

June 08, 2024 - James 5:13-18 - "Fervent Prayer Avails Much".

### Introduction:

On February 15, 1947 a DC4 passenger plane heading to Ecuador, South America crashed into a 14,000 foot high Columbian mountain and fell thousands of feet into a ravine below. All the passengers were killed instantly. Glen Chambers was aboard that plane flying to Quito, Ecuador to become a missionary with the Voice of the Andes. This was his life-long dream to begin his ministry in missionary broadcasting. But he never arrived.

Before he left from the Miami airport he penned a quick note to his mother. All he could find for stationery was a page of advertising on which was printed the single word "WHY?" Around that word he hastily scribbled a final note. It went off into the mail and caught up with his mother a week after his death. She opened the letter and saw the word why printed below the note that her son had written. No doubt this was the questions on her mind. "WHY?"

It too was on the minds of James' disciples, of all the questions this is the most probing and taunting of them all. Something of this nature can produce doubt and even spiritual feebleness to the point of hitting rock bottom.

From verses 7 to 11, James was calling these dispersed, trouble and sorrowful Christians again to be faithful in persecution. They are in a continual situation of suffering and stress from hostility that can for some produce irritability, it can produce weakness. When we don't understand "why" it's possible for a believer to get angry to even sin with ones' mouth, to retaliate, to feel vengeance or doubt God...\*

The mature and growing Christian in this situation will make prayer a matter of priority. There is power in prayer when we pray effectively. James mentions 7 times in this book the matter of prayer. However, not everyone knows how to pray or to pray effectively.

A study released by the Barna Research Group of Ventura, California found their research suggests that many people pray without any sense of assurance that there is a living and powerful God who hears their prayers. For many Americans, prayer is like snacking - we don't really think about it, but we do it out of habit and without much passion.

James teaches us the power of prayer and that one's faith that is genuine prays believing. --- James 1:5-7

### I. The Power of Prayer -Verses 13-15

**1. All the verses from 13 to 18 are all about one subject, prayer. Prayer is mentioned in every single verse. James asks is any afflicted, that means troubled, enduring trial. He follows with any merry or cheerful. On the one hand you have a suffering soul and the other hand you have the happy soul. On the one hand you have the wounded broken spirit. On the other hand, you have the whole rejoicing spirit. One is singing praise, the other is pleading for comfort.**

**2. Then he asks is any among you sick? The Greek word for sick actually means "without strength" and its primary meaning is to be weak, to be feeble to be impotent. So what does James tell the weak to do? Pray, this is a passage on prayer. The believer is being called to patience and endurance must know who the resource of their deliverance is and pray. Wednesday evenings we spend time in prayer.**

**Second, if you've hit bottom, let him call for the elders of the church. This is referring to the church leadership, the pastors. We know the word elder can mean older individuals but among Christians, those who presided over the assemblies or churches of the NT the term pastor, bishop, elders, and presbyters are synonymous.**

**In this passage we see that the responsibility for initiating the process is with the sick / weak. Call on the spiritually strong, and draw on their strength. They are to come and pray directly over them. This means in the person's presence. You have a second directive; anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord." There are two words used in scriptures for anointing.**

**a. "Chrio"(cry-o) is where we get the word "Christos"; Jesus was the Anointed One. It is used only 5 times in the NT & refers to the anointing of Christ by God the Father with the Holy Spirit.**

**b. The word used here in James is "aleipho" and it means to rub with oil. In Biblical times, oil was used for its soothing and medicinal purpose. Oil was applied to external wounds. Remember it was one of the few medicines available in that day; a good example is the Good Samaritan story.**

**So, this is in a metaphorical sense. Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit and when an elder comes he anoints in a metaphoric sense the soothing oil of the Holy Spirit. The pastor or elder stimulates, encourage, calms one spirit, and provides strength to your weakness. So from a literal viewpoint you can see a persecuted Christian coming in whose body is broken because he has been attacked literally and physically for the cause of Christ.**

**You can also see a believer coming in who is wounded and broken and crushed in his spirit. On the one hand they might apply oil. On the other hand, they might encourage and love and strengthen and stimulate in the metaphorical sense. Today you see a doctor.**

3. It is a mistaken practice and false to think that this is speaking of a religious ceremony of putting a little oil on someone's head and they will be miraculously healed. Prayer and medicines go hand in hand. Trust God to use the doctor's etc. *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. Luke 5: 31*

The statement the Lord shall raise him up means that it is not the oil or the literal prayer that does the healing ... it is God.

In verse 15 we have the results of this ministry. The word "save" is the word, "sozo" it's to rescue and here it means to restore. It can mean to make well, heal, restore to health, to preserve, to make whole. This doesn't have to do with physical sickness. The prayer of faith will restore the weary. The prayer of faith does not always heal the sick. Note "and the Lord will raise him up." That means to rebuild. This is the word *egeiro*, (er-guy-row) to arise, to awaken, and to excite. The Lord will restore and excite and awaken. to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease,

5. Notice the last part of verse 15...if he's committed sins, they'll be forgiven him. You see, this proves that he is not speaking about a sickness or disease. Folks not all disease is related to sin. However, if your weariness or spiritual defeat is a result of sin, in that atmosphere of crying out to God and confessing God will forgive you. Prayers changes things, prayer changes lives, prayer grants us the protected power of God. However our prayers must be effective as James continues he mentions...

## II. The Hindrance to Prayer - Verse 16

1. The ability to pray successfully for the weak and feeble to be healed is conditioned upon the admission of our faults (to one another). James reminds us that mutual confession and prayer brings healing, both physically and spiritually. Confession can free us from the heavy burdens (physically and spiritually) of unresolved sin, and removes hindrances to the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. This involves others in prayer...you, the congregation. James 5:16 "*Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.*" The Bible is saying that to be able to successfully pray for one another for physical or spiritual healing is conditioned upon our willingness to confess our faults to one another. James 5:16 illustrates this principle. A.T. Robertson, the great Greek scholar, says that in James 5:16 the odd tense of the Greek verb confess in this verse implies group confession rather than private confession. It is confession "ones to others" not "one to one other." Confession can often be public.

## Conclusion:

**R. A. Torrey lamented the average believer's indifference to prayer by writing: How little time the average Christian spends in prayer! We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. This chapter highlights for us several things that prayer does, and they are basic for us to learn today. God works in the same way today as he did in these first century days, and he will respond to our prayers in very much the same way. That does not mean that everything we pray for will be granted. Sometimes God overrules our prayers. But prayer does other things as well, even when the things for which we pray are not granted.**