

## SHOW ME: YOUR WORK SHOW ME SERIES - Part 8 Ben Rudolph

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Good morning Life Fellowship. It is so good to see you guys here this morning. Turn in your Bibles to James Chapter 4, and if you have ever heard a sermon on this passage of Scripture before this morning, you will get a free donut. Okay? The reason I bring that up is I grew up as a pastor's kid so that meant I was in church three times a week, Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. And then I went to Bible College and took all kinds of Bible classes. I went to seminary for three years and I have also been a pastor for twenty-one years. And I can honestly say I have never been in a small group, I have never been in a church service, and I have never been in a class where this passage that we are going to study today has ever been taught or preached on.

It's crazy. And after I read it I think you will understand why a lot of pastors and teachers skip this passage of Scripture, because it is not an easy passage of Scripture to talk about. But we are in the book of James, we are in this series called 'Show Me,' and every week as we have been in the book of James we have been going through systematically every section and chunk of instruction that James gives.

We have talked about this before and that is that James doesn't mince words. He says some really hard things, and sometimes in a very harsh way. But his point is to try and confront the sin and the evil that exists in the community and exists within the church. The theme of this entire series has been 'Show Me,' and the whole idea is we want our faith to show up. We want our faith to show up in all different kinds of ways. So we talked about faith showing up in our speech, our faith showing up during trials, and our faith showing up in our wisdom. And all of these are wonderful things.

As I got to this passage of Scripture and I was studying it, my biggest take away was at first glance and I don't know how applicable this is going to feel to most people in the room. And the reason is because if you are not an entrepreneur starting a business, or you are not a business owner where you are paying people wages, this passage of Scripture feels like it is for someone else. And sometimes we can do that with chunks of Scripture because they don't feel directly applicable to us. When we talked about the tongue we all knew we had tongues, and that we all have problems with our speech. When we talked about having joy in the midst of trials it just seemed to fit all of us.

So what I want us to know is that at face value as I read this it may feel like it doesn't apply to you. Just hold on, because there are some broader implications in this text that I do believe does apply to every single person in this room. So let's read two different sections to James' instructions here. And they both start with 'Come now.' So let's start in verse 13 of Chapter 4:

***“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” – yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and***

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*do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”*

*“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”*

Okay, how many of you have heard a sermon on this passage before? This is not fun preaching, right? But there are a couple of things I want us to do. I want us to make some observations first before we get into the meat of the text. So as we read this what were the feelings and thoughts that came into your mind? What were the things that you were thinking about? Did you think, ‘*Oh I wish my boss would have heard this? I have a boss that really needed this.*’ Or maybe you thought, ‘*I wish I would have heard about this twenty years ago.*’ However you received this, I think the main idea that is here with us today is this – that God cares about our wealth and He cares about our work. Our work and our wealth matter to God.

Now I know that is something that is sometimes hard for us to grasp because there are certain things that just feel more spiritual than others. I have a son who is driving back home after spending the last ten weeks as a counselor in a Christian camp. And we have had great conversations as he has been working literally eighty hours a week with young kids all summer long. He has been leading kids to Christ and that kind of work feels spiritual, doesn’t it?

And then there is another job that my son had where he just moved boxes around for Amazon. And sometimes there are things that feel like they are spiritual work, like when we come in here and sing it feels spiritual. But I think what we need to do is understand that God cares about every part of our lives. He cares about it all. He cares about our work. He cares about the businesses we start. He cares about our career ascension. He cares about our wealth and how we got it and what we do with it. He cares about everything.

What I want us to do is to picture our life like a house this morning. Imagine your life is like a house and you have lots of rooms in this house just like you have rooms in your own house. And in these rooms there is a certain part of your life that you segment off. You have a work room, you have a marriage room, you have your kids’ room, and then there is a room that deals with your retirement. So there are all these rooms in our house, different spots that we go to like an exercise room, a food room, and an

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entertainment room. Imagine all these rooms in your house, and now the question I want to ask you is how many rooms does Jesus have access to? Maybe access is not the right word, so how many rooms does Jesus own?

