00:27:02

They have the richest and greatest company of all, Christ himself.

00:27:10

Now, we may not feel very rich, but wealth is relative.

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If you were to contrast what we have in this part of the world compared to what believers have in other parts of the world, we're very rich.

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So that's the exalted poor or the poor that are exalted.

00:27:33

Secondly, the rich that are humbled.

00:27:37

The rich that are humbled.

00:27:39

Look at verse 10, but the rich in that he has made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

00:27:46

This is very interesting.

00:27:48

Of course, the world and its agenda wouldn't like to hear this, but the rich are made low.

00:27:55

It's coming from on high.

00:27:57

God makes them low.

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This, of course, again, is for a believer.

00:28:03

It speaks of humiliation.

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Rich people don't like to be humbled.

00:28:09

They don't like to be humiliated.

00:28:11

And if they are humiliated, they usually get some kind of legal team together to pay so that they don't continue in their humiliation.

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But the believer is glad to be humbled.

00:28:27

The rich person

00:28:29

realizes that all they have has been given them by God, and they've been made low.

00:28:35

And again, they should rejoice in this.

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How are they humbled?

00:28:42

The rich believer is delivered from self-exaltation, from promotion of self.

00:28:53

The apostle Peter speaks about

00:28:56

the fine gold and the apostle Peter Paul also speaks about this.

00:29:01

The ornaments and people wearing certain expensive clothes or certain expensive jewelry or certain expensive watches or whatever it is.

00:29:12

They are humbled.

00:29:14

They are delivered from this.

00:29:18

There are some rich people I've met over the years and some of them are very rich farmers.

00:29:26

And you would never have guessed.

00:29:28

It wasn't that they dressed as if they didn't have a pound to run together.

00:29:32

I can't use a pound anymore, probably I'll have to use something else, but they hadn't got much money.

00:29:38

No, they dressed appropriately, but they didn't wear extravagantly, wear their clothes extravagantly.

00:29:47

And they were very humble.

00:29:49

I remember staying in a farm house and this man had built a

00:29:54

Holiday cottage on the shores of Strangford Lough.

00:29:59

This is pretty nice, a part of Northern Ireland.

00:30:02

It's quite exclusive in some ways.

00:30:06

I said to him, why did you build a house?

00:30:09

He says, because I wanted preachers to come here and enjoy God's creation and that it could be a blessing to them and refresh them as they ministered here.

00:30:23

That's the attitude of a rich believer.

00:30:26

He wants to be a blessing.

00:30:27

She wants to be a blessing to others.

00:30:31

That's the first thing.

00:30:32

Secondly, they are freed from flimsy, fictitious, worldly accolades and praise.

00:30:41

They read through all this froth and all these accolades and all these empty praises that people give the rich.

00:30:51

They see through it all.

00:30:54

because they've got their eyes on Christ.

00:30:56

Third, they are humbled because they are being conformed to the image and likeness of Christ.

00:31:11

This is extraordinary.

00:31:15

Fourth, they are now in their humble state, able to realise

00:31:21

Heaven's honours are more important than Earth's accolades.

00:31:28

And 5th, they are humbled and they appreciate being humbled by Almighty God because they have an inheritance that will not pass away.

00:31:45

So the exalted poor

00:31:51

and the humbled rich.

00:31:55

And the Lord, through James, reminds both that the flower of the grass shall pass away, the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heap, but it withereth the grass, the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth, so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

00:32:18

And this lastly is the brevity of life, or the short, brief time on earth.

00:32:26

Both humble, sorry, the poor and the rich believers have short lives.

00:32:31

But the Lord, the Holy Spirit, through James, reminds the rich that their lives are very short, even those who are believers.

00:32:43

What does this mean?

00:32:44

Let's just look at this verse very quickly.

00:32:49

The sun is no sooner risen.

00:32:52

Now, James and Paul love the aorist.

00:33:01

Now, what do I mean by the aorist?

00:33:03

The aorist is something that begins in time and continues.

00:33:10

So you could translate this phrase, let the sun be risen.

00:33:16

Now, of course, the sun rises and the sun sets.

00:33:21

But for the text here, the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat.

00:33:29

No sooner risen with a burning heat.

00:33:33

Well, of course, in this part of the world, the sun rises, but we wouldn't call it a burning heat.

00:33:39

But we need to remember where this was written.

00:33:43

It was written in the Orient.

00:33:44

It was written

00:33:46

Most likely in Jerusalem.

00:33:48

It may have been written when James left Jerusalem, but we're not sure.

00:33:52

But most likely it was written in Jerusalem.

00:33:55

And therefore it's hot.

00:33:56

The sun is hot.

00:33:57

If you've ever been to the Middle East, you've ever been to Israel or to somewhere like that, you know that when the sun rises up in the morning, it's very intense heat.

00:34:09

And there may have been grass that grew up during the night.

00:34:12

in the nice cool of the night.

00:34:17

And as soon as the sun is up high enough, it begins to burn the grass.

00:34:22

Now, where did James get this inspiration?

