

## The Faith That Moves us to Invite Others into Our Restoration

**Part I Blind Beggar Lady in Gaut.** *The lady, was blind, lame, and sitting off to the side of a main street in Antigua. Thousands of people would pass her on a typical day. She soft and unobtrusive in her appeal (Por favor, para mi familia, para mis nietos – por favor.) Begging comes in many forms – loud and intrusive, silent but unavoidable, - soft but painful. It was very soft – but it was very painful because – well her physical condition, that she was on the street all day – and most of all because she was alone – pained me.*

*Beggars stir many emotions in us- who believe we would never beg or hope we will never have to.* There is a powerful and convicting thought that relates to this idea begging or pleading in the beginning of our passage today. Hear it with me.

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

pray - to keep on asking, petitioning, pleading – even begging!

God all through this passage urges us to plead – bc he is our only hope **IN ALL SITUATIONS**, whether we are suffering or in joy as v 13 says. In suffering, in pain – he urges us to plead – to beg before Him. Why? Is he moved by our pleading and moved to answer our prayer? God has no formula for prayer. No – he is not moved by our pleading - but by our pain. We – were not suppose to be in pain. He is moved. So he tells us – its ok to **PLEAD** when you are hurting, *truth – please come and plead to me, & all through this passage – he says plead together.* Why? Because prayer invites us into someone and something great together. Main truth today-

**Pleading with God together - we join together in God's restoring work.**

01. Pleading together = intimately and powerfully joining Gods restoring work.

02. Fear - leads to no pleading together.

03. Trusting that God's full pleasure rests on us - leads to pleading together.

01. Pleading together = intimately and powerfully joining Gods restoring work.

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Pleading together with God can involve hurting together and rejoicing together.

BUT – the focus seems to be on hurting together.

14 Is anyone among you sick? 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.

- Elder led prayer for the sick is one of the ways we can plead together. **Why elders, oil, faith?**
  - Elders lead this to bring clarity to the truth about praying for the sick. *(Not bc they have powers.)*
  - Anointing with oil connects the sick with the body and reminds them of God's presence which alone brings healing. *Sick were cast out and avoided. Here the sick are welcomed – to reach out.*

15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up ...

- The "prayer of faith" is directed toward those praying - not the sick.

**GOD still heals.** *I have seen cancers removed, chronic headaches disappear, sick babies on the verge of death revived, and on and on. God still heals – and he says we are to pray for Him to heal. We are to pray in faith - faith in the power of the resurrection of Jesus which has conquered all death and sickness. One day – healed!*

**However –** *On this earth, He does not heal every sickness to our broken bodies. You could be healed eight times from death but there will be a time God allows you to die – and you will not die because you are old. You will die because God allows it. This is God's truth. When you are healed – God allows. When you die – God allows.*

Elijah. 1) Pray – it is God's sovereign plan. 2) Right in Christ. 3) Normal guy. 4) In Faith.

16 ... The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

We pray for healing because God allows – but I want you to notice; God's healing is about more than restoring our body that will one day die on this earth. His healing is even more so about restoring our soul. 15 And the prayer of faith ... And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. How we do this?

\* People ask the elders or at times – we ask them if we can pray for them. *Doesn't matter who initiates.*

\* We ask the person to invite friends and read through James 5 and see if God is using this sickness to reveal sin. ***We are not sick because of sin.*** John 9 – Jesus said, ***“it was not that this man sinned or his parents but that the works of God might be displayed.”***

\* When we get squeezed by the crush of suffering or pain – what is inside comes out. If we are full of bitterness, hatred, anger, disdain for God or others – it will come out. ***Ballon with shaving cream in it.***

\* **When sin is revealed – we ask the person to confess to the group before we pray for them.**

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

- Confession of sin – is part of God’s plan for the healing / restoring of our soul.

No where in scripture does God say – you are sick because you sinned.

***Your specific disease is not punishment. God is not mad at you. That was poured out on JESUS.***

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, ...

