

FAITH IN ACTION

The Power of Prayer

James 5:13-18

Prayer and Praise

James 5:13 (KJV) ¹³ *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

- James was a man that committed to prayer, prayer was central to his life
- James asks, “is anyone afflicted? Let them pray
- When we are going through a difficult season in our lives, we are to be praying
- When we are afflicted with challenges in life, we are to combat them by prayer
- We are to pray and seek God’s *presences, guidance, power, and strength* to help us walk through the difficult situation we’re facing
- Praying is the opposite of complaining, murmuring, blaming others and grumbling about our lot in life
- The text says, let *him* or the *suffering person* pray, suggesting we have a responsibility to pray during tough times in our lives **Psalm 50:15 (KJV) 15 *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.***
- When we’re faced with challenges and trouble in life, *we are to pray*, and God promises to rescue us and we will praise Him for it
- James also says when we are merry; things are going well with us, we are to sing psalms of praise
- God is the author of all things good and He should receive the credit
- We are not bragging about how wonderful our life is, but we are to be cheerful in the Lord
- James is giving the same instruction those that are *suffering* and those that are *cheerful; take it all to the Lord*
- These two commands can actually be *reversed*, where the suffering should praise God and cheerful should also pray

Prayer and Sickness

¹⁴ *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

- James asks, “is there any sick among you?”
- In verse 13 the believer going through a season of suffering had *the responsibility to pray* for themselves
- For those who are physically ill, they have *the responsibility to call* for the elders of the church
- The initiative is on the person who is sick to call for the elders of the church
- The elders of the church prayer over the sick and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord
- The Lord *alone* is the healer of sicknesses, we are not healed by our prayers nor by oil, but by the Lord

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- What does it mean to anoint with oil? In the Bible we see anointing with oil be used two ways:
 1. *Symbolically* – when a priest or prophet or king is anointed, it is a symbol of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit before they assumed a position of authority
 2. *Medicinally* – In Luke 10 the Good Samaritan poured oil as a healing agent into the wounds of the man left for dead on the Jericho Road. Oil in those days was the *best medical attention available*
- There are two vehicles for healing: *prayer and medicine*; and God works *in both* of them
- And the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick. Is James guaranteeing every sick person will be healed?
- No, we are to pray in faith expecting God will heal them, but it's all in the hands of God
- We are to humbly pray for the sick with confidence that they will be healed, and trust God for the outcome
- Some people will not pray in faith, just in case there is not healing out of concern for "God's reputation"
- All prayers are subject to God's will
- All healing comes divinely from God
- He is called *Jehovah Rapha* for a reason, He is *the God who heals!*
- James says if the person has committed sins, they will be forgiven
- Sometimes our sins are the cause of our sickness
- This doesn't mean all sicknesses are a result of sin, but it does mean God heals *both* soul and body **Mark 2:5 (KJV)**
- **5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**

Confession and Prayer

¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. ¹⁷ Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

- James says we are to *confess* our faults to one another and pray for one another
- Confession means to agree, it literally means to say the same thing
- Confession is the humility and the courage to call sin what it is; sin
- Does this mean as believers are to go around confessing all fault, failure to everybody in full detail?
- No.

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- When we sin against God, we are to make a *private* confession of our sin and ask Him to forgive us
- When we have sinned against another person, our confession is to be *personal*
- We are to go to directly to the person and ask for forgiveness **Matthew 5:23-24 (NLT) 23 “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24 leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.**
- We are to confess the hurt we’ve caused, injustices, lies we’ve told, how we’ve offended someone, or how our actions caused someone else to spiritually stumble, etc.
- Personal confession can be difficult because sometimes we feel the other person is the one who is wrong
- Confession removes the barrier to the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives
- When we confess our sins to one another, it creates an opportunity for us to pray for one another because confession produces compassion and compassion leads to intercession
- Confession lead to healing emotional, spiritual, and even physical healing
- James says, “*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*”
- And in every instance, James is saying prayer is *effective* in every case
- Prayer works when our prayers are:
 - *Effectual* - We prayer earnest, sincere, and humble prayers
 - We’re not trying to impress God with the words of our prayers nor the length of our prayers
 - You can pray effectively and your prayer be short **Matthew 6:7 (NLT) 7 “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.**
- *Fervent* - Speaks of the passion, the energy, the strength, the intensity of your prayers
 - This does not mean that it takes great emotion because God is reluctant or resistant to answering our prayers, but it touches God’s heart when we’re fervent about what He’s fervent about
 - When you are fervent in prayer, you don’t mind praying more than once if you don’t receive an answer
 - When we’re fervent in prayer, we discover a closer relationship with God was part of the answer
- *Righteous* – Righteous means right with God
 - Righteous means to be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ **2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT) 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned,**

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to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

- Righteousness is not only *being right*, it is also *doing right* 1 **John 3:22 (KJV) 22** ***And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.***
- They are people of God who love others, people of integrity, who live godly lives
- The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous person *availeth much*, their prayers have great power and produce wonderful results
- James uses Elijah as an example of the prayers of the righteous
- Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are; Elijah was human just like us
- Elijah had good days and bad days
- Yet Elijah prayed earnestly or fervently that it would not rain and it didn't rain for 3 ½ years
- Elijah prayed again and it rained and everything on earth started growing again
- ***The point is this: earnest and fervent prayer is effective; it works***