00:34:25

I've mentioned this already.

00:34:27

James is steeped in the Old Testament.

00:34:31

James has verses that he doesn't necessarily refer to, but he just, he's convinced that you'll know what these verses are.

00:34:42

I believe he's been meditating on Isaiah 40 verses 6 to 8.

00:34:47

This is what Isaiah wrote.

00:34:49

The voice said, cry.

00:34:50

And he said, what shall I cry?

00:34:53

Isaiah the prophet, what shall I cry?

00:34:56

All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.

00:35:01

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.

00:35:06

Surely the people is grass.

00:35:09

Notice the grass withereth.

00:35:13

The flower fadeth, but there's something that endures.

00:35:18

The word of the Lord endureth forever.

00:35:27

He could also have been meditating on Psalm 37, verses 35 to 36.

00:35:32

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree, yet he passed away, and lo, he was not, yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

00:35:43

There's 2 emblems here to show us the brevity of life.

00:35:46

First of all, he speaks about the grass.

00:35:51

Let me just note 4 things for you from this text.

00:35:55

First of all, when grass is growing, it shows and grows very well initially.

00:36:03

If we live in a temperate climate like this, in a more moist climate, our grass keeps growing.

00:36:11

but initially it makes a great sport.

00:36:15

In the East and the Orient and parts of the world where there's rainy seasons, the grass disappears in the dry season.

00:36:24

And then when the heavy rains come, or especially the rainy season begins, it's abundant.

00:36:32

One week there's no grass in the garden, or some people call it the yard in the United States.

00:36:39

And then when the rain comes, the grass comes up.

00:36:42

But it only shows and grows initially.

00:36:45

Secondly, it fades suddenly.

00:36:48

Grass doesn't hang around very long.

00:36:51

If there's scorching wind or an intense sun, the grass will fade away.

00:36:57

Third, it is lost utterly.

00:37:00

It is lost utterly.

00:37:03

When the grass dies, the grass dies.

00:37:07

And you see what James is doing here, and you see what Isaiah was doing as well.

00:37:12

That at least for the season, until God sends the rain, and just like life, just like life, it shows and grows well initially in the early days in youth and in teens and in young people's lives, and then gradually it fades until it's lost utterly.

00:37:34

And how important the rich need to be reminded of this.

00:37:38

They only have their riches for a very, very, very short time.

00:37:43

And if they squander their riches in this world and ignore the overtures and mercy of God, then judgment is all that they face.

00:37:54

And they can't take their riches into judgment.

00:37:58

But for the rich, the rich person will

00:38:02

Need that reminder, the emblem of the grass.

00:38:05

But there's one other reminder here, the flower.

00:38:09

Look at what James says, the flower thereof falleth and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.

00:38:15

We'll come to the grace of the fashion in a moment.

00:38:18

But James here may have been meditating again on another text in the Old Testament.

00:38:26

In Isaiah 40 verses 6 to 8, I mentioned the grass withereth, the flower fadeth.

00:38:31

But in Job 14, verse 2, this is what the Bible says.

00:38:35

He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down.

00:38:40

He fleeth as a shadow and continueth not.

00:38:44

It reminds me of that famous hymn that we often sing.

00:38:53

Sometimes we sing it at a funeral.

00:38:57

Change and decay.

00:39:00

And all around I see, O Lord, who changeth not, abide with me.

00:39:08

That will be the cry of a true believing believer.

00:39:12

That will be the cry of a person who's rich.

00:39:16

Change or decay I see all around me.

00:39:19

But Lord, that change is not.

00:39:21

Stay with me.

00:39:23

The flower falleth.

00:39:26

but also the grace of the fashion.

00:39:28

Literally, the beauty of its face or the beauty of its appearance.

00:39:34

Flowers are beautiful.

00:39:36

There are some flowers that are absolutely extravagant and extraordinary.

00:39:42

There are some plants that only produce flowers every few decades.

00:39:47

And the flower that produces absolutely and utterly awe-inspiring.

00:39:53

But even that flower fades away.

00:39:57

Even those beautiful flowers that we grow and that we tend to and we nurture and some people play classical music too, hoping that the flower will do better, eventually that flower will fade.

00:40:09

And so it is with life.

00:40:13

It will fade.

00:40:15

It will dwindle.

00:40:17

And the ways here, this little phrase ways refers to the rich, or literally it could be his goings.

00:40:24

His goings, they fade away too.

00:40:28

Both disappear.

00:40:30

Both are no more.

00:40:33

So we learned this morning, first of all, the poor are exalted.

00:40:38

And secondly, the rich are humbled.

00:40:41

And 3rd, the brevity of life for both.

00:40:47

And so why should we exalt the rich?

00:40:53

And why should we despise the poor when they're both, both have received the grace of God in Jesus Christ?

00:41:07

Next time, we look at the phrase, the crown of life, and we'll see how God works that through.

00:41:16

Let us briefly pray.

00:41:17

Father, thankful for this morning, thankful for thy word, bless us together in Jesus' name.

00:41:23

Amen.