

Joy in Whatever Financial Condition

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[0:00] James 1, I'll read the first 11 verses in your hearing. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations, greetings.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asked, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position, but the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wildflower.

For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant. Its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

[1:17] We live in a country that has long known the blessing of God in the form of financial prosperity.

We've been given a way of life unheard of by most of the world. But sadly, we've turned God's blessing into an idol and served it rather than him.

Jesus says you cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and money. And it's sad, but I'm afraid true that it's not God that's being served in our nation today, but money.

Money talks. Money satisfies. Money reigns. Money gains. Andy Hamilton in a recent sermon said, as only Andy can say it, that the most sensitive part of the man's anatomy is his pocketbook.

Hit him in the head. Punch him in the gut. Kick him in the rear end. Little effect. But you touch his pocketbook and he comes unglued. Well, a lot of pocketbooks are being touched in these days through bankruptcies, business closings, loss of jobs, loss of hours worked, the threat of the same, price of gas and food and concrete and a host of other things.

[2:42] According to the polls, the number one issue with voters in November is the economy. This is touching my pocketbook. What are you going to do to fix it? Now, there's much about the economy that I do not understand, but it does seem clear that our lifestyle of prosperity is being threatened, and we don't like that.

The whole house that prosperity has built is showing cracks in its foundation, signs of crumbling, and so it has the feds, it has the president, it has Congress scrambling to try to do something to shore up the economy.

These are indeed troubling times financially in America. We don't have a clue just how unglued we will yet get when our pocketbooks are touched.

Some of you can remember your parents perhaps telling you what happened in the stock market crash in the earlier part of last century, how people jumped out of high-storied buildings and took their own lives.

And I wonder what our soft and spoiled generation that so often had the silver spoon and everything we've won, how are we going to face a collapse like that?

[4:04] And what about you? And what about me? In times like these, we need the Savior. We need the Bible. And James meets us with a timely word spoken 2,000 years ago and yet as relevant today as it was then.

He says to us with divine authority, whatever your financial condition in life is, rejoice. Rejoice. Whatever your financial condition in life may be tomorrow, rejoice. Our text, verses 9 through 11.

Take us back to the opening command of verse 2. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds. That's a general statement. All sorts of promises.

Consider it pure joy. But now he gets specific with us in verses 9 and 10. And he's talking about specific kinds of trials, namely financial trials, the trials that come to you because of your financial status in life.

[5:19] Now, we're used to thinking of financial trials in a one-dimensional way. The trial of poverty is what we think of. The trial of not having enough money.

James doesn't think that way at all. Now, in verse 9, he does address the poor with their trial of poverty. That's part of his message. But he goes on in verse 10 and 11 to address the rich with their trial of riches.

And you say, John, I hadn't thought of riches as a trial before. Now, there's the kind of trials I could use more of.

Even I could rejoice in that trial and count it all joy. But be very careful what you wish for. There are people in hell this morning because they did not pass the trial of riches.

They couldn't handle the temptations that come to those who are better off. Who in their eagerness for more money have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many griefs.

[6:30] They left the pathway of holiness to get more money. And people who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

There are ruinous temptations. There are destructive traps that are just waiting for the guy who is chasing money. And I don't read anywhere in my Bible where it says how hard it is for the poor to enter into the kingdom of God.

But I do read the words of Jesus that say how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Indeed, it is harder.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

And I read of a rich young ruler that failed the trial of riches to his eternal loss. Who, when he heard the claims of the gospel upon him, became very sad and walked away from Jesus and eternal life in him.

[7:47] Why? Luke's comment goes right to the bottom. Because he was a man of great wealth. He flunked the trial of wealth and walked away from Christ.

Yes, there are peculiar trials that come to the rich man because of his riches. Trials and temptations that he faces that the poor man does not face.

There's the trial, the temptation to self-sufficiency. I don't need God. What would I need God for? My things and my money meet all my needs. That's not the poor man's temptation.

The poor man's temptation is that I don't have enough and maybe I need to steal or cheat to get more. No, it's the wealthy that are tempted to say, who is the Lord? Who is he? I don't need him. There's the deceitfulness of riches that chokes out the word. And the rich man simply has no room for the word of God and its influence in his life.

[8:54] Why? Because of the choking power of riches and its deceitfulness. He is able to afford more. So he's tempted more to find his happiness in more and more things.

