

FAITH THAT WORKS THROUGH PRAYER

James 5:13-20

Eyanrin, Sunday (Evangelist)

Introduction

The study of the Book of James has been wonderful and Educative. Last week, our Brother, S. Ogumor (elder) took us through a comprehensive analysis of Chapter **5:1 – 12**, starting with warnings to the rich, who will soon “*weep and howl for (the) miseries that are coming on (them),*” because the Lord has heard the cries of the laborers whom the rich have defrauded. He also gave us examples of Faith during afflictions, using Abraham and Sarah, the afflictions of Job were not left out and others.

Today, we will be concluding this remarkable Book of James, learning great things, on the topic: **FAITH THAT WORKS THROUGH PRAYER - JAMES 5:13 – 20**. In this concluding part, James emphasizes prayer, confession, and the value of redeeming those who have wandered from the truth.

JAMES 5:13-15 – THE PRAYER OF FAITH

13 Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises. 14 Is any 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, 15 and the prayer of faith will heal him who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

“Is any among you suffering? Let him pray” (v. 13a). This verse has a prescription for both ends of human emotion. If suffering, pray. If cheerful, sing praises. The suffering of which this verse speaks could be physical, emotional, or circumstantial (such as being sick or homeless). The antidote is prayer, not only for God to solve the problem, but also for the strength and grace to bear it.

“Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises” (v. 13b). Being cheerful depends as much on us as on our circumstances. Some people are perpetually gloomy, and others always have a smile on their face. Body chemistry has something to do with that. Some people are naturally sunny, and others not. But habits make the difference.

Apostle Paul’s prescription for this is:

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

“Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders (Greek: *presbyteros*) of the Church” (Greek: *ekklesias*) (v. 14a). “and let them pray over him” (v. 14b). The first duty of the elders to the sick is to pray. James gives no instruction regarding the content of such prayers. Prayers for physical healing, emotional well-being, and spiritual discernment are all appropriate.

“anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (v. 14c). Olive oil was the most common, and was used for purposes both secular (food, lamp fuel, and medicinal ointments) and religious (anointing kings, priests, prophets; tabernacle/temple uses; purification rituals; and offerings and sacrifices). James doesn’t give details regarding the type or quantity of oil to be used—or where it is to be applied. He says only that the anointing should be done *“in the name of the Lord.”*

In *Exodus 30:22-25*, Moses gave a recipe for anointing oil that included myrrh, cinnamon, cane, cassia, and olive oil that produced a batch of about a half-liter (one quart). It was to be used only for holy purposes and would have served for many applications. Early in their ministry, the twelve *“anointed many with oil who were sick, and healed them” (Mark 6:13).*

“and the prayer of faith will heal (Greek: *sozo*) him who is sick” (v. 15a). It isn’t simply the prayer that opens the door to healing, but *“the prayer of faith.”* The word *sozo* can mean heal, but it can also mean save. Perhaps James intends his readers to understand both as true. He says that the sick person, if a sinner (which all of us are) will be forgiven.

“and the Lord will raise him up” (v. 15b) “If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (v. 15c). Spiritual healing is as important as physical healing. Prayers of faith can accomplish both.

JAMES 5:16-18 – CONFESS YOUR OFFENSES AND PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

16 Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn’t rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 He prayed again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.

“Confess (Greek: *exomologeō*) your offenses (sins) to one another” (v. 16a). The word (sin) means offense—missing the mark with regard to failure to meet the standard. Our sins are by their nature sins against God, but they are also sins against our neighbors or fellow-brethren.

Confession of sin can be (1) to God alone, (2) to the person against whom we have sinned, (3) to a spiritual adviser, or (4) to the entire church .

“and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective” (v. 16b). Now James returns to the theme of prayer, which permeates this entire passage. Keep in mind that prayer is the second step of a two-step process, the first step being confessing to one another.

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn’t rain on the earth for three years and six months.

He prayed again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit” (vv. 17-18). James uses the example of Elijah to illustrate his contention that the prayers of a righteous person have great power.

JAMES 5:19-20 – TURN HIM BACK & SAVE A SOUL

¹⁹ Brothers, if any among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The (truth) is that which is real, unadulterated by falsehood. There are different kinds of truth. A person who avoids telling lies will gain a reputation as truthful. That is critical to our Christian faith. Jesus promised, “If you remain in my word, then you...will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32).

The promise is that, when people stray from the faith and we help them to find their way back to faith, we will have helped to save their souls from death. Obviously, this is referred to as Spiritual death. Beloved, do you see your brother or sister going astray? James says you must do something to bring him or her back to faith and save that Soul from eternal death.

The promise is also that turning a sinner from the error of his ways “*will cover a multitude of sins.*” (1 Timothy 4:16)

Conclusion

Beloved, are you a brother or a sister going astray from the faith? Were ever you are listening to this message; all hope is not lost. God is calling you to return to Him, and He will forgive you your Sins. Are you a friend/ visitor worshipping with us for the first time? The Lord is calling you. Why not come to the Lord now.

Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “*Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall*

be as wool. (Isaiah.1:18) My friend, Remember, tomorrow may be too late, why not now?

Beloved, now that you have heard this message, repent and come back to the Lord, be Baptized for the remission of your Sins and you will be saved. (**Mk.16:16, Acts.2:36 – 42 & vs 47**).