

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!

5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

5:3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

5:4 Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5:5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

5:6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

[From today's sermon.

We are reminded of Jesus' story in Matthew 6, after the Lord's Prayer. When you fast, no one knows. Your Father, who sees hidden things, will reward you." Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither worm eats nor rusts, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

We are also reminded of the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16.

Lazarus was poor and covered with boils all over his body. He was at the rich man's door, trying to feed his hunger with food from his table. A dog came and licked his boils. Was he sharing his meager food with this dog?

But the rich man in the gate, who is spending his days in luxury, does not care about the man at his doorstep, whose light of life is about to be extinguished. All he cares about is his own wealth, and that is all he cares about. And the Lord knows all about the hidden hearts of people. In today's passage, too, there is a man who boasts of his wealth. However, the Lord hears the cries of the workers because their wealth is based on the unpaid wages of their employers. Where are our hearts turned? Are our hearts turned to God, who willingly made us rich through the sacrifice of His beloved Son, and are our hearts turned to our friends in need?

Good morning everyone.

November has finally arrived. The summer days continued with temperatures exceeding 25° C during the daytime.

I hope you have been well in these days of varying temperatures.

We are now at the last chapter of the book of James.

As I read today's passage, I was reminded of two or three verses.

Hebrews 10:30 says, "Vengeance is what I do. And we know Him who said, "I myself will take vengeance," and who said, "The Lord will judge His people.

10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God.

10:32 Remember the days of your first days, when ye endured great and bitter battles, after ye were enlightened by the light.

Matthew 6:16 And when you fast, do not look gloomy, as hypocrites do. They make their faces disfigured, trying to show others that they are fasting. I tell you well, they have received their recompense.

6:17 When you fast, anoint your heads with oil, and wash your faces, that you may be clean.

6:18 That no man may know that you are fasting, but your Father who comes to you in a hidden place. Then your Father, who sees hidden things, will reward you.

6:19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures in the earth, where worms eat and rust, and where thieves break in and steal.

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth eateth, nor rust, nor thieves break in and steal.

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

6:22 The eyes are the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eyes are clear, your whole body will be bright.

6:23 But if your eyes are evil, your whole body will be dark. 6:23 But if thine inward light be dark, what shall be the darkness thereof?

6:24 No one can serve two masters at once. For you hate the one and love the other, or you love the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.

6:25 Therefore I say to you. 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what shall I eat, or what shall I drink; neither be anxious for your body, what shall I put on? For life is better than food, and the body is better than clothing.

6:26 Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap, neither do they put them in their storehouses. Yet your heavenly Father provides for them. And you are far more excellent than they.

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters at once. For he hates the one and loves the other, or he loves the one and despises the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.

16:14 When the covetous Pharisees heard these words, all of them mocked Him.

16:15 Then He said to them, "Ye are those who justify yourselves before men. But God knows your hearts. What is honored among men is an abomination before God.

16:16 The law and the prophets were until the time of John. Since then the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and all the people have plunged into it.

16:17 But it is more easy for heaven and earth to perish than for a patch of the law to fall.

16:18 For every one that putteth forth his own wife, and coveteth another, committeth adultery: and he that coveteth a woman putteth forth by her husband, committeth adultery.

16:19 There was a certain rich man. He wore purple robes and fine cloth, and lived luxuriously every day.

16:20 But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with a workmanship all over, sat down at the rich man's door,

16:21 And he was desirous to satisfy his hunger with what fell from his table. Moreover, a dog came and licked his boils.

16:22 At last the poor man died, and the angels took him and sent him to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

16:23 And he was in Hades, suffering, and when he lifted up his eyes, he saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom far away.

16:24 And he lifted up his voice, and said, Father, have mercy on me, O Abraham! Take Lazarus and wet the tips of his fingers with water, and let my tongue be cooled. For I am in agony in this flame.

16:25 Abraham said, "Son, remember. You received good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus received bad things. But now here he is comforted, and you are in agony.

16:26 And not only so, but there is a great pit between us and you; it is impossible for us to cross over to you, nor for you to cross over to us.

16:27 Then the rich man said, "Father, I beg you, let us go to my father's house, and let Lazarus come to us. Send Lazarus to my father's house.

16:28 I have five brothers, and I want you to warn them so that they will not come to this place of distress.

16:29 Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.

16:30 And the rich man said, No, no, father Abraham, if any man from among the dead would go to his brethren, they would repent.

16:31 Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not heed his advice, even if someone rises from the dead.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets are up to the time of John. Since then the Kingdom of God has been proclaimed and all the people have plunged into it.

Luke 4:15 Jesus taught in the synagogues and was respected by all.

4:16 Then He went to Nazareth, where He had grown up, and entered the synagogue as usual on the Sabbath day, and stood about to read the Scriptures.