He's tempted for the love of money and things that it buys. He's tempted to trust in his riches, to lean on what they can do for him, where they can get him in life.

He's tempted to pride in riches. It's what he's accumulated as if it makes him more important than the poor guy. He even despises, is tempted to despise the poor and take advantage of them, exploiting them.

James will have much to say about the rich exploiting the poor later in chapter five. He's tempted to live in self-indulgent luxury while he's forgetful of the poor.

Yes, there is the trial of riches, the trial of a greater accountability to be given in the day of judgment for to whom much is given. Much will be required.

[9:56] He carries a heavy burden. He carries a heavy trial. Follow the rich man around for a week and you'll find he has his trials to. Trials that come not in spite of his riches, but precisely because of his riches.

More to take care of, more to look after, more to worry about, more to keep and to keep from being robbed and keep from being lost. Sure, he has the perks of riches, but he also has the temptations,

the headaches of riches.

Yes, James speaks of the trial of wealth. Could it be that God knows exactly how much money you have in the bank?

Could it be that he knows how much you can handle in a holy way? How much temptation of riches you can take?

How much would sink your ship? And so in kindness, he's keeping you from being tempted beyond what you're able to bear. Trials, temptations of wealth.

[11:07] But then there are trials and temptations. Of the poor. The condition of poverty. Jesus says that the cares of life choke out the word.

Just the sheer difficulty of making a living. That, too, can choke out the word. Don't have time for God. I've got to get to work. I've got to now do this and that. God is choked out and the word is choked out.

He's tempted to steal and dishonor God's name because he doesn't have enough. He's tempted to get more money in all sorts of unlawful ways of lying and deceiving. We can see the evil to which Judas stooped to get just 30 more pieces of silver.

He's tempted to worry about how he's going to make ends meet. He's tempted to the love of money like the rich man because he can covet what he doesn't have.

And he can be tempted to selfishness and keeping all that he does have. And tempted to complaining and whining about what he doesn't have. Yes, there are trials and temptations of the poor.

[12:14] And most of James' hearers would have been in that class, the poor. But there were some who were rich. And three more times in this letter he's going to address the rich and the poor. And he's got a word for them both, even as he does here.

Now, if James came back and followed us home today, which class would he put you in? I dare say he'd put probably all of us in the rich class. The haves versus the have-nots.

But perhaps you say, well, I'm in the middle. I'm in the middle class. I'm somewhere between the rich and the poor. Well, congratulations. You get some of both trials. The point James is making is whatever your financial status in life, there are temptations peculiar to your status.

Your bottom line. Your bank account. And you better know how to persevere in holiness in those trials. And he's here to help us. So I've got three questions right off the bat.

Have you thought of your financial status as a trial from God to test your faith and to develop perseverance in holiness? You must.

[13:26] You must. Secondly, have you thought of your financial status as a temptation from Satan to destroy your faith? To knock you off of the highway of holiness and to get you to sin and to take you to hell?

You must. You must. The very same trial from God to further your holiness is a temptation from Satan to end your holiness and to get you to sin.

And thirdly, have you thought of your financial status as a trial that therefore requires much wisdom? If you're to pass this test and temptation and so to persevere in holiness through it.

You see, it's not automatic. Trials don't automatically develop perseverance. And trials, financial trials, do not automatically lead to greater holiness.

In fact, Satan would have them lead us to sin and would jerk us off of the path of holiness. So when trials come, what is James teaching us? When trials come, they show us our lack of wisdom.

[14:38] So we must pray. We must ask God for wisdom who gives it generously to all who ask without finding fault. God, meet me with the wisdom of your truth.

Help me to see this financial trial as you do. To have your perspective ruling my heart and life so that I will respond accordingly. Exercising my faith. Growing in perseverance and holiness.

Whatever my financial status. Are you praying? Are you praying for wisdom to handle your money and the lack of it in a holy manner?

You see, what James is doing is he's descending to particulars. Count it all joy, brothers, when you face all kinds of trials. Now let me talk about a specific subset of trials.

Financial trials. You must count it all joy. You must find wisdom in God for this trial as well. Now I've told you where we're going. I've taken you part way there.

[15:37] Let's look at the text. First of all, a word to the poor brother. Verse 9. The brother in humble circumstances. Now that itself is perhaps a little broader statement.

