

Salt Church
James 5:12-20
“Righteous Prayers”
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The Fruit of Salvation

David & Cindy (They are home)

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Recap

James 5:1-11

- ***“If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.”***
- Some of the wealthy people in the early church were not paying their debts
 - They were refusing to pay those that had labored in their fields.
 - God heard the cries of the poor people and was now **warning the wealthy to pay their debts** lest He comes as the **Lord of Heavens Armies.**

- God also had instruction for those that were suffering
 - **Be patient** was a reoccurring theme
 - **Perseverance** is the expectation of the Lord
 - James reminded us of the prophets of old
 - All of them suffered for teaching the truth
 - All of them persevered
 - James also reminded us of Job
 - The one of the wealthiest men alive in his day
 - Also the most righteous man alive
 - He too suffered greatly
 - He persevered
 - And he was greatly rewarded

We closed with these reminders from James 5:

- **We all have a responsibility** to do what is right before the Lord
- **We all must be very patient** with each other
- **We all must remember** the prophets who were mistreated and murdered for speaking truth
- **We all must remember our brother Job**, his losses, his **perseverance**, and his reward.
- **We all must remember that The Lord Almighty comes to the defense of the defenseless.**

Now we come to the final sermon in the book of James

James 5:12-20

¹² Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “yes”

mean “yes,” and your “no” mean “no,” so that you won’t fall under judgment.

- Don’t over think this because I have already done it for you!
 - The Greek word translated “oath” is *omnuo*.
 - It means to take an oath or swear.
- Jesus had already taught this and James through the Holy Spirit was repeating it.
 - ***This means there was an issue within the early church.***

The rabbit hole:

In the Old Testament, making an oath (invoking God as a witness) was a recognized as a serious legal and personal practice:

- **Abraham:** Swore an oath to Abimelech regarding a peace covenant and water wells at Beersheba (Genesis 21:23–24).
- Later, he made his servant swear an oath concerning finding a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:2–3).
- **Jacob and Laban:** Made a covenant and swore an oath by their respective deities to mark their border boundary (Genesis 31:53).
- **Joseph:** Made his brothers swear an oath that they would carry his bones out of Egypt when God delivered them (Genesis 50:25).
- **The Israelites and Joshua:** Swore an oath to spare Rahab during the fall of Jericho (Joshua 2:14), and mistakenly swore an oath of peace to the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:15).
- **King Asa and Judah:** Entered into a covenant and swore an oath with a loud voice to seek the Lord with all their heart (2 Chronicles 15:12–15).

None of those oaths were considered to be sin.

New Testament Context

- In the New Testament, Apostle Paul took religious vows, and Paul frequently called God as a witness to the truthfulness of his statements (effectively acting as an oath, as seen in Romans 1:9 and 2 Corinthians 1:23).
- Jesus himself responded under oath during His trial (Matthew 26:63–64).

The Rub!

- **Jesus said these words:**

Matthew 5:33-37

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **You must not break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord.** ³⁴ But **I tell you, don’t take an oath at all:** either by heaven, because it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, because it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Do not swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one.

What do we do with that?

What do we do with Hebrews 6?

Hebrews 6:13-18

¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself: ¹⁴ **I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply you.** ¹⁵ And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham

obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For people swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a confirming oath ends every dispute. ¹⁷ Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, **he guaranteed it with an oath,** ¹⁸ so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us.

What do we do with all of that?

- What Jesus is forbidding here?
- Jesus is forbidding the flippant, profane, or careless use of oaths in everyday speech.
- In that culture, such oaths were often employed for deceptive purposes.
- To make the person being victimized **believe** the truth was being told, the Jews would swear by “heaven,” “earth,” “Jerusalem,” or their own “heads” **but not by God,** **hoping to avoid divine judgment for their lie.**

Jesus' point:

- All the things that were sworn by are in God's creation, therefore drawing the Creator into the oath.
- **Jesus suggested that all our speech should be as if we were under an oath ALL OF THE TIME and to tell the truth.**

James will shift from oaths to prayer

13 Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises.

- So far, so good.
 - Easy to understand and easy to agree with.
 - Suffering people should pray to God the Father
 - Cheerful people sing praises to God the Father

14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Context is KING!

- Questions that need answers:
 - What does James mean by sick?
 - What does James mean by anointing with oil?
 - What should be our expectation if these things are done according to God's Word?

Let's start with the word "anointing"

The primary Greek words for anointing and to anoint in the New Testament are *chrío*, *aleipho*, and *chrisma*.