I think a lot of times we treat Jesus like a guest in our house. You know what it is like to have a guest in your house, don't you? You invite someone over and when you have a guest in your house what is the first thing you do? You show them where they can go. *'Hey this is your room. Here is where the bathroom is. Here is the kitchen.'* And we show them the boundaries of where they can go and what they can do. Now imagine you have a guest in your house and all of a sudden you see them walking out of your bedroom. What are you going to think? What are you going to do?

Some of you are non-confrontational so you are just going to ignore it like nothing happened. But the reality is if you saw a guest coming out of your bedroom, the first thing you would wonder is, *'What were they doing in there? That's my room.'* And many times we treat Jesus like a guest in our house. There are certain rooms that we love inviting Jesus into. *'Oh Jesus come into my marriage room. We need you in this room. Jesus come into the room with my kids and help my kids.'* We may bring Jesus into a room to help us with our personal growth. *'Jesus I want to grow personally and to love you more.'* We love inviting Jesus into our emotions. *'Jesus I want to get better at not being so fearful or so angry.'* There are rooms that we are very comfortable letting Jesus into.

But there are also rooms that we might not feel very comfortable letting Jesus into. *'Here is my entertainment room, Jesus. I want you to own this.'* But then I may not watch movies if I let Jesus into that room. Or there are other rooms like our workroom, our career, our wealth. And these are rooms that are a little bit harder to let Him in. Maybe we have invited Jesus into those rooms when we had a crisis in our lives, but as far as asking Him to own it; we treat Him more like a guest than a landlord.

And if Jesus is Lord, if He is King over our lives, He owns the house. He owns it all. And if you were the landlord over someone who is renting your house, you can go into any room that you want. Do you know why? It is because you own the house and you can go where you want. If there is a problem with the house, it is yours. And so what we need to do is confront our own hearts, confront our own minds because we have only let Jesus into this room and that room but not into all of our rooms.

As it comes to our work and our wealth those are two rooms that are challenging to invite Jesus into, to be Lord over those rooms. So as I studied this passage there were a couple of things that stood out to me. The fact that our wealth and our work matters to God means there are some observations I want to make about this passage before I get into some practical applications of what this looks like.

The first observation is this – as we have been reading through every single section in the book of James, what James does when he is about to introduce a new idea

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he will say something and then add this little Greek word, *adelphos*, or brothers and sisters. He is addressing believers; he is addressing fellow Christians who he refers to as brothers and sisters in Christ. So in this section he is about to teach he mentions brothers right at the top. He does that all throughout his letter, but what is unique about these two sections is he starts them both in two very unique ways. He says, “*Come now, you who say,*” and then “*Come now, you rich.*”

And there is something about that that we need to ask ourselves if James is writing just to Christians here or is he writing to everyone. I believe this is a section of his letter; this is a teaching, that isn’t just to Christians. Yes it applies to Christians, but I believe it speaks to the greater sense of what’s going on in their culture then. There is something that tells us that God wants us to speak into these areas of the world, that our economics matter to God. Whether it is Capitalism or Socialism or Marxism, there are certain economic systems that make more sense according to biblical principles than others do. I think it has been proven over and over again the reason why a lot of Christians go back to a Capitalist system is because it teaches the idea of ownership and property rights. But we also know Capitalism doesn’t obey the Word of God in loving our neighbor. What happens is the stuff we are seeing here in this passage. That is why he is outraged against the one percent in our world today.

So the first thing I see is we have to be willing to speak into everything in our world, because the supreme ethics of God’s Word should teach us how to speak into even economics and politics. That we don’t keep our faith private and hidden just on Sunday morning but we speak into all areas of our lives in all areas of the world because God cares about these things. That is number one.