The brother in humble circumstances. The brother in a low condition. And that could have many applications. Perhaps in your health, you're in humble circumstances. Perhaps in different ways in your life, you're in a humble circumstance.

And yes, these things would apply to that. But I believe that what James and the Holy Spirit are especially putting their finger on is a humble circumstance financially.

And I say that because of the contrast in verse 10. Who's contrasted with the brother in humble circumstances? Well, it's the one who is rich. It's the brother who's rich. And indeed, this word for humble circumstances can be translated.

The poor. The poor in material things. The financially struggling fellow. Brother. And what is he to do?

[16:47] So a word for the poor brother. Well, he ought to take pride in his high position. This is one of those imperatives. This is a duty. This is a command. This is what God expects out of the poor brother.

He ought to take pride in his high position. Now, what do you mean take pride in? Well, it's a word that can mean to boast in, to glory in, to rejoice in.

It's a word that can have a negative as well as a positive meaning based on the context. There are things that we are not to boast about, aren't we? Not to boast as if our good works God has saved. But we are to boast in the Lord, aren't we? And we are to glory in the cross. We are to take pride in the cross. We are to take pride in the Lord. And so that's the word here.

To greatly exult and glory and rejoice in. It's the positive side of the word. And the poor brother ought to greatly rejoice in what?

[17:47] In his high position. His high position. What a striking thing. The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position.

He ought to rejoice in his high position. It sounds ridiculous. The brother in lowly conditions with a low bank account should take pride in his high position.

What's the meaning of this riddle? Simply this, that this man in humble circumstances has wealth that you cannot see. And no bank teller can ever add up.

And no financial statement will ever show. This man who is so poor financially that he's barely getting by has riches in Christ beyond telling.

He's so rich you can't tally it up. The one scraping the bottom is in a high position indeed. He is blessed in the heavenly realms with Christ.

[18:48] Ephesians chapter 1. So poor man, take pride in your high position. Poor man, low man, low man on the financial totem pole.

Greatly rejoice in your high position. He's teaching us how to apply the command to take pure joy in our trials. Come with me to Ephesians 1.

And listen to a poor man taking pride in his high position and calling us to do the same. Ephesians 1 and verse 3. Paul says, praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenlies, the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

And he starts to unpack that and enumerates it in verse 4. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Is that not wealth beyond words? That before the world was made, God had you on his mind and chose you to be saved, to be one of his holy and blameless children.

[19:59] Verse 5. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ.

The predestining, adopting love of God to make you not just his servant, but his son, his daughter. A child of the high king of heaven, co-heirs with him of the whole universe.

High position indeed. Verse 6. In him, that is in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Sins forgiven. Blotted out. Erased from your record. Never to be brought up against you again in judgment. What's that worth to you, Christian?

Put a price on that. And as you tally it up, remember this, that it costs the very blood of the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

[21:03] To be forgiven. To be forgiven. A day is coming when the richest man without forgiveness would give up all his wealth to buy it. But it won't be for sale.

And you will show up in that day forgiven? Oh, your wealth? You're loaded, Christian. You're loaded. Verses 7 and 8.

All in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. How rich I am since Jesus came my way.

Redeem my soul and turn my night to day. How rich. How very rich I am. Verse 11.

To have all my all wise God working out everything in my life in conformity with the purpose of his will. What's that worth to you? To know that even my present condition financially is being worked out by my God according to his plan for me.

[22 : 11] And his plan for me is always good. What's that worth to you? Verses 13 and 14. He's given me the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance.

That's an eternal inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. Reserve for us in heaven.

Ephesians 2.6. This salvation of Jesus Christ has made you rich.

It has lifted you up to dizzying heights because you are now seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

Let the poor man take pride in his high position.

You're there with Christ. United to him in the heavenlies. Ephesians 2.7. We're so rich it'll take all the coming ages of eternity to unpack and to show and to display the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 3 and verse 8. Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ. That is the deeper in you go into the riches that are yours in Christ. The more you see you haven't come to see anything of unsearchable riches.

[23 : 27] Philippians 4.19. His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Hear me believer. The poorest believer has more true riches than the wealthiest unbeliever.

You are rich toward God. So brother, whatever your bottom line in Christ, you're rich beyond telling.

So when things get tight financially, rejoice in your true wealth. In Jesus, your priceless treasure.

Let the weak say, I am strong. Let the poor say, I am rich because of what Christ has done for us.