And it is in Jesus we find our healing – our restoration for our body and soul.

***and with his wounds we are healed.*** When we are all together – and its time to pray. This is how we do it.

1) We all PLEAD with joy for God’s spiritual healing/restoring He is doing in our friend’s soul.

2) We all PLEAD for God to heal/restore our friend’s body. ***BECAUSE ...***

Pleading together for our sick friend – intimately and powerfully joins us together in God’s restorative work. ***So please, let me or one of the elders know if you want us to pray with you.***

- Confession of sin - pleading with God together for our soul’s restoration - is a gift to all believers not just the sick. ***This is a clear prescription for praying for the sick – but it applies to all.***

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

Do you have someone to plead with God for you and with you? Do you have others you plead to God for them? ***This is why we live in CG’s and DNA groups***

- Community Groups – 10-20 people who live out our mission. We do 3 things: Gather, Grow, Go.

***This past week Scott Cumbie led our group as we prayed for the sick in our group and as we confessed sin about our impatience and desire to want vengeance or control.***

- DNA Groups – 3-4 people from a CG where we Grow together helping each other be restored in Christ. ***I hear of great things happening in the groups that have been started. We have about 40 people meeting in DNA groups that I know of. Many more have been trained but I think many of you have just not started to meet. The whole purpose of these groups is to allow for us to plead together in an intimate setting so we can powerfully join together in God’s restorative work. If you want to be a part of one and you have been through training – form a group and contact me. We want to get you a coach to help. If you want to be a part and do not have training – contact me. We will get you trained.***

Pleading together for our sin – intimately and powerfully joins us together in God’s restorative work. ***This is God’s call but often the reality is – we often don’t plead with others before God.***

***Why? Why do we often struggle to pray together in meaningful ways?***

## 02. Fear - leads to no pleading together.

There are many fears that can keep us from pleading together but here are two that drive many of us that I think God has been addressing as we have gone through James together.

- **Fear of being found out – keeps us from pleading together.**
  - ***we don’t know how to pray*** (Is this you – you don’t want to look silly or be seen as immature so you are walking through pain alone?)
  - ***we believe we are sick and afflicted because this is some kind of punishment and we don’t want others to know*** (Is this you – do you believe you are someone you love is being punished and the fear of being found out is leaving you to walk through this pain alone?)
  - ***our weaknesses and sins will be exposed*** (Is this you – the thought of confessing before another – would be as awful as begging on Mid River by the mall.)

*I hid in the bushes after school one day because I had been sent to the principal's office for disrespecting a teacher. Probably there for 30 minutes but it felt like 5 hours. I was afraid of coming home and getting my dad to sign the paper I needed him to sign that explained my rebellion at school. Fear of being exposed makes us hide. It will keep many of us in pain – alone.*

- Fear of being hurt – keeps us from pleading together.

- **we are afraid of our prayers not being answered and the shame this will bring** (We believe to some degree God's healing/restoring physically and spiritually is completely up to us. Failure – means we are a failure – and the way others could respond fills us with fear. Is this you?)
- **we fear having our pain, our brokenness used against us** (Is this you – have you been harmed by others who spread your weakness or sin around? Are you afraid of what others can do to you?)

Fear will keep us alone, from pleading together and joining in God's restoring work.

*In every social survey in the last 5 years – where people are asked what are their top desires for their lives, in the top three every time is to have real and meaningful relationships. Yet when they are asked to describe why they don't have these relationships – most say they have been hurt in their close relationships in the past. We all long to be connected with others in something meaningful – yet fear keeps us away.*

**So many people, so many of us are living our lives and painful moments alone.**

**How do we unite and plead together before God joining His restoring work? Last thought ...**

### 03. Trusting that God's full pleasure rests on us - leads to pleading together.

Our fears are great – and they keep us from others – from pleading together. Something greater must come against them. God's love given to us in Christ – is more powerful than my fears. Truth: **My fears are overwhelmed when I trust in God's full pleasure in me.** What do we base this on?

