

Prayer and Restoring the Erring Brother [James, pt. 11] (James 5:13-20)

Michael L. Riddle

1. We conclude our study of the book of James this morning with James 5:13-20 where James deals with the importance of prayer and singing in various circumstances of life, as well as restoring erring brethren.
2. The end of a practical book urging us toward greater faithfulness

Discussion:

I. PRAYER (James 5:13-18)

A. Outline of this section

1. A time to pray and a time to sing psalms (:13)
2. Praying about illness (:14-15)
3. Praying for each other (:16a)
4. The power of prayer (:16b-20)

B. A TIME TO PRAY AND A TIME TO SING PSALMS (:13)

1. If we are suffering (afflicted, in trouble of any kind) – pray
 - a. Command to rejoice always, count it joy when we fall into trials (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16; Js. 1:2, etc.)
 - b. Sometimes we are troubled and need help – the solution: prayer for strength and encouragement
 - Zerr – “When a disciple is met with these trials, he should be in the frame of mind that would lead him to go to God in prayer for strength and encouragement”
 - c. Don’t be anxious but take your troubles to the Lord (Phil. 4:6) who hears our prayers (Js. 5:4; Lk. 18:6-8)
 - i. Pray continually (Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17)
 - ii. Pray for strength (1 Pt. 5:7)
 - iii. Pray for the removal of the suffering if God wills (2 Cor. 12:8)
 - iv. Pray for those causing our suffering (Lk. 6:28)
2. If cheerful (we aren’t suffering or have laid our burdens on the Lord and have received comfort and we are filled with cheer) → sing Psalms (praise God!)
 - a. Consider the Psalms (Ps. 96:1-2; 98:1-3; 113:1-3; 147:1)
 - b. A way to express thanksgiving (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16)
3. BOTH are important! (We are often more ready to pray when troubled than to sing when cheerful) – we ought to be “Prayerfully patient in adversity and thankfully happy in prosperity”

C. PRAYING ABOUT ILLNESS (:14-15)

1. If you are sick (physical ailment, feebleness of the flesh)
2. Call for the elders of the church (each church should have them – Ac. 14:23; Titus 1:5)

3. Let them (elders) pray over them – a much neglected responsibility of elders... why them? Righteous? (c.f. :16b)
 - a. And anoint with oil in the name of the Lord
 - i. Healing properties in oil/comforting to the sick? (**Luke 10:34; Mk. 6:13**)
 - ii. ‘symbolic’ for the healing power of the Lord? (miraculous healing done without oil by Jesus and the apostles sometimes)... or just a custom of the time?
 - iii. Either way, prayer is the primary focus here and elsewhere in the text prayer is the emphasis!
 4. The prayer of faith will save the sick
 - a. They must pray trusting in the Lord’s power to heal the sick, IF it be His will to do so (c.f. **Js. 1:5-8**)
 - b. The Lord will raise him up (if it is His will) – sometimes He doesn’t heal us as we wish (Paul – **2 Cor. 12:7-10**)
 - c. IF he has committed sins, he will be forgiven – conditional ‘if’ - though the sickness is physical, the prayer can heal us spiritually as well via forgiveness -NOT saying that physical illness is related to our sins, though sometimes this is the case.
- D. PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER (**:16a**)
1. Confess your trespasses to one another – seek forgiveness (preferably before they need to confront you about it – **Mt. 18:15-17**)
 2. Pray for one another – for spiritual healing, strength, encouragement, etc., thanksgiving for forgiveness and restoration of the relationship
 3. That you may be healed – forgiveness of sin, reconciliation
- E. THE POWER OF PRAYER (**:16b-18**)
1. The type of prayer which avails much
 - a. Effective, fervent – active, whole-hearted prayer
 - b. of a righteous man – must be righteous for God to hear our prayers (**1 Pt. 3:12; Heb. 11:6; Prov. 28:9; Mt. 7:21**)
 2. Example
 - a. Elijah (**:17-18; 1 Kg. 18:41-46**)
 - i. A man with nature like ours – he was an “ordinary” human – with the same physical limitations, emotions, etc.
 - ii. He prayed to God and God provided his request twice – he was a righteous man who prayed earnestly (// fervent :16)
 - We don’t have his prayer recorded, but are told here it was through prayer
 - We see man has NO power over the weather, but God chose to respond to his effective fervent prayer.
 3. Other Examples
 - a. Joshua → sun stood still (**Josh. 10:12-13**)
 - b. Hezekiah → Delivered from the threat of Sennacherib and the angel slaid 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (**2 Kg. 19:14-19; Is. 37:21,36**)
 - c. Hezekiah → life extended (**2 Kg. 20:1-6**)

d. Jerusalem church → Peter released of prison (Ac. 12:5-10)

II. RESTORING ERRING BRETHREN (James 5:19-20)

- A. If anyone among you wanders from the truth
 - 1. Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin – Heb. 3:12-15
 - 2. Wanders from the truth we were brought forth by – Js. 1:18
 - 3. Drawn away by human wisdom – Js. 3:14
 - 4. Any darkness in us – 1 Jn. 1:5-7
- B. And someone turns him back
 - 1. Gal. 6:1-2 – the responsibility of the spiritual, carefully restore
 - 2. 2 Tim. 2:24-26 – seek them out and be firm but gentle
 - 3. Mt. 18:15-17 – if they wrong us personally, follow this
 - 4. Turns him back – converts him, repentance, induce them to turn away from sin and back to the path of truth
- C. When we turn a sinner from the error of his way (recognize the error, bring it to their attention to get them to repent of their sin and turn back to the truth)
 - 1. Save a soul from death – those who wander from the truth are destined for hell – Rom. 6:23; 2 Pt. 2:20-22; Heb. 10:26-31
 - 2. Cover a multitude of sins (when you bring them to repentance, God forgives their sins and blots them out – Ps. 103:12)
 - 3. REJOICE!! When this happens – Lk. 15:7

Conclusion:

- 1. How are we doing?
 - Do we pray when we are troubled?
 - Do we sing Psalms when cheerful?
 - Do we seek prayer when we are ill?
 - Do we confess our trespasses to one another and pray for each other?
 - Are we working to restore those who have wandered from the truth?
- 2. Is thy heart right with God this moment?
- 3. If not, why not come back to Him today?