Number two is this – did you notice how James’ tone was pretty harsh? I am going to read some of these words to you again. “*“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.”* Just imagine you are hearing a sermon and that is the next line that comes out of their mouth. “*Weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.”* “*You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.*” This is a harsh tone. It is a harsh tone for those people who are wealthy because they don’t like being talked down to. And let’s just be honest with ourselves, we live in Lake Norman which is one of the wealthier zip codes even in the United States. All of us in this room are wealthy. All of us are rich. You are rich if you own multiple cars, you live in a house with your family and you don’t have to worry about what you are going to eat or where you are going to find your food this week. And if you have a regular income, if you have cellphones and own a television you are rich by every standard of the world.

Most of us are not trying to figure out how we are going to eat this week. That is a sign that we have a level of wealth that has become normal to us in America. That is first and foremost. And I think a lot of times we have allowed people’s wealth, status and power to affect us and we are not as honest with them as we should be. And the Word of

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God does not mince words. James is saying, *‘Listen, I don’t care if you are wealthy or not, I don’t care if you have power or not, I am going to say some harsh things to you.’* We cannot be afraid. I have been in churches before where people literally thought they had to think about how to say something so that they didn’t offend people who tithe and so they wouldn’t leave the church. That should not matter to us. If we care about the Word of God, if we care about preaching the Word of God, we preach the whole counsel of the Word of God and if people are offended, they are offended. We are to preach God’s truth that is the second observation.

The third observation I have is this, notice how wealth and profit are not condemned. Wealth and profit are not condemned in these passages. What is condemned is arrogance, fraud, greed, self-indulgence and abuse of power. Those are the things that are condemned. Those are the things that are attacked. So again I want to speak to kind of the spirit of the age we find ourselves in. I kind of sense that sometimes we read stories or we watch the news and there is this narrative that if you are someone who has worked hard, you are successful in your business and you have money that you are somehow evil because you have worked the system and you have privileges.

Listen, the reality is the Bible teaches us that wealth comes by diligent hands. And I don’t believe that God thinks that wealthy people are bad. In fact I love this verse in Proverbs Chapter 22 and verse 2 that says, ***“The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all.”*** God is the one who is supremely over all of these things and we are not to condemn people just because they have money, or just because they are poor. God is the maker of them all. But I think sometimes there is this venom against people who are successful in our world and that is not right and it is not godly or biblical.

So those are the observations I wanted to make this morning before we get into it. I think we have noticed that in the book of James there are all these imperatives that say to do this, do that, do this. In this passage there is only one imperative. There are fifty some imperatives in the book of James, and in these two sections that I just read, one speaking to entrepreneurs and one speaking to wealthy landowners there is only one imperative. That is another reason why I think this is written to everyone and not just Christians.

There is only one imperative and that is the word, ***“weep,”*** and that is in verse 1 or Chapter 5. So what does it look like in a practical basis if I am going to take the principles that are outlined in these two sections? What is the broader scope if Jesus is Lord over my wealth and over my work, what does that look like? I am going to share with you six ideas this morning. Now we are not going to spend a lot of time on each one. I have been there before when pastors say they have six points and I have thought, *‘Hold on, we are going to be late for lunch today.’* We are just going to spend a few minutes on every one.

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Maybe you are sitting here and not every single point is going to apply to you, but there might be at least one that you need to hear. So ask the Holy Spirit right now to let you know what He wants you to hear from this passage of Scripture that on face value you might say doesn't apply to you. The first one is this – when Jesus is Lord over our work and our wealth, we humbly seek God's direction before making decisions. We humbly seek God's direction before making decisions.

Notice in verse 13 of Chapter 4 it says: ***“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.”*** You think you have these plans to make a profit, plans to start a business, you have done the market research and this area over here would be perfect for you to do this business and make a profit. There is nothing wrong with that, but the problem is what James says in verse 15: ***“Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”***

As people we have these dreams, we have these plans, we have these goals and there is nothing wrong with dreams, plans and goals. The problem is when we have our dreams, plans and goals and we go through the entire process to do this, and then we invite Jesus into the final moment of it. *‘Jesus I need you to sprinkle your blessing dust over this project so that I am successful.’* And what God wants us to do is to invite Him in on the front end of it. Ask Him if this is even something we should do. Invite Him into the process. Invite Him to walk with you through the process. Don't allow yourself to think you can handle it to a certain point and then you will invite God in.

