JAMES – BEING RIGHT IN A WRONG WORLD
Annual Bible Study
January 12, 22,26, & February 5 2012

Text: *James – Being Right in a Wrong World* by Michael D. McCullar

Session 4 – You *Gotta* Serve Somebody: Tips for Righteous Living

Focal Text: James 4 & 5

Below you will find my notes to the fourth and final session of the Annual Bible Study. They follow the slide presentation (Keynote) I used, and include whatever interpretive notes I included along with the slides.

Due to time restraints, and the amount of material to cover (the final two chapters of James), I decided to begin the last session at 4:13, since I had preached on 4:1-12 in the 9 AM Traditional Service.

I. The Arrogance of Existence (4:13-17)

A. The Sin of Presumption - Anyone can commit the sin of presumption, not just the wealthy.

Even though the wealthy certainly have the wherewithal to display presumption, and usually are successful in having their plans fulfilled, anyone of any economic standing, or of human standing, can be presumptuous of life.

B. Wisdom from On High – Fallacies Associated with Presumptive Living

1. We presume we can live as long as we wish.

2. We presume we can make whatever plans we please; we can go on a business venture, a fishing trip, etc. today or tomorrow; the choice is ours.

3. We presume we have the capacity to execute whatever plans we conceive. We declare we *will* make a profit. (McCullar, p. 89)

C. Presumptive living equals practical atheism (Patrick Hartin; quoted by McCullar, p. 90)

Practical atheism is displayed in the lives of those who claim to believe in God, but who never include God or His will in their daily plans.

"This kind of boasting is evil, then, not because of the arrogant manner in which it is done; it's evil because the objects of the boasting are instances of arrogant disregard for God." (Douglas Moo; quoted by McCullar, p. 90)

II. The Arrogance of Wealth (James 5:1-6)

Money is neutral; it becomes sinful when it's used to oppress and promote violence, or is raised to a godly status.

A. The Power of Enough (James 5:1-3)

Ecclesiastes 5:10 - "Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income." (For whom little is not enough, no amount will ever be enough.)

B. The Judgment of the Rich

1. Supernatural (". . . .miseries which are coming on the rich.")

2. Eternal – "It is the last days that you have stored up your treasure."

   See Amos 8:4-8

3. The Great Reversal

   The rich life you now enjoy you will soon lose. (In 5:2-3 James writes as if the judgment of the rich is so sure that it has already happened; see the Parables of Dives and Lazarus - Luke 16:19ff)

III. The Charges Against the Wealthy (James 5:4-6)

The Routine Sin of the Rich (See Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15; Mal. 3:5)

IV. Virtuous Patience (James 5:7-12 - Here James turns his attention to those who have been oppressed by the wealthy.)

A. Wise advice – be patient and stand firm (5:7-8)

B. Don't bicker (James 5:9)

"Impatience is a sign of internal struggle and chaos that sooner or later leads to outward expressing." (McCullar, p.96)

Live consistently in your faith in spite of suffering injustice.

C. Look to the Prophets for Inspiration (James 5:10-1).

D. In the OT, the prophets were held up as those who are to be revered and emulated. (See Matt. 5:7-12)

James holds up Job (who was not a prophet, but was wise and very rich) as an example of patience to be emulated and followed. (James alone in the NT mentions Job.) Also, James never mentions Jesus as the perfect example of patience.)

E. Don't swear (Don't make oaths) (James 5:12)

See William Barclay's comment on bottom of page 97and 98. (Quoted by McCullar)

V. We're All In This Together (5:13-20)

A. Prayer Within the Family of Faith (James 5:13-18)

1. James mentions prayer only in the context of 5:13-18, and primarily in relation to suffering or sickness.

2. The type of prayer James has in mind is *petition*.

"We should view prayer as another revolutionary tactic, not a passive resignation to a situation." (Ralph P. Martin; quoted by McCullar, p. 99)

Does the testing of our faith develop perseverance in us in the area of prayer?

Compare James 5:14 with 1 Corinthians 12:16.

> "According to the integration model, the primary purpose of religious acts is the integration of the individual into

the religious community. They give him stability in the face of extreme situations of suffering, hopelessness, and injustice." (Gerd Theissen, *Miracle Stories of Early Christian Tradition*, p. 29; quoted by McCullar, p. 100)

Vv. 15-16 - James relates unforgiven sin to healing of the body. (We hear people of faith request healing of the spirit and body by the community of faith.

What about "public sin, public confession," and "private sin, private confession?"

5:16b - "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (McCullar, p. 100 - "Mature, righteous

Christians pray with power and effectiveness."

B. The Reclaiming Power of Faith (James 5:19-20)

1. James echoes Jesus' call for repentance ("Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." - Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15)

2. James highlights confession, forgiveness, and reclaiming those who have wandered away into sin as part and parcel of life in the kingdom of God.