

JESUS' BROTHER, CHALLENGES OUR HEARTS

Talk 7 – Patiently Waiting For Jesus' Return – James 5:1-20

Small group questions

Leaders – if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer – please contact bishop@bathurstanglican.org.au

1. What resonated with you from the message, or was there something you found challenging or unclear?

Section 1: Warning to the Wealthy (James 5:1-6)

2. James condemns certain wealthy people because of three things: they hoarded their wealth rather than sharing it (v.3), they accumulated wealth through dishonesty (v.4), and they lived in luxury and self-indulgence (v.5). Discuss each of these accusations and how they might apply to us today.
3. James' condemnation of these selfish wealthy people in verses 1 and 2 is almost shocking in its tone. Why do you think James is so vehement in his condemnation? What does this say about the importance of this issue in God's eyes?
4. Read Luke 12:33-34. How might we apply these principles of generosity today?
5. Read Luke 16:19-31. Jesus describes a rich man who ends up in Hades. What attitudes or behaviours did the rich man have that led to his missing out on heaven?

Section 2: Encouragement to the Faithful (James 5:7-12)

6. James then encourages the poor people in the church who are suffering. In verses 7 and 8, what does he remind them of and tell them to focus on? How might we do that in our own lives?
7. James refers to "patience" four times in the first three verses of this section. What does it mean to be patient in the midst of suffering or difficulty?
8. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What attitude toward trials and suffering are we exhorted to have in these verses?
9. Read the last statement in James 5:11. Why does James inject this into his narrative? Why is this important to know?
10. Can you share a personal experience where the hope of heaven and/or the compassion of God helped you to persevere?

Section 3: Exhortation to the Sinful (James 5:13-20)

11. What is James' message regarding healing, especially in verses 14-15? How does the context of discipline and repentance influence our understanding of this passage?
12. How can we balance the biblical truth of occasional healing with the understanding that not all sickness is a result of personal sin? Share personal experiences or insights.
13. The concept of God using sickness as a means of discipline is a difficult one. Why does God do this?
14. Read Isaiah 53:4-6. What does this tell us about the healing that God is most concerned about?
15. Read James 5:19-20. What responsibility do we have toward one another as God's children? Discuss examples of how we might do this.

Prayer idea – Pray that we will patiently await Jesus’ return – being generous, enduring hardship, and confessing sin. And pray in response to the entire James’ series, that we might reflect on everything we’ve learned and continue not to be hearers only of God’s word, but people who put it into practice.