- *chrío* (χρίω): A verb meaning "to anoint" or "to smear/rub with oil". It is used in a sacred, ceremonial, or religious sense for divine appointment and consecration (such as God anointing Jesus with the Holy Spirit). This root gives us *Christos* (Christ), meaning "the Anointed One".
 - *Jesus Christ* = *Jesus the anointed One*

- *aleipho* (ἀλείφω): A **verb** meaning "to rub or smear with oil". It is typically used for the ordinary, physical act of greasing the body, face, or hair for daily hygiene, mourning, or medical care (such as anointing someone who is sick or preparing a body for burial).
 - *Medicinal purposes*
- *chrisma* (χρῖσμα): A **noun** meaning "anointing" or "unction". It refers to the figurative or spiritual endowment of the Holy Spirit given to believers, found specifically in 1 John 2.

1 John 2:20-21

²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

1 John 2:26-27

²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in Him.

Now that we have the three words used for “anointing” we must look to the Greek to see which one was used:

aleipho (ἀλείφω): A verb meaning "to rub or smear with oil". It is typically used for the ordinary, physical act of greasing the body, face, or hair for daily hygiene, mourning, or medical care

Now we must determine the context in which it was used by looking at all of chapter 5:

1. Rich people were sinning by not paying the poor laborers
2. There was encouragement for those mistreated by the rich sinners
 - a. James said to cry-out to the Lord and trust that He will intervene on their behalf
3. ***“Remember those that have suffered”*** especially the prophets and consider their perseverance as a motivator as well as their ultimate reward.
4. ***“Do not grumble about each other for the Judge is standing at the door”***
 - a. The reminder that grumbling and gossip are very serious sins to the Lord
5. ***“Stop lying by taking oaths that mean nothing”*** but let your yes be yes and no be no.

So, the context that has led us to this verse is dealing with sin.

- We must also remember that the entire book of James has been very practical and not mysterious at all.

So with all of this in mind let's look at this verse again keeping the context as king:

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

We know that this Greek word used for anointing is the Greek word aleipho which means to rub oil for medicinal purposes

- not chrio which has to do with the kind of anointing that you would do when you install a king.
- Nor is it chrisma which is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So we must then ask the question is this person physically sick or spiritually sick?

- I think this person is both.

Can sin make you sick?

- Absolutely!!!!

Psalms 32

- King David (A man after God's own heart) writes these words under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 32:3-6

³ When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. ⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. ⁵ Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. ⁶ I said to myself, "I will confess

*my rebellion to the Lord.” **And you forgave me!** All my guilt is gone.*

Consider (David again)

Psalms 38:1-8

¹O LORD, don’t rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage! ²Your arrows have struck deep, and your blows are crushing me. ³Because of your anger, my whole body is sick; my health is broken because of my sins. ⁴My guilt overwhelms me— it is a burden too heavy to bear. ⁵My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins. ⁶I am bent over and racked with pain. All day long I walk around filled with grief. ⁷A raging fever burns within me, and my health is broken. ⁸I am exhausted and completely crushed. My groans come from an anguished heart.

- Clearly, we see from the Old Testament that sin can make you physically sick.

This same concept is also supported in the New Testament

1 Corinthians 11:27-30

²⁷ So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. ²⁹ For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating

and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

- **WOW!**

So when we read verse 14

*¹⁴ Is anyone among you **sick**? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, **anointing** him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

- We come to a rational conclusion
 - Since James has been **very practical** so far
 - Since he has been speaking to the church about **ongoing sin** within the church
 - Since we understand that **unconfessed sin** can and will bring about **physical sickness**,
 - **we can understand this verse to mean the following:**
 - These people are sick because they **refuse to confess** their sin
 - **They are so sick** that they cannot leave their homes
 - James says call for the elders (not doctors) why?
 - **Because this is a sin issue!**
 - James says that the elders are to pray over them because this is **their primary need**.
 - It is the elders job to ask the sick person if there is **any unconfessed sin**.
 - I have been a part of these type things and the very 1st question that must be asked before any prayers

happen is “**is there any unconfessed sin in your life?**”

- Why?

- Because without confession there can be no forgiveness, no healing.

- Now, once the confession has happened the elders pray for the healing of their brother.

But it does not stop there as the elders are called to “aleipho” which means to rub oil for medicinal purposes

- Do practical ministry in the rubbing of oil. (WHY?)
 - This was a form of medicine in James day
 - They would mix herbs and other natural things that helped in the physical healing process.
 - This is why James used the Greek word *aleipho* and not the word *chiro*.
 - Practical teaching that has been misunderstood.
 - So many what to make it mystical, it is not!
 - It is as practical as giving someone medicine.