I am rich. I am rich. I am rich. I am rich. There goes that old beater car down the highway with the bumper sticker.

[24 : 32] My treasure's in heaven. Good for you, brother. You got it right. Right on. That's the spirit, brother. My treasure's in heaven.

And whenever you're faced with the things you can't afford. And whenever you're faced with your lack of things that you cannot buy. It's meant to be a trigger to make us think of all that is ours in Christ.

Even as I'm bouncing down the road in this beater, each bounce is reminding me. I've got better things in heaven. Let the brother in humble circumstances take pride in his high position.

And so every financial pinch is a call to take inventory of our true riches, unfading wealth.

You're watching the news and they're announcing another 200 point drop in the stock market.

That's the opportunity right then.

[25 : 36] Right then. Every time I'm faced with my loss, my lack of financing, the erosion of my savings. To take the opportunity to tally up my true riches.

To count my blessings. And to name them one by one. When you when you when you hear financially troubling news.

Turn up Psalm 103 and do not forget all his benefits. And memorize Ephesians chapter one. It tells you of the glorious riches of his grace that have been lavished on you in Christ and how in Christ you have been enriched in every way.

First Corinthians one five. Poverty then becomes a pointer to our true riches in Christ. Lift up your head. Poor brother. And see your true riches in Jesus.

And that exercise is meant to weigh in on our emotional level. It's meant to set to change us from complaining depressed people. Into people who are taking pride.

[26 : 48] Who are glory. Who are greatly rejoicing and exultant in how rich we are in Christ. Hattie Buell's taking pride in her high position.

In that song. My father. Oh my father. Is rich in houses and land. He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hand. Of rubies and diamonds. Of silver and gold.

His coffers are full. He has riches and told I'm the child of a king. A tent or a cottage. Why should I care? They're building a mansion for me over there. And we're just talking about the cheap riches aren't we?

Silver. Gold. I mean that's the stuff they pave heaven with. Right? Let's go a little deeper into the vault. And let's see what's ours in Christ. And there's the righteousness of Jesus.

That robe. It's mine. What's that worth in the day of judgment? Wealth is worthless in the day of judgment. But righteousness delivers from death.

[27:48] Proverbs tells us. Peace with God. The smile of God. Citizenship in heaven. Daily mercies. A God who loves me and cares for me as a father, his son.

I'm rich in the economy of heaven. I'm loaded in the things that really count. Glory in it, brother. Glory in it, sister. Whatever your bank account says.

Now to do that, we're going to need a whole lot of wisdom. Wisdom. I don't mean the world's wisdom. I don't mean the wisdom of the financial consultants on Wall Street.

I mean the wisdom of God. The kind James talks about that trials expose our lack of. We're going to need wisdom to see our finances in this way and to rejoice.

The world teaches us that our importance is wrapped up in what we have. You're defined by your wealth today. Your whole identity and self-image is tied to your bottom line.

[28:48] The paycheck we make. The cars we drive. The houses we live in. The clothes we wear. The vacations we take. The investments we've got stashed. We're being told every day in every way by the world's wisdom that a person's happiness depends on how much money they have.

We breathe this atmosphere and we're all too easily suckered in to the world's value system. And oh, we're in trouble when we're thinking like the world about money.

That's what James is saying. What a difference. It's God's wisdom that enables the Christian to see with different eyes.

And that's why it's so important that you read your Bible every day. That you memorize scripture. That you meditate on it. You think about it. You talk to yourself. You remind yourself about the value of money.

Because the world's telling you a lie every day. You need to counter those lies with the truth. With wisdom. What a difference God's wisdom makes. Here's this poor man.

[29:58] He's broken. He's rejoicing in his high position. The world looks on. It makes absolutely no sense. The guy is delusional. He's out of touch with reality. No. No.

Wisdom enables us to see riches that the world has never tasted or seen. He's not out of touch with reality. He's never been more in touch with reality. He sees that rich vein of celestial gold that they know nothing of.

Fellowship with Christ. The promises to come. So Savior. If of Zion's city I through grace a member am. Let the world deride her pity. I will glory.

I will boast. I will take pride in thy name. Fading as the world means pleasure. All is boasted. Pump and show. Solid joys.

Lasting treasures. None. But Zion's children. No. So James is showing us how God's wisdom enables the poor brother in his poverty.

