

## GOD IS CALLING US FROM LONELY SUFFERING TO UNITED HEALING

*<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16a</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

### UNITED BODY

- God gives us a place to go when we are suffering, discouraged, guilty, or sick. To each other.
- Satan wants to sever and isolate into loneliness or pockets of bitterness. God's spirit and word push us back towards one another.
- If we are a connected body (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12), then there should be within our community a healthy awareness of everyone's suffering.
  - This makes us nervous because we don't want to overshare or be a burden to others.
  - I don't think we are at risk of this. Much more at risk of harboring bitterness, suffering alone, not confessing sin, and not living in healed relationships.

### UNITED CONFESSION

- We are not Catholic or Orthodox, therefore we do not have a regular practice of confession.
- We believe that Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and that we, as the royal priesthood, can approach the throne boldly in Christ.
- However, we have largely lost the art of confession, and until it is recovered we will continue to live in shame and darkness.
  - Not everyone needs to know everything, but some people need to know things so that you may be freed and prayed for.

### UNITED HEALING - Damage done by proclaiming absolutes and certain cases as universal. Mosaic that makes up the truth.

- Sick without sin
  - We live in a fallen world, and sickness is a huge part of that brokenness - this is not our home.
- Sick because of sin
  - *1 Corinthians 11:29–32 - <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup>That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup>But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.*
    - Sometimes your sickness might be a form of judgement or refinement from the Lord, it's true; with a heart to preserve and strengthen your soul.
    - Sometimes this one is spiritual, but sometimes we make it harder than it needs to be.
      - If you are covering up a secret, you will be more anxious, and this will affect your health.
      - If you are given to gluttony of food or drink, eating and drinking in excess will affect your health.
      - If you are numbing your pain late into the night with screens, your sleep and your health will suffer.
- We do not need to be paranoid and fear-mongering Christians. Nor should we think he is completely uninvolved.
- We should receive any and all sickness, pain, or ailment as the reminder that it is: we are not all powerful, we are not all knowing, we are not all wise.
  - Sickness and weakness is an opportunity for us to search our hearts and to turn away from all sins, especially identity/dependency

*Grant Osborne - As seen throughout the Gospels, Jesus healed both physically and spiritually, and the same double connotation may be present here as well. James is not teaching that all illnesses will be healed if people would simply call on the elders, or try to make themselves have enough faith, or pray with enough conviction. Healing, when it does come, is always a gift from God, who is sovereign over all circumstances, including sickness and health. It does not follow, therefore, that lack of faith on the part of the sick person is the reason that the sick person may not be healed.*

- Tension - God heals, faith doesn't. However, God honors, in his ultimate control, the persistent, passionate prayer of those who love him.
- Not all healing is immediate. Sometimes it is ultimate. Sometimes God joins with you as you walk in a new chapter. Again, the goal is wholeness (shalom). What good is physical healing without a changed heart? Jesus commands the opposite - breaking your body if it's causing you to sin!

James is pushing us away from temporal comfort and convenience and towards deeper soul rest and the relational connection we were created for.

## GOD IS CALLING US FROM DOUBTING INDEPENDENCE TO POWERFUL DEPENDENCE

*<sup>16b</sup>The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

- He didn't just pray that it wouldn't rain, he did much more at this time. Let's go down this rabbit trail.
- Ahab rules over Israel, "did more to provoke the Lord than all the kings before him."
- Elijah - no more rain, declares the Lord

### THE WIDOW & HER SON

*1 Kings 17:17-24 - <sup>17</sup>After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup>And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" <sup>19</sup>And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup>And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" <sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." <sup>22</sup>And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup>And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." <sup>24</sup>And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."*

Three years go by...

### THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

*1 Kings 18:36-39 - <sup>36</sup>And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." <sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. <sup>39</sup>And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."*

- The point still remains and is further proven - he was a man with a nature just like us (NLT - as human as we are), but had an expectancy to his prayer.
  - He was just like us, but for most of us he did not have a faith like us. "He prayed with prayer" - paraphrase - "he really prayed"
  - God hears fervent prayer. This can sound like works. God is not a genie, but James has been calling us to a living faith.
  - Many of us pray like God isn't real.

I'm done living this way.

You can call me naive, you can call me radical, you can call me over the top, but I'm done with lukewarm and I'm done with passive prayer.

I want to talk to God like he's alive and like I expect him to act, not on my command, but in communion with his son.

Press in to the lord and expect much, wait on the Lord in rest and trust much. Faith must be expanded in both directions!

Cloud like a man's fist.

## GOD IS CALLING US FROM SELF-CENTERED TO SELF-SACRIFICE

<sup>19</sup>My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,

<sup>20</sup>let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Sometimes people are in sin and they aren't sick, nothing is stopping them, and they don't seem to care.

Prevents the wanderer from further sins. Faith in action, the whole book of James.

*Gordon Poteat - A Christian church is not a social club with an exclusive membership; it is open to all on the sole terms of repentance. Neither is it simply an ethical culture society for the self-improvement of its members. It is the reconciling agent of the kingdom which knows no boundaries; it is the servant of the abundant love of God which is for all peoples. He "reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). If a church in its rank and file does not function in this manner, then it is recreant (unfaithful or cowardly) to its high mission. Too many church members either have no faith to share or else lack enthusiasm to share it. They are willing to delegate that responsibility to the paid employees of the church. Perhaps they no longer believe that it is a matter of life and death, as James believed; no longer believe that to wander from the truth is disastrous.*

- We can't make people believe. We can't make people repent. We can't make people change.
- So there likely comes a point when we've reached the end of what we can do for a person.
- We have given counsel, we have pleaded, we have reasoned, we have offered help, and they are content to remain unchanged.

So what do we do? Give up, grow bitter, roll our eyes when we talk about them? No... we pray, for our hearts and for theirs.

Anytime we press into these questions, doubt can come out.

*1 Kings 17:13-16 - <sup>13</sup>And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup>For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.' " <sup>15</sup>And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup>The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.*

I believe we have been settling for less. God has been kind and has been providing, but rain is coming, and we want it.