



A Love that Leads to Death

James 5:1-6

Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you
(James 5:6—KJV).

You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you
(James 5:6—NASB).

You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you
(James 5:6—NRSV).

We must never take a few verses of the Bible out of context from the whole Bible. If we had nothing more than a few verses of warnings from the Bible, truths that God designed to be save the ungodly, we might mistakenly condemn anyone who is rich and tell them God will someday bring miseries upon them and destroy all their rich possessions. Thankfully, we have the whole Bible and know that it is not being rich that is the problem; instead, it is what or who we love and how we use our gifts from God that make the difference. Some rich people have chosen to love and seek luxury, privilege, power, pleasure, and wealth. But those who love money will serve money, and as Jesus said they will hate God. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” Those who loved money and power arranged the murder of Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. Some rich people still murder the righteous ones who cannot or do not resist them. As followers of Jesus, we need to pray that He will restrain us from loving, seeking, and serving money and draw us into a closer and more loving relationship with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We need to teach truths from the Bible that will help others and us love God, stand firm in our faith in God, and enable us to warn those who love wealth and the things of this world so they too might turn to God, repent of their sins, cease to cheat or exploit others, place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and begin to faithfully follow God. The warnings in the Bible express God’s love for sinners and God’s efforts to save us from slavery to sin, keep us free from slavery, and give us eternal life.

Thinking Further

1. Is it wrong to be rich? Give a reason for your answer.
2. What can bring contentment to rich and poor (see 1 Timothy 6:6-8)?
3. How can a Christian rightly prepare for retirement or “the last days”?
4. What did James promise those who have been cheated?
5. In the New Testament, how was “the righteous one” condemned and murdered by the rich and powerful? Today, to increase their riches, do some still condemn and murder those who do not resist them?