[31:03] To rejoice in the wealth that is his in Christ. Christ. So then seeing and enjoying our riches in Christ is the cure for our trials and temptations in financial difficulties.

Money loses its pull on us when we are enjoying greater riches. Have you found that? When Christ is all in all to your soul the allurements and the pull of money loses something of its strength on you. And so instead of selling out holiness in the mad pursuit of money our soul is satisfied in the riches that are ours in Christ. And so we continue pursuing holiness. Rejoicing in what we do have in Christ.

Rather than whining about what we do not have. Oh but without that wisdom we're vulnerable. We're vulnerable to the temptations. That come to us financially.

So in the midst of difficult realities and your financial lack. Keep your eyes fixed on your true riches in Christ. And rejoice in him. The brother in humble circumstances.

[32:15] Ought to take pride in his high position. Now that's the radical medicine that James gives us. But folks that's not half as radical as the medicine he's going to hand to the rich brother.

He has a word to the rich brother now. Verses 10 and 11. But the one. The brother who is rich. Should take pride in his low position.

That is he should rejoice in his low position. And his low position is spelled out for us. Because he will pass away like a wild flower.

That's pretty low. Let me show you a picture of a rich man. No I don't have the cover of Forbes magazine or money magazine. There's a wild flower.

And it's growing out there in the meadow. There it stands in all its splendor and beauty. But keep watching it. Because now the sun comes up.

[33 : 13] And it begins to wilt. And one by one its blossoms fall to the ground. And all the beauty and splendor that was there is now gone.

And it's just a rather ugly withered up stem of a thing now. But keep watching. Because it's not done. And the sun beats on it some more.

And it shrivels and breaks apart. And blows away in the wind. And pretty soon. It's gone. There's nothing there. Its place knows it no more.

That's the picture of the rich man in his riches. We've seen it again this summer. Flowers that grew up in splendor. And once beautified the landscape.

They're gone now. They're no longer here. They've passed away. Not a very flattering picture of the rich man, is it? But it's a true one. It's a true one.

[34 : 18] For the sun rises with scorching heat. And withers the plant. And its blossoms fall. And its beauty is destroyed. In the same way. The rich man will fade away.

Even while he goes about his business. Even as he leaves home in the morning. Sipping his coffee on the way to work. He's fading. He's dying.

Even as he's sealing the deal on that next profitable business transaction. He's fading away. He'll soon be gone from the scene. Somebody else will be in his office. Somebody else will be spending his money.

That's his low position. The low position. Of the rich brother. That no matter how high up he may be on the scale of earthly riches.

Both his life and riches are so brief. So fleeting. So vanishing. So quickly gone. That's the low position.

[35 : 18] Of the rich man. And radical James says. That the brother who is rich. Should take pride. And boast. In his low position.

I told you. It was radical medicine. He should glory in this. Not in his riches.

But in the day of his total loss. Of them. When he and they will pass away. And be no more on the earth. That day is coming for each of us.

And I ask. Are we rejoicing in the prospect. Of it. The pharaohs of Egypt weren't. Were they. They built their pyramids. Why? So that they.

Could be buried with their riches. And enjoy them in the afterlife. They chafed under the. Reality of. Job. Naked. I came into the world.

[36 : 14] Naked. I will depart. This low position. Is the grief. Of the rich. Worldly man. That he cannot. Live. On. In the enjoyment.

Of his wealth forever. That he must die. And pass away. Because. Oh. If he could. He would gladly. Live forever. For this is where all. His good things are.

But not so. The brother. Who is rich. Not so. The brother. In Christ. Who is rich. That which makes. The unbelieving. Rich man. Cry. Makes the rich.

Brother. Rejoice. He's glad. That there's a day coming. When he will say goodbye. To all of life.

And all of his possessions. Here below. And will say hello. To Jesus Christ. And the better life. To come. And he's glorying.

[37 : 10] In that. He looks with joy. At the. Coming removal. From this. Earthly scene. Because just like.

The poor brother. His real riches. Aren't here. All this stuff. He's got. That's not his real. Riches.

They're not here. They're there. They're not in earth. They're in Christ.

And that's exactly. What the apostle. Paul did. He. He gloried. In his low position. When he says. For to me. To live is Christ. And to die.

That is to pass away. Like the wildflower. Is gain. And he wasn't. Complaining. When he said that. He was. Boasting.

