

STERN WARNINGS TO THE SELF-SERVING WEALTHY

James 5:1–6

F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway were talking together one day.

Fitzgerald: “You know, Ernest, the rich are different from us.”

Hemingway: “Yes, I know. They have more money than we do.”

It’s debatable if that dialogue actually occurred . . . but the humor based on obvious fact makes us smile. Far more significant is the part that’s left unanswered, namely, how are the rich different from us—or are they? It’s virtually impossible to discover the answer, since the extremely wealthy are notoriously private people, especially those who are extremely greedy. Only God’s Word tells the whole truth. That’s what makes today’s message so intriguing. James writes stern warnings to the self-serving wealthy of the first century, which fits those in that category who live in this twenty-first century.

I. Necessary Explanation

- Clarifying what James is NOT saying:

- Classifying both “rich” and “poor”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

II. Expository Instruction

- Opening rebuke (v. 1)
- Human reasons (vv. 2–6)
- Divine retribution (vv. 2–6)

Lingering lessons about God and the wealthy