

A MASSIVE DIVIDE

Contributed by Jim Jordal
Thursday, 14 August 2014

A MASSIVE DIVIDE

By Jim
Jordal

“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming on you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be for a testimony against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you have kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Armies. You have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure. You have nourished your hearts….”

James 5:1-5
WEB, emphasis mine

A massive divide is opening in the U.S. between the top 1 percent of the economic pyramid and the remaining 99 percent of us. Recent figures show that the richest 400 Americans control more wealth than all 41 million African-Americans, and as of 2010 one percent of U.S. households own 35.4 of all our wealth. (Julie Polter, *The Rich Get Richer*, Sojourners, Aug. 2014).

The Bible

passage above describes the coming angst of the rich who gained their wealth at the expense of others as their wealth becomes a testimony against them. Think of the Wall Street bankers who gained wealth at the expense of millions of foreclosed homes and shattered retirement plans, but have yet to darken any jailhouse door. They thought they were laying up treasure for the future as their crooked policies created a few plutocratic families at the top of the heap while billions of hopeless, abject sufferers wallowed in poverty as powerless laborers for industry and cannon fodder for militarists. They are charged with living “delicately upon the earth” as they take their pleasure at the expense of others. And no one but a few watchmen crying in the night takes up their cause---not politicians, nor economists, not educators, and especially not most religious institutions and clergy. It’s tragic if you really think about it!

But the

cries of the laborers robbed of a living wage and good working conditions in the endless search for profits have been heard by God. As I've said before, it's not a sin to be wealthy, but it is egregious sin to gain wealth by manipulating finance, denying living wages to workers, or spending existing wealth to further rob and oppress the people.

The natural

tendency of business is toward monopoly and the natural trend of wealth is to beget more wealth. God said all along this would happen! The trouble is we aren't listening. We blindly pray for peace on earth when God says there will be no peace until justice triumphs. We pray for the poor, but keep supporting the political and economic policies that made them poor and keep them there. We pray for personal financial benefits as we refuse to honor God with what we do have. The sum and substance of the matter is that we pray for things that God can't and won't give us until we surrender our minds and wills to him.

Wouldn't it

be wonderful if American clergy across the land spoke out on the issues surrounding the existence of a supposedly people-controlled Congress elected by and operating to benefit, not the people, but a cabal of their wealthy corporate masters? They could begin by identifying exactly who is gaining and who is suffering as a result of recent legislation, and could go on from there using the literally thousands of Bible verses dealing with these situations.

How much

longer will it be until we make the connection between the worldwide chaos, destruction, and misery we now experience and the fact that God says this era of disaster is a direct result of our prideful and arrogant refusal to hear and heed God's word and will? It will not end until we as individuals and as a nation turn to God with all our hearts and wills. Until then, hang on!