

## EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR BRINGS GOD'S JUDGMENT AND PENALIZING PRODUCTIVITY DOES NOT LIBERATE THE POOR.

*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. <sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.*

### Intro:

Q: Who are the rich?

A: The definition of 'poor' in the Bible refers to those living a hand-to-mouth existence. By biblical standards, most all Americans are rich. In context, the rich are crooked, non-Christian landowners using their economic leverage to steal from the poor Christians.

Q: Does being rich = being greedy?

A: No.

Q: Who are the 'rich' in James?

A: Those whose god is money and influence instead of God who gives both.

*"Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience." - C. S. Lewis<sup>1</sup>*

### Economics and the coming justice of God:

- Money is a **poor** god – 5:1-2

*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.*

- Cheating people may be a **short**-term gain but is certainly a long-term **loss** – 5:3  
*Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.*

- God is not blind to **injustice** – 5:4-6

*Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.*

- Be patient; **justice** is coming – 5:7

*Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains.*

### Application:

Employers...

- 1) Treat your employees as persons having **intrinsic** value.
- 2) Talk to your employees in order to understand their socio-economic struggles.
- 3) Offer personal financial **stewardship** training.
- 4) Reflect the coming justice of the next world in the world of your workplace:  
What's legal is not always righteous and what is righteous is not always legal.
- 5) Offer to pray for your employees when the situation arises.

Employees...

- 1) Do your work just like you're working for God Himself.
- 2) Understand that management and leadership come with an unprecedented level of "Supervisor **Stress**."
- 3) Do your utmost to be a **peacemaker** in the workplace for the glory of God.
- 4) View your workplace as your mission field.
- 5) Offer to pray for your coworkers (or boss) when the situation arises.

<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), 292.