4:17 Then the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, and He opened it and brought out the place where it says

4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord dwells in me. 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord dwells in me, because he has sanctified me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that the prisoners will be set free, and the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the brokenhearted will be set free,

4:19 And I will proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

4:20 And Jesus rolled up the Scriptures and gave them back to the attendant, and when he sat down, the eyes of all the people in the synagogue were fixed on him.

4:21 Then Jesus began to preach, "This scripture was fulfilled on this day which you have heard.

The law is not perishable, not one jot or tittle of it, but the law has been fulfilled through the gospel of Jesus, through salvation by the cross and the coming of the new covenant, the Kingdom of God. God has done what men could no longer do.

The Lord is merciful. His eyes are on the afflicted, and His ears hear the cries of the afflicted.

James 5:1 O ye that are rich! Hear ye well. Cry out in remembrance of the evil that is about to befall you.

2 Your riches are wasted away, and your clothes are wasted away: your gold and your silver are rusted,

3 Your gold and silver are rusted. 4 And the poison of the rust shall reprove your sins, and devour your flesh as fire. 4 And ye shall be in the time of the end, and yet ye shall have treasure in your hearts; 5 And ye shall have treasure in your hearts, and yet ye shall be in the time of the end.

The previous chapter, chapter 4, had this to say.

4:8 Draw near to God. 4:8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners! O ye double-minded, purify your hearts.

4:9 Suffer, grieve, weep! Turn your laughter into sorrow, and your joy into grief.

4:10 Humble yourselves before the LORD. 4:10 Humble yourselves before the LORD, and

he will exalt you.

4:11 When his pride of riches is decayed and spoiled, when it becomes rusty and poisonous, when the sins of his covetousness are ripened, when the sins of his greediness become ripe. The Bible says, "The time will come when the sin of his greed will ripen and he will reap the destruction of his body so that it will be consumed by fire, so cry out and repent at the thought of that calamity.

5:4 Behold, the wages that you have made the laborers reap the field, but have not paid them, are crying out. And the cry of those who have reaped has already reached the ears of the LORD of hosts.

5:5 Ye are living in the earth in luxury and in pleasure, and your hearts are fattened up for the "day of praise.

5:6 And you have condemned the righteous and killed them. And he will not resist you.

His wealth was based on the unpaid wages of his workers. He used people and accumulated wealth, but it was wealth that he had built fraudulently by deceiving and tricking the workers. He was not known to do such things, and those who were in a weaker position would not be able to stand against him, because he was in a better position, because he was more powerful. You should be thankful if you can work and receive a wage, even a geometric one. You may think this way. However, "the cry of the reapers has already reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

I am reminded of a Christmas carol written by an English writer named Dickens, a man named Scrooge. He spared his workers' wages and did not care much for the sick child of his servant. The child died quietly, and Scrooge thought nothing of it.

The ghosts of Christmas visited him and made him realize how unloving he was, how greedy he was, how the wealth he had amassed by ripping off others and plunging them into misery was a huge chain that bound him, a chain that would bind him to the depths. The chains that bound him to the bottomless pit. After awakening from his dream, he is reborn and transformed in character, running around town like a child, tearing up the deeds of unjust debts, donating to those in need, and promising to pay for medical treatment for the sick children of his servants. Thus the joy of Christmas spread around them. A good future opened up for those in need.

Christmas. It is the day when the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed and astronomical debts are canceled for those who were helplessly trapped in the wages of sin that brought debt and death. God accomplished it through the sacrifice of His beloved Son.

Today, I don't believe that there is anyone lying on our doorstep starving and sick. If there were, we would call an ambulance and that would solve the problem. But who is our neighbor? We don't hire anyone for unpaid wages, we don't rip anyone off, and we live modestly on what we have rightfully worked for. But there are people in the world who cannot afford even a fraction of what we have, who have been driven from their homes by war, who have lost their families, and who are on the street.

Their "cries have already reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

We have been forgiven by the Lord for our inexhaustible sins and our lives are protected. What a blessed life! Should we take this for granted and think only of ourselves, only about preserving this life?

6 And he condemned the righteous and killed them. Moreover, he will not resist you.

How can we heal their suffering, their unresolved pain and sorrow, their misery and anger, when "the cry has already reached the ears of the Lord of hosts," when righteousness is trampled on without resistance, when they are condemned without question, when they are condemned to death? We are taught that our hearts, ears, and eyes should be with the Lord of hosts and with those who are in need.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father, we thank you for today's worship. God's eyes and ears are open to the world, and we are informed that God looks at the poor, needy, and crying people and hears their voices. Even at the cost of the life of Your beloved Son, You sought to deliver us from the noose of sin and damnation. Your heart is always poured out on us. We are taught such a heart of God, and we are searched in our hearts to see where our hearts are. Please guide us this week to look up to the heavens, to always think of the merciful God and his lovingkindness, and to spend our time serving and loving you. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.