

James 5: 1 – 6

'Response of the Rich'

Introduction ...

How do different groups of people describe their need for water?

It could be:

- Safe water to drink collected from their village well
- Enough water to irrigate their crops or slake the thirst of their animals
- Safe cold running water in their house:

to drink

to wash – themselves and their clothes

to have a flushing toilet

- Hot and cold running water in their home
- A shower and a bath, a downstairs and an upstairs toilet
- A Jacuzzi or a hot tub
- A Swimming pool

Where are you, where am I on that list?

On that hierarchy of needs or wants?

I suspect – a long way from “basic” and so – when we heard the opening words in our New Testament reading, I wonder how each of us reacted?

Are we rich?

James 5: 1: 'Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you ...'

Do we think that 'the rich' includes us ... or is about those who currently have more than us?

We are a rich country in comparison to many others ... and so for me, some words later in the passage from **James 5** rang more true than I would like them to:

Verse 4: 'Listen! The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out ... and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts.'

If we take those words and apply them to our own situations – what might God be saying to us? **PTO**

Let me suggest 3 things:

Standard of Living: The first is to do with expectations about our standard of living. We've had decades in this country during which our standard of living has gradually increased year on year. But this has not been true in all areas of the world.

Are we prepared to say that a fall in our standard of living is a good thing if others in much greater need benefit?

This links to two other areas ...

Fair Trade – in which we're already involved. Food costs and the costs of other goods – if Fair Trade – are often more expensive ... but wages of labourers matter. Buying Fair Trade essentials and cutting back on non-essentials ... is a Christ-like thing to do.

Then there's also

Caring for our environment – decreasing our Carbon Footprint.

This isn't merely a 'trendy issue' – it's becoming a matter of life and death for some ... with climate change bringing increased severe weather conditions. It's about losing your home for those on low lying islands. It's about failed harvests – with either drought or flood. And the impact is disproportionately on the poor nations of the world.

'Come now, you rich people ...'

What are we prepared to do?

Then Revd Judy asked us to spend a short time of reflection ...

Amen.