I was thinking about this and who would say something like this: ***“Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.”*** Who says things like that? It is people who are dreamers and who have a vision of doing something, or someone who is successful, someone who has experienced some level of success in their business. And again, success is not wrong but I will say that success can breed arrogance and pride in our lives. We get used to doing certain things our own way. We climb the ladder of corporate success at a certain level and certain pace. And we feel good about ourselves because we feel like we have done this.

And it creates arrogance. Look at verse 16, ***“You boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”*** One of the greatest dangers we can have in our lives is when we are highly successful apart from understanding how God is working. Don't mistake this, God has been a part of all of our lives, and His hand has been over us, but don't ignore the fact that God is the one who got us where we are. I think that we need to humbly seek God's direction before we make decisions. That is number one.

Number two – seek God's glory and not our own. We have this grand idea and we start making plans. Look what it says in verse 14: ***“You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”*** James is saying that many times we have ideas, plans and strategies and what

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happens is we forget that we are limited, we forget that we are not ultimately in control of that stuff, what we are pursuing might be for our own name. And James is saying our lives will go quickly, so we need to invite God in for that which is eternal, not just for ourselves. *'I want this to be just about me, God; I don't want it to be just about my plans, about my name, about my glory, but for it to be for your glory.'* Everything that revolves around us is temporary and it is forgotten.

For example, if you have a job right now, let's say you work for Bank of America and you, God forbid, passed away this afternoon. How long would it take for your boss to replace you? It would only take about a week. They would mourn for you a little bit, and then they would move on. Right? It is easy to be forgotten.

I love asking this question, I did this in my membership class at my other church; how many of you can name one of your great grandparents? Most of the people there could name at least one. But do you realize that you have eight great grandparents and most people could not name all eight grandparents. I could name a couple of mine because one of them lived until she was a hundred years old and that was Grandma Mildred. She had her driver's license taken away at ninety-seven for speeding. *(Laughter.)* She was late for her hair appointment. She was at her doctor's for her hundred year checkup and he asked her about her diet and she said she had ice cream and cake every single meal. The doctor told her she shouldn't do that and she said, *'Why not, I am hundred years old.'* And the doctor said, *'Yeah, just go ahead and eat anything you want.'* *(Laughter.)*

I bring that up to say this, if you can't name all eight of your great grandparents, do you realize that even your own family will forget you someday? They are going to forget you. And what they do remember about you may be like, *'He was kind of smelly. There was a strange odor coming from Grandpa Ben.'* I say this because I think sometimes we think we are going to find our identity, our purpose of who we are in our success at work. And know this, it will fade like that.

We pursue these things as opposed to asking God what He wants for His glory. Our time is limited, our time is short. We could die tomorrow but we should want our work to count for God, for eternity. Most of us have had these plans and dreams and strategies in life and maybe they are good things. I remember when God called Liz and me to plant this church in Denver in 2006. We moved out there and we had these dreams and these plans to plant this church where it would honor God and people would get saved. We were going to change our city for the Kingdom of God. And I remember three years into we had fifty people and I was miserable. I didn't know what was going on because every book I had read, every conference I had attended said to do this and that and if you start with five people in your living room in two years you can have a thousand people. And that didn't work for us.

I remember anguishing in my heart wondering if there was something wrong with me or with the church. I remember really struggling about it. And three years into it I

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was in my bedroom on my knees crying out to God and asking Him to save people and to grow our church. We needed to see people baptized and disciplined and I was praying for all the right things. I was seeking God in that moment of my life when I was broken and at the end of my rope because I couldn't understand why God was not blessing this work that we were pursuing.

