



**SERIES: FEBRUARY – MARCH FAITH IN REAL LIFE**

**SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD**

**Tuesday, 03/22/2022**

**Scripture: James 5:1-3**

**TITLE: Is Wealth a Sin?**

After returning from a recent trip, I opened my cupboard to discover moldy bread. But not just one loaf but several. I thought to myself, "Gross! How old is this stuff?" But then it dawned on me that our cupboards are full of food we may never eat and may likely get thrown out. And then I began to look around my house to see stockpiling of all kinds.

Is there a difference between preparation and hoarding? Does God care about what we do with our resources? That's what James will answer for us in James 5:1-3, (CSB).

*Come now, you rich people, weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you. Your wealth has rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasure in the last days.*

Okay, at first glance, it would appear that James is putting down being wealthy. Is that true? No. It's not. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The issue isn't the stuff or lack thereof. The issue is the heart. What precipitates and motivates wealth? That is the issue.

James notes four sins that precipitate severe judgment on the wicked rich: useless hoarding, unfair gain, selfishly spending, and merciless acquisition.

Because their behavior has been so abhorrent to God, they will experience miseries and judgment. They hoard food that could be used to feed the less fortunate. Instead, it goes bad and is thrown away. Their fine clothes are collected and destroyed. Their wealth rusts and is useless against God's judgment.

You see, the rich and the poor can both be selfish. Both can be selfless. Both stand before God without excuse for their sin. The only one who can help them is Jesus Christ.

Over the past two months, I've had a lot of conversations about the return of Christ. One friend said, "I think Christ is coming back soon. I don't know if there is a point to saving for retirement." I agree that Christ is coming back soon. How soon? We don't know. But we should live like it.

Does that mean we should give all of our resources away? Maybe. Probably not. I think what it does mean is to live with intentionality. As we discussed yesterday, living according to God's will. We live within our means. We meet our obligations and do not create an unnecessary burden on our lives or our pocketbook.

It means we don't hoard our food, our clothing, our homes, our cars, our time, or our talents. But instead, we seek godly wisdom to live a life intentionally pleasing to God. Is this easy? No. Is it right? Yes. Is this unique to each individual and family? Yes.

So here's my challenge for you today: Take a look around. That day that I looked around my house to observe my own hoarding was a humbling experience. We all do it to one level or another. And as James reminded us in James 1 that real faith results in a life of giving out of the grace of God. So take a look around and then be generous.

When we live with awareness and generosity, we will win the day.