- The cross of Jesus-leads me to see I have been exposed-but "found out" as pleasing to God.

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

**At the cross I am exposed for all my rebellion. My sin was exposed for all to see.**

**At the cross, God's merciful justice laid my sin on Jesus.**

**At the cross – I am exposed as sinful – but found out as pleasing because of Christ's work.**

*I loved being with my boys, always have. When they were little – wrestle daddy was our favorite time. Wrestle daddy is not so practical now bc it hurts, but through the years – even though there has been many times we get on each other's nerves, various different things have become our favorite way to be together. Why – because even as a broken human dad – I take such great pleasure in them even at 18 and 16. I mean – I really do.*

**Much more so at a much grander level – I have begun to believe that because of the cross - my Heavenly Father loves to be with me.** He is pleased and takes great pleasure in me – a sinner, a broken man, a man who often runs from pleading with others – is the pleasure of my Father's eye. Do you believe this? Do you believe you are the pleasure of God's eye bc of Jesus.

Ephesians 3:17-19 (ESV) 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, ...Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

**This pleasure moves me to be with others – even others who could potentially reject me, ridicule me to others, or just be disappointed in me. How?**

- When I trust that God's pleasure rests on me in Christ – it empowers me to move past my fears to plead with others. **We all wrestle with fear – but when that fear comes – God says, "look to the cross and see my pleasure in the midst of your exposure. Trust, ask me to help you believe that my pleasure is greater than your fear of being found out – it is and will crush. Trust ask me to help you believe that my pleasure is greater than your fear of being hurt."**

*God is not asking you to trust that others will not hurt you. They are broken like you and will hurt us. God is asking you to trust him that His pleasure of us is greater than the pain. Let this move you to plead w others.*

## CLOSE

*We had passed the lady begging in the Antigua street at least twice when someone in our group stopped and looked back and said hold on. Another guy from our group named Justin had sat down with her. In the middle of this crazy busy intersection – he just sat on the dirty busy sidewalk – right next to her and began praying with her.*

Faith in Christ's work moves us past our fears to plead with others. *A powerful truth.*

But something else happened here this day. Justin finished praying and then motioned us to go on. He sat there and as best I could tell – just softly and painfully joined the lady in pleading, begging for her and her family. **And as he did – something powerfully intimate happened that let us all experience Jesus.** Not many more words were shared – just two people setting together pleading. She was no longer alone.

Faith in Christ's work moves us from being alone to joining others in God's restoring work.

The most painful thing that had affected us all that day was not her physical condition or her pleading. **The most painful thing to us all was that she was alone – when Justin sat down for about an hour she was not alone.**

**One of our biggest pains and fears – is being alone, especially through pain.**

Sister - God hears your cry – He sees your suffering in your sickness. Brother – God hears your cry of confession and he sees the pain of your sin. Friend – he hears you praying for your daughter, your friend. He is not far, being silent, or mad at you. **THE CROSS – proves pain is never wasted. All Jesus' pain was so you could be reconciled to God – God is not mad – and so you would never be alone.**

**We can come now and plead before the Father in Jesus' perfect work and he hears and he is here!**

**GOD HAS ESTABLISHED PRAYER – SO WE WOULD BE WITH GOD AND OTHERS.**

**And as we pray – WE ENTER INTO HIS GREAT AND GRAND RESTORATION PLAN.**

Pleading with God together - we join together in God's restoring work.

## PRAY TO CLOSE

We usually move into a time of communion to respond to God's work in Christ. Today – we are going to pray together instead. I am going to ask you to do something that will require us trusting in Christ's work.

- 1) I am going to ask those of you who need prayer – you are someone you know is hurting – to raise your hand.
- 2) I am going to ask those around you to pray for you. You don't need to be an elder or deacon to pray for someone. Just a few of you go to the person – ask how you can pray and pray.
- 3) LET'S PRAY!