And He came to me in a holy moment and said, *'Ben, all you want is a lot of people in a big room listening to you talk for an hour a week, and I am not in that. I am into something so much greater for my name.'* And I remember in that moment repenting and weeping before the Lord and giving it over to Him. And the scary thing was that everything that we had planned started off so well and I didn't even realize that I had drifted into the other lane of doing it for myself.

Do you know how easy that is? We have these plans and these dreams and these desires about wanting to do something great for God. We will ask God to bless our business and then we will give to missions. We try to make these bargains with God but He knows our hearts. I think one of the things that is very true for us is that many times our career pursuits can reveal the idols of our hearts. Things at our church didn't start changing; we didn't see people being saved and our church growing until I could get that part right in my heart. Some of God's greatest gifts to us will be our failures, our disappointments. They will be the things we try and fail at because in those moments God is shaping us.

The greatest thing God cares about is not our income level or our career path, it is about conforming us into the image of Jesus, and He uses all kinds of things to accomplish that. He will use our successes and He will use our failures to show us our hearts. And we have to invite Him to show us what we love, to show us what we are really after because we want it to matter for eternity. We don't want to have the attitude of arrogance, or a motivation of arrogance, where it is just about us. We need to want our work to matter for the Kingdom of God. That is number two.

Number three – we have to be intentional with righteousness. Look at verse 17: ***“So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”*** Maybe you have heard this verse before taken out of context. We usually use it to describe two different kinds of sin that are in our world today. Theologians call it ‘sins of commission and sins of omissions.’ Sins of commission are the things that we do that are sinful like lying, cheating, stealing, murder, and gossip. We do things that are sins of commission.

Sins of omissions are things I know I should do but I don't do them. God wants me to share my faith. God wants me to pray more. It is when I withhold doing the very commands that God has told us to do. Those are sins of omission. And what James is saying in the context of that is he believes we need to invite Jesus into our work, to ask God to come into this room and own it, to show us what it looks like to be an employee,

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to show us what it looks like to own this business that we have been given, to show us, God, because you want to do this.

And if we do that here is what will happen. The moment He starts asking us to do something that does not feel comfortable, something that is outside our comfort zone, or it might be God asking us to just sit and wait. And we will be like, *'Yeah but God I hate my job, I hate my boss, I hate my co-workers, I hate everything about my work.'* So we pray and pray and we feel like God's timing is slow when God may be teaching us something in our work right now. He is teaching us patience and how to have joy apart from our job and our circumstances. And many times God is telling us in our careers to wait, to be patient as opposed to feeling like we have to get out of this situation right now.

If God is instructing us, we need to be saying, *'If the Lord wills.'* *'If the Lord wills I will move there.'* *'If the Lord wills I will take that position.'* *'If the Lord wills .....* Invite Him into every step of the process. Let's stop making plans apart from the Spirit of God and invite Him into these moments in our lives. That is number three and that is what James deals with in the first section. Now let's move to the second three applications.

If Jesus is Lord over our work and our wealth, what does it look like? Number four – we comprehend the limited value of wealth. Now I am going to read the first three verses of James Chapter 5, and we are going to play a little game. What I want you to do is see what this sounds like. There is another passage of Scripture in the New Testament where this passage sounds very similar to this one. Let's read Chapter 5 and verses 1 through 3.

***“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. “***

What does that passage sound like? If you said Matthew Chapter 6, the Sermon on the Mount, ding, ding, ding, you get a donut. I am giving out donuts this morning. Matthew Chapter 6 and verses 19 through 21 are some of the first verses I memorized as a young teenager when I started taking my faith seriously. ***“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

Now notice what the similarities are between the two passages. We have rust, moth and treasures in the Sermon on the Mount. In James Chapter 5 and verses 1 through 3 we have rotting, corrosion, moth eaten and treasure. James is taking the words

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of Jesus and applying them to the reality of this situation. The reality of this situation is in that day, in the first century Judea, there were landowners, wealthy landowners, and the way that the economic system worked in Rome was very corrupt. If you had money you could make more money. If you were a landowner you could buy more land. But if you were poor you found yourself more in debt and even selling yourself into slavery.