He was taking pride. That it was so. In Christ. Death. Becomes. Something to glory in. Something to take pride in. To rejoice in. Christ.

[38 : 06] By his death. And resurrection. Takes the sting. Out of death. So that in Christ. The last enemy. Death. Has a friendly. Face. To it. For the believer.

For death. Is but my entrance. Into glory. Death. Brings me. Face to face. With Jesus. My savior. In whose presence. Is fullness of joy. At whose right hand.

Are pleasures. Forever. More. Death. Brings me. To that finish line. That I've been pursuing. All my life. Perfect likeness. To Jesus. I'm pursuing holiness.

And death. Brings me. Across that finish line. When I'll see him. And be made like him. Death's the end. Of all the trials. And temptations. It's the end of battle.

With sin. With the world. With the devil. The day I lose my life. And possessions here. I gain far more there. I have. Better.

[38 : 59] And lasting. Treasures. No wonder Paul's glad. That this present life. Doesn't wind on forever. But that as a wildflower.

He too will pass away. He can glory. In his low position. Because for the believer. To die. Is gain. Not should be gain. It is gain. Tally it up. It's gain.

It's gain every time. For every believer. That dies. It's always gain. It's better by far. He goes on to say. To be with Christ. To depart. To die.

Is to depart. And be with. Which is better by far. You can't even put it on a balance. They're not comparable. The day of death. Is better for the believer. Than the day of his birth. Ecclesiastes 7.

1. And I stand before. A statement like this. From James. And my heart is searched again. Is Jesus Christ.

[39 : 54] So precious to me. That I count. Death. Passing away. Gain. To be with him. Is my pursuit of holiness.

So intense. That I count death. Which leads me to that goal. Of being like Christ. I count it gain. Because it brings me to perfect likeness.

Christian. The Bible says. You're going to be. With Jesus. And you're going to be. Like Jesus. And oh. By the way. You've got to die. To get there. Well then.

Welcome death. For Jesus sake. How bad do we want it? That's what this text. Does to me. It says. John. How much do you want it? What does Christ mean to you?

What does holiness mean to you? That you are so reluctant. That you're still so gripping. This earth. And its possessions. And its things.

[40 : 54] Is it just the poor Christian. Harassed by poverty. Who should count death gain? Or are there not. Future glories. In Christ. Sufficient to make. Even the richest Christian.

Among us. To count his death. Gain. And to glory in it. Oh don't get me wrong. All the earthly. Riches of this life. That we use. And rightly so. And that we enjoy. And give thanks to God for. Yet they are nothing to compare. With the presence of Christ.

And the eternal glories of heaven. Do we believe that. Or not? Is it a lie? Or is it the truth? The truth. The truth. That should forever change.

The way we look. At death. So you brothers. Who are well off. And yes you. There in middle class America. Let your gains. And your enjoyment.

[41 : 49] Of your earthly riches. And prosperity. All the amenities. Of this prosperous way of life. That we've been given by God. Let all of it be a call to you. To remember the fleeting nature.

Of these riches. And of your life itself. And seize this opportunity. To take pride in your low position. That is the wildflower one day. You will pass away.

And go on. To meet. Your precious. Precious. Jesus. Let the brother. Let the one who is rich.

Take pride. In his low position. Rejoice. In the prospect of your death.

And all that it will bring. To you. And we saw last week. How trials expose our lack of wisdom. Do you feel any of that this morning? When talking about the trials of wealth.

[42 : 51] And the lack of it. Do you come up empty before these words. And say. Oh Lord. I don't see it that way so often. So often I'm thinking like the world is.

And that's why my hands are closed. Lord teach me. So often. I'm thinking like the world. And complaining. And whining. Lord teach me.

My high position. Teach me. My low position. Help me to glory. Lord. Lord I need mercy and grace in this. I need pardon and power for this.

I need your wisdom. To help me see. Things from your perspective. To see money as you see it. So that I do not overvalue money as the world does.

But see it for as it is. Surely nothing. To live for. Nothing to sell out. Holiness for. Nothing to sin. To get.

[43 : 46] Or to keep. Nothing to leave the path of holiness. To run after. You see it's wisdom that defangs. The temptations. Of riches.

