

## THE PRIORITY AND POWER OF PRAYER, Part 2

James 5:13-18

<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; <sup>15</sup>and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. <sup>16a</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.

The \_\_\_\_\_  
of prayer

<sup>16b</sup>The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

The \_\_\_\_\_  
of prayer

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

### ① We are to pray in all the seasons and circumstances of life (v. 13)

v. 13 - *Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray.* (pray in the \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances of life)  
*Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.* (pray in the \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances of life)

In times of \_\_\_\_\_, pray.

In times of \_\_\_\_\_, praise.

This is James' way of saying:

- *pray at all times* (Ephesians 6:18)
- *pray without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

**The main point:** Every circumstance in life (the highs and the lows and everything in between) is intended to drive us to God in prayer.

### ② We are to pray in \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ (vv. 14-16a)

- What is the true nature of this person's problem? [the diagnosis]
- What is the solution that James is proposing? [the prescription]
- What is the outcome that James is predicting? [the prognosis]

## VIEW 1

### The Diagnosis: Physical \_\_\_\_\_

#### v. 14a - *Is anyone among you sick?*

- *sick* (astheneō)
  - In the Gospels, *astheneō* always refers to physical illness (Mt. 10:8; 25:36, 39; Mk 6:56; Luke 4:40; John 4:46, 5:3, 7; 6:2; 11:1, 2, 3, 6)

This is not just any physical sickness; this is a \_\_\_\_\_ physical illness.

#### v. 14b - *Then he must call for the elders of the church*

- Implies that he is physically unable to go to them

#### v. 14c - *and they are to pray over him*

- This pictures someone confined to his bed and that the elders are gathered around him, praying over him

This is not just serious physical illness; this is when the seriously ill believer suspects that his illness is the result of divine \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ sin.

#### v. 15c - *if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him*

- Apparently, this person suspected that God sent illness as a discipline for his unrepentant sin
  - 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 - <sup>27</sup>*Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. <sup>30</sup>For this reason many among you are weak and sick...*
- An illustration (vv. 17-18)
  - v. 17 - *Elijah...prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months* (an act of divine \_\_\_\_\_ on God's people).
    - In response to God consuming the altar with fire on Mt. Carmel, the people *fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."* (1 Kings 18:39)
  - v. 18 - *Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit* (to lift the divine chastening)

Connection: Divine physical chastening (drought) because of sin → repentance → Elijah prays → chastening was lifted → rain brought physical healing

**The Prescription:** Call for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church

**vv. 14c - *He must call for the elders of the church***

What are the elders to do?

**v. 14d - *and they are to pray over him***

- What are they to pray?
  - For genuine repentance from the sin involved
  - For divine healing

**v. 14e - *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord***

- *they are to pray* (main verb) *over him, anointing* (participle) *him with oil*
  - v. 15 - *and the prayer offered in faith* (not the oil) *will restore the one who is sick*

- What is this anointing with oil?

1)

- Luke 10:34 - *He came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them*

2)

- The Roman Catholic sacrament of \_\_\_\_\_  
(or \_\_\_\_\_)

3)

- An outward, physical expression of concern and as a means to stimulate the faith of the sick person

4)

- In the OT and NT, anointing was frequently used to symbolize the consecration of a person or thing to the use and service of God

**The Prognosis:** \_\_\_\_\_ and divine \_\_\_\_\_

**v. 15 - *and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.***

- The sick person has already demonstrated his faith by calling the elders to come and pray, but because of his repentant heart and the elders' prayer and faith, God acts

## Application

1. If you are seriously ill and you think it's because of divine chastening on your unrepentant sin, then call the elders to come and pray
2. If you are in a \_\_\_\_\_ serious sickness, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another
  - v. 16a - *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.*
  - Richard Mayhew - *“For lesser spiritual problems and less established patterns of sin, this was most likely how they were to keep a short account with God and prevent deterioration in a life-threatening situation.”*
  - Repent before it becomes an object of divine chastening in your life
3. Every time we are sick, we must turn to God in \_\_\_\_\_, even if we don't think it is a result of our \_\_\_\_\_
  - We should have an appreciation for medicine and doctors, but not to the point that we trust in them, and lose sight of the reality that God is our healer
  - 2 Chronicles 16:12 - *In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians.*
  - Alec Motyer - *“Even when we go to the doctor, our eyes are to the Lord. He alone can heal. There is no such thing as non-spiritual healing. When the aspirin works, it is the Lord who made it work; when the surgeon sets the broken limb and the bone knits, it is the Lord who has made it knit. Every good gift is from above! On no occasion should a Christian approach a doctor without also approaching God.”*

## Summary of View 1: Physical Sickness

When you are sick...	
v. 13	Pray
v. 16a	Ask others to pray with you even if you don't think your sickness is connected to your sin
vv. 14-15	If you think your sickness is connected to your unrepentant sin, then follow the process outlined (repent and call on the elders to pray for you).  Why?
v. 16b	<i>The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.</i>

## VIEW 2

**The Diagnosis:** Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_

**v. 14a - *Is any among you sick?***

- *sick* (astheneō)
  - In the gospels, it always refers to physical illness
  - In the epistles, it refers to spiritual weakness in 13 out of 16 occurrences

**Q:** So how should *astheneō* be translated here in v. 14?

**A:** We must look at the \_\_\_\_\_

**Q:** What is the context?

**A:** James 5:1-13 is about \_\_\_\_\_ people (not sick people)

**Q:** What is the source of their suffering?

- A:** \_\_\_\_\_
- vv. 1-6 The wicked wealthy were withholding their wages and unjustly taking them to court
  - v. 7 *Be patient (with people) until the coming of the Lord*

**v. 15 - *and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick* (kamnō)**

- Hebrews 12:3 - *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary (kamnō) and lose heart.*

What kind of weakness would prompt someone to call upon the elders for prayer?