The entire economic system played out like this: the wealthy got wealthier and the poor got poorer. That is how it happened. If you were wealthy you could take someone to court, you could attack someone, you could accuse them of something, and you could bribe your way into getting whatever you wanted. The whole system was corrupted. James was saying you might be doing things now that look like you are getting away with it, you might be doing things that expand your portfolio rapidly, but really wealth is limited. Why? Number one, we know that all wealth is temporary.

James said, “*You have laid up treasure in the last days,*” what treasure is he talking about? He is talking about judgment. He is talking about one day they will face God as judge. “*You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.*” He is saying that one day all of the wealth, all of the opulence, all the self-indulgence will end. Wealth has limited value and it will one day end. One day we will see that our money, our wealth does not save us, it does not give eternal life, and it does not make us stand right before God.

There is only one thing that makes us stand right before God and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. And if you find yourself finding your identity, your purpose and your value in how much money you have, or how many zeros are in your bank account, that is something that is not true. It is not according to the Kingdom of God. So we need to understand the limited value of wealth. It does not save. In fact God shows Himself as a judge in this moment.

And that leads us to point number five. Not only do we have to comprehend the limited value of wealth, we cannot let money own us. Don't let money own you. Notice what James says in the second part of verse 3. “*Their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire.*” What is James saying here? It is a very descriptive term. He is saying that some people really do not have money, rather their money has them. Their money consumes them. They can't see their life as good apart from their wealth.

We all know people whose money has changed them. Maybe it is someone you went to college with, someone you grew up with, and they have attained a certain level and then all of a sudden instead of letting their value, their principles, their convictions, their faith, the things that really matter give them a sense of purpose and identity, what happens is they have let their money become their identity. And it has changed them. It has changed how they act and how they relate to others. Money can do that. If we are not careful wealth can do that to us. We have to make sure in these moments that we

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understand that our identity is found in Christ and He is our true treasure. As followers of Jesus we cannot let anything determine who we are apart from the Word of God and Jesus Christ. It is Him who tells us who we are. So we can't let money own us.

And then this is the last point – we have to treat all people with justice, honor and dignity. James says something here in verse 4, “*Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.*” I don't know how many of us in this room have ever had to make a decision on paying people or employing people, but here is what I know. God has heard the cries of the people who have been defrauded. He has heard the cries of the people who thought they were getting something and instead they got a raw deal. And because of their social standing, because of the courts, or because of some other extenuating circumstances they had no way out and they got defrauded. And God hears them.

James doesn't just call Him God; he calls Him the Lord of hosts. Why would James use that terminology? I think James uses that terminology because the Lord of hosts is this picture of God. We are going to look at this in our names of God series that is coming up after the book of James. But the Lord of hosts is the name of God that is meant to show God of armies, the God of legions, the God of authority, the God of power, the God of might. It is to let us know that there is an army behind God and this army is about justice. And it is about bringing true righteousness on the face of this planet.

If we truly understand that God cares about justice, honor and dignity for us we also need to understand that He cares about justice, honor and dignity for all people. If we have the power in our hands, whether it is how we treat our fellow employees or people downline from us in our jobs and occupations, we are also to treat everyone, to pay everyone with justice, honor and dignity because God cares about that. He cares about it. He cares about how much people make.

Why would God care about that? It is because He understands the idea of being worthy of a wage. There are so many other passages of Scripture that I wish I had time to go into, but God is so big on if you do a job then you should get paid the proper amount for it. And if we have the power to pay someone the proper amount, we are not to try to skimp, cut corners or defraud them. God is saying we need to be people of blessings. Christian business owners should be the most gracious, generous, blessing filled people on the face of this planet.