It shows in its true color. There it is. And it's gone. You're going to live for that. That's what I must say to myself. You see a flower fading on your way home today. Remember that. That's you and your riches. Are you going to live for that? Right. Let the flowers speak to us. The message is that God is attached to them in his word. It takes wisdom for the poor to rejoice in their high position. They've got to see things God's way to glory in their riches. And it takes wisdom for the rich brother to glory in his low position. Wisdom. We need wisdom. We're desperate for wisdom. And once we see it God's way. Then we open our hands. And that grasping. Opens up. So that we give it away. [44 : 46] We invest it in the kingdom. We lay up lasting treasures in heaven. Wisdom makes us glad to leave it all behind. To give up what we cannot keep anyway. To gain what we'll never be able to lose.

Fading earthly wealth for the unfading treasures of heaven. You see we're not safe. With either poverty or riches. Without God's wisdom. There are temptations in both. That will ruin us. If we do not have wisdom. So if any of you lacks wisdom in this area of finances. Ask God. You know he's promised you something. He's promised he will give it to you generously. He won't scold you. Oh you're only now coming around to ask. What have you been doing for the first 20 years of your Christian life.

That's how he ought to speak to me. So I come to this passage. I say John. Have you ever read these words before? Have you never come and pleaded with God for wisdom in this area?

[45 : 47] Where have you been? But God never upbraids us. You come humbly and broken. The Lord does not despise the broken heart. Come this morning. You'll find him ready to give wisdom.

Wisdom that makes a poor man glory in his high position. His true riches. And wisdom that makes a rich man glory in the prospect of losing it all at death. To gain something truly better.

The Puritan Walter Craddock said. Take a saint. Put him in any condition. And he knows how to rejoice in the Lord. Take a saint. Put him in wealth.

And he knows how to rejoice in the Lord and not his riches. Why? Because wisdom has been given to him. And he sees that money is not what it's cracked up to be.

He glories in Christ. Take a poor man. Take a man and stick him in a poor poverty home. And there he is. He's rejoicing in Christ.

[46 : 49] Why? Because he's been made truly wise. To realize how loaded he is in Christ. Wisdom makes that difference. How blessed we are, brothers and sisters, to see things as they really are.

Things that the world doesn't have a clue about. It's grace. Blessed are these eyes that see. That were once blind. The glories in Jesus and the glories to come.

You know the key for both rich and poor is valuing Christ above all. That's the key. Seeing more in him than in the whole world combined.

Bernard of Clairvaux. From the best bliss this world imparts. Well, if you're a poor man and you've been drinking from the wells of this world for another week.

You can sing this song. You just got a little bit of what the world's best bliss is. But if you're a rich man this morning. And you've been drinking deeply from the world's best bliss.

[47 : 53] You can sing this song. From the best bliss that earth imparts. We turn unfilled to thee again. They're all just broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

You are the fountain of living water. That's the key. For the rich man and the poor man. To find his treasures in Christ. And oh how it glorifies Christ.

There's that poor man. He doesn't have much of anything. And he's rejoicing. Because of his savior. What kind of a savior does he have? And there's a man that has things.

And he's not boasting. And he's handling them in a way of holiness. And he's glorying. In the day when he will die. And leave all of this behind. And go on to better things.

What must that savior be? It's glorifying to Christ. May we glorify him then. And count ourselves in Christ.

[48 : 53] To be the richest on earth. God help us. Father. Thank you for a time out from the world. Again today. To focus on.

Our true treasure. Upon our savior. All that is ours in him. Lord I'm embarrassed even to sing this song in your presence.

Of all that Jesus is to me. That I should be so. Reluctant to face my own death. And release of life.

And everything mortal. That I should let. Financial loss. Or stress. Of such minimal kind. Steal my joy.

Lord teach me. Teach my brothers and sisters. Whether in low. Humble circumstances. Or rich. To glory in Jesus.

[49 : 49] Our true riches in him. Our day of leaving it all behind. To meet him. Do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We couldn't save ourselves when we came to you the first time.

We can't do this Lord. So we're coming to you and asking. Breathe upon us your Holy Spirit. And that wisdom from above. That makes us truly wise.

Help us to so walk in this land. Under financial strains at this time. In a way that glorifies Jesus. And shows how precious he is. Cause some that are here who are not rich toward God. Or bankrupt for eternity. To even now.

To seek Christ. And to find in him. All that they need. Even that righteousness that delivers from death. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

[50 : 44] Amen. Amen.