- John MacArthur - *“James moves beyond the suffering believers of the previous point (v. 13) to address specifically those who have become weak by that suffering. The weak are those who have been defeated in the spiritual battle, who have lost the ability to endure their suffering. They are the fallen spiritual warriors, the exhausted, weary, depressed, defeated Christians. They have tried to draw on God’s power through prayer but have lost motivation, even falling into sinful attitudes. Having hit bottom, they are not able to pray effectively on their own. In that condition, the spiritually weak need the help of the spiritually strong.”*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:14 - *We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*
- Hebrews 12:12-13 - *Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.*

**The Prescription:** Call for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church

**vv. 14c-d - *He must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over them***

**Q:** Why are the elders to be called? (1 Tim. 3)

**A:** They are the ones who are/should be the spiritually strong, consistent, victorious (Titus 1)

- John MacArthur - *“Weak, defeated believers are to go to them and draw on their strength. [There is no such thing as a pastor who is perfect or who has ‘arrived,’ but...] “The elders ought to be strong in the Lord so that wounded, exhausted, broken sheep can go to their shepherds who will intercede for them and ask God for renewed spiritual strength on their behalf.”*

**v. 14e - *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord***

- Spiritual encouragement, refreshment, and healing
  - Isaiah 1:4-6 - *Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.*
  - Psalms 23:5 - *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.*
  - Psalms 92:10 - *But You have exalted my horn (strength) like that of the wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil.*

**The Prognosis:** Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_


**v. 15 - *and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick*** (weary)

- ***restore*** (sōzō) = “to save” or “to rescue”
  - 28 times in the NT it is used “to deliver from physical distress”
  - 28 times in the NT it is used “to deliver from spiritual distress”
- ***and the Lord will raise him up*** (egeirō) = “to arouse” or “to awaken”
- ***and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.***
  - He may have disobeyed James 1:2 to “consider it all joy when you encounter various trials”

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

- This is a command to the \_\_\_\_\_:
  - Don’t wait until you hit rock bottom. Instead, maintain a relationship with other believers in a way that you are always praying for one another.
- ***confess your sins to one another***
  - Don’t \_\_\_\_\_ your sin
  - As long as it is in private and secret, you can nurse and nurture and feed it
  - Proverbs 28:13 - *He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper; but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.*
  - God wants it open and out and exposed among people who love you

**The point:** Don’t let yourself get to the point of spiritual weakness, driven by your sin, because you never \_\_\_\_\_ with it.

- ***confess your sins to one another and pray for one another***  We need each \_\_\_\_\_  
We need \_\_\_\_\_
- ***so that you may be healed***
  - ***healed*** (iaomai) = “healed” or “make whole” (physical or spiritual)

## **Summary of View 2: Spiritual Weakness**

v. 13a	If you are suffering, then pray.
vv. 14-15	If you hit bottom from the spiritual battles of life (compounded by your own sin), go to the elders who will come alongside/comfort/encourage and pray for you. God will lift you up and forgive your sin.
v. 16a	To prevent you from getting to that position share your burdens, confess your sins, and pray for one another so that you’ll faithfully deal with issues in your life.

## James 5:14-16a

<sup>14</sup>*Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;* <sup>15</sup>*and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.* <sup>16a</sup>*Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.*

### PHYSICAL SICKNESS

### SPIRITUAL WEAKNESS

#### Contextual Study

A command to pray in all circumstances

- v. 13 - *Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.*

A command to pray in a specific circumstance

- v. 14 - *Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him.*

James' letter begins (1:2-12) and ends (5:1-13) with trials

- James calls Christians to "consider it all joy when they encounter various trials" (1:2)
- James calls Christians to get help because they are not responding to trials with joy (v. 14-16a)

5:1-13 - James' audience is suffering at the hands of the wicked wealthy who defrauded them of wages and unjustly took them to court

5:7 - *Be patient (with people) until the coming of the Lord*

#### Lexical Study

v. 14 - *Sick* (astheneō)

- In the gospels, all 13 times it refers to physical sickness

v. 15 - *restore* (sōzō)

- 28 times in the New Testament it is used "to deliver from physical distress"

v. 16a - *healed* (iaomai)

- physical healing or spiritual healing

v. 14 - *Sick* (astheneō)

- In the epistles, 13 out of 16 times it is translated "weak"
- In the epistles, *astheneō* is always qualified (e.g. "weak in faith", "weak in conscience", etc.)

v. 15 - *restore* (sōzō)

- 28 times in the New Testament it is used "to deliver from spiritual distress"

v. 15 - *Sick* (kamnō) = weary

v. 16a - *healed* (iaomai)

- physical healing or spiritual healing