Now James is going to express the result of confessing your sins:

¹⁵ The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

- Notice what the scripture says
 - It says faith will save the sick person, not heal!
 - Some of your Bible may have translated it heal but the Greek word is “sozo”

sózo (from sōs, "safe, rescued") – properly, *deliver* out of danger and *into safety*; used principally of God *rescuing* believers *from* the penalty and power of sin – *and into His provisions (safety)*.

¹⁵ The prayer of faith will **save** the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, **he will be forgiven**.

- James is giving instruction about dealing with sin!

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be **healed**.

Greek word: iaomai

Pronunciation: ee-ah'-om-ahee

- healing, particularly as supernatural and bringing attention to the Lord Himself as the Great Physician (cf. Is 53:4,5).

- So when we confess **there is a physical healing process** that **can happen**.

- This makes sense to me because living in sin creates **tension with God**, His church, and with righteous people.

- Tension = stress
 - Stress = health issues
 - SO PRACTICAL!

James follows that sentence with:

The prayer of **a righteous person** is very powerful in its effect.

- “The prayers of a **righteous person**”
 - It is extremely important to me that I convey to you that this is **not only describing church elders or leaders**.

- This is describing a **Christ follower**.
 - Righteous means right living according to God
 - Why would the prayers of a righteous person be so powerful?
 - Because the greatest form of worship is **OBEDIENCE!**
 - **THIS IS how we say to God our Father, we love Him and trust Him.**
 - **That He** is the most important being in our lives.
 - **He loves that** and He desires to give us what we ask for as long as it is according to His will.

For years I have said to everyone that I serve as pastor, daddy, husband, son, friend, or boss, that my “YES” is on the table for you until it can’t be.

- I want to say yes but not at the cost of sin.
 - Now, I didn’t come up with that saying.
 - ***It is how I see God as my Father***
 - ***His yes*** is always on the table for me as long as it is not sin, or if it is not good for me, or does not interfere with his plans for me or those that I have influence.
 - Its **Romans 8:28** lived out in trust and obedience.

“The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.”

- **Our prayer life is more than making request to God.**
- I don't think this is conveyed from the front of the room as much as it should be so allow me to express it now.
- **Prayer is communion with God**
 - We speak to him through prayer
 - ***But how does He speak to us?***
 - Through the Bible, that is why it is called God's Word.
 - God speaks through His word.
 - A righteous person learns how to be a righteous person from the words of God.

The great prophet Elijah understood this:

¹⁷ Elijah was a human being as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.

- ***James knows his audience***
- They know who Elijah is and they remember him as one of two people in the Bible that did not die but was taken to Heaven by God.
 - **Why did God honor his prayer for no rain for 3 ½ years?**
 - Yes, he was a righteous man
 - Elijah's relationship with God the Father was so wonderful so close that He knew what God wanted to do in that situation so he prayed God's will and God's "yes" was on the table!

What is James doing in this last chapter of his letter?

- **He is calling Gods people** to confession and repentance
- **He is calling Gods people** to prayer and the study of God's Word.
- **He is calling Gods people** to communion with God the Father.

James knows that this church is in trouble and the cure for this sickness is not:

- Better branding
- Seeker friendly Sundays
- Better music
- Shorter sermons
- Better children's and youth programs
- It's not better buildings

The cure for the church is:

- Prayer that produces
 - Confession
 - Repentance
 - Restoration
 - That motivates the study of Gods Word
 - Healing both physically and spiritually
 - And discipleship which includes accountability!
 - This cure still works almost 2,000 years later!

¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let that person know that

whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

- That is so powerful and so serious
 - **This is a matter of life and death**
 - This is the **difference** between being healthy and being sick
 - **This is being** the SALT and the Light of the earth.

In the end the book of James has taught us this:

- Church is not a perfect place filled with perfect people
- Church is a group of people who are in process
- The church is the bride of Christ who has many flaws but has been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit:
 - It is through this power of the Holy Spirit that the following can happen:
 - We can endure trials and tribulations
 - We can resist temptation
 - We can ask for wisdom and expect to receive it
 - We can be quick to listen and slow to speak
 - We can learn to control our tongue and not gossip or grumble
 - We can learn not to show favoritism
 - We can allow our faith to produce good works
 - We can come near to God and enjoy His love
 - We can love each other and do what is right
 - We can become patient and therefore persevere to the end
 - We can restore the sinful brother but loving them through the power of God's Word.

What am I trying to say?

Its starts with us!

- May we be who God has called us to be!
- May we make much of **His great and glorious name!**
 - So that someone's soul will be turned from death and their multitudes of sin will be covered by the precious blood of Jesus.
 - So that they will be healed physically and spiritually
 - So that they will come to know the supremacy of Jesus Christ
 - Jesus the Anointed One!

Close in prayer