Do you know why we should pay people like that, why we should lead like that, why we should budget like that? It is because we understand that in I Corinthians Chapter 9 it says that Jesus became poor for us so that we might become rich, that we are people that love to bless. We are not to be like people in verse 5 that says: “*You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence.*”

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It is not supposed to be just about me. We aren't to use all of our resources, all our wealth to just pour out on ourselves. We have been given something, a gift from God temporarily to bless the Kingdom of God, to bless the people of God, to bless even people who are not Christians. That is what we are to do. Whether you make fifty thousand dollars a year or fifty million dollars a year, all of us have the power to do this. All of us have the power to give people blessings, justice, honor and dignity.

I love the story of Zacchaeus in the book of Luke in the Bible. Zacchaeus was this tax collector and if you went to Sunday school you have probably sang the song about Zacchaeus. He was a short dude and he climbed a tree because he wanted to see Jesus. Jesus told him to come down and then He went to his house. Now we don't know the conversation that Jesus had with Zacchaeus, but we know that he was wealthy, and we know everyone in town hated him because he had defrauded probably everyone in that town out of money.

And this is what Zacchaeus said after meeting with Jesus. *'I am going to give away a major chunk of my wealth to the poor. And not only that, anyone that I have defrauded I will pay back four times what I owe them.'* And Jesus said, ***"Truly salvation has come to this house."*** Now it does not mean that Zacchaeus bought his salvation, or because he gave to the poor that now he has earned salvation. No, Jesus was saying that because of Zacchaeus faith, because he had made Jesus lord over his life, lord over his work, lord over his wealth it now showed. Salvation came to Zacchaeus house because he showed by his actions that he had trusted Jesus. Zacchaeus showed by his actions that Jesus was truly lord over his life. That was why salvation had come to his house.

We have to ask ourselves these six things. I don't know which one stood out to you, but how many of us have let Jesus into all these rooms in our house? This leads us to our application questions. What room do you need to allow Jesus into? Maybe some of you are like, *'Man, I have no problem inviting Jesus into my wealth. I invite Jesus into every financial decision I make, but man when it comes to my career I am driven, I am focused, I have my own plans and my own ideas of how I want to do things.'* Then you need to invite Jesus into that room. Every single room that we have we need to allow Jesus into it and to own it, to be Lord over it. And that is going to change how we do things.

Number two – are there any people who need you to make things right with them? Are there any people that maybe you have defrauded, or any people that you have treated unjustly? Is there anyone that you went into a business deal with that went wrong and you made sure that you were taken care of but you didn't care about the other person?

Number three – what changes do you need to make on how to approach your work and your wealth? What do you need to trust God with more? One of the things that Jason mentioned was this album that was written by these artists who wrote these songs about work. Just think about if we prepared our hearts every morning as we drive to

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work. What would it mean to have a spirit of worship when we walk into our work environment? Maybe that is what God is asking you to do.

Maybe what God is asking you to do is to forgive. Maybe you are the one that has been defrauded. Maybe you are the one who has suffered from the injustices of others. In James Chapter 5 and verse 7 he actually talks about this. We don't have the time to deal with it but he says: "***Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.***" We might not see justice happen on this side of eternity, but God cares about justice. He cares about our situations. Maybe part of trusting God with our work and our wealth means letting go of the hurts, letting go of the ways in which we have been defrauded and saying, '*God, I am going to trust you as the mighty judge knowing that one day you are going to come back and make things right.*' Maybe that is what it means.

Maybe it means that you have been successful in your business, successful in your career, and you have walked with God. Throughout this passage that we have talked about this morning you were saying '*Amen, Ben, Amen. God through my life over the last thirty or forty years has showed me this. He has taught me this. I learned how to do this.*'

Then let me just say this, maybe God has called you to not just keep that wisdom and that knowledge and that understanding to yourself, but to pass it on. We need godly business owners, we need godly career minded people who know how to bring their faith into their workplace and take other men and women under their wings and disciple them in the Kingdom of God to show them that this is what it looks like. There may be a twenty year old or a thirty year old in this room that says they don't know what it like to have God over their career and over their finances, but you know how. We need people who will stand up and to love people, to bring people along and to disciple them.

What is God asking you to do if He is Lord over your work and over your wealth? How are we going to live that out? What are we going to do this week?

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*