

“Prayerful Till Christ Comes”

James 5:12-18

Pastor John Miller

I. Introduction

- A. If ever a man was qualified to speak on prayer, it was James
 - 1. “But if any of you lack wisdom...” (James 1:5)
 - 2. “...you have not because you ask not” (James 4:2)
 - 3. At the conclusion of his letter, he mentions prayer seven times in six verses
- B. Perhaps you have a hard time identifying with James
 - 1. You may be more like Peter (sleeping instead of praying)
 - 2. Jesus said, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1)
 - 3. Remember, James has just exhorted us to be patient till the Lord comes (vv. 7-11)
 - a) The farmer, the prophets, Job
 - b) Patient till He comes
 - c) But now, prayerful till He comes
 - 4. A real faith is patient and prayerful in all circumstances of life
 - a) Like a car without fuel is a life without prayer
 - 5. James calls us to pray
 - 6. When should we pray? In times of:
 - a) Suffering
 - b) Joy
 - c) Sickness
 - d) Spiritual darkness
 - 1) “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

II. In Times of Suffering or Sorrow (James 5:12-13a)

- A. He first tells us what not to do
 - 1. “Don’t swear” (v. 12)
 - a) What does he mean by “swear not?”
 - b) It covers the use of profanity
 - 1) (Ephesians 4:29)
 - c) It primarily forbids frivolous oaths
 - 1) (Matthew 5:33-37)
 - d) It is a call to reverence and truthfulness in our speech
 - 1) When you suffer, don’t swear
 - 2) Better to turn to God in prayer
 - 2. “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray” (v. 13)
 - a) “Afflicted” means “any kind of trouble or misfortune”
 - 1) Illustration- King Hezekiah
 - 2) “Casting all your cares...” (1 Peter 5:7)
 - 3) “Don’t worry about anything” (Philippians 4:6)

III. In Times of Joy (James 5:13b)

- A. “Is any merry? Let him sing psalms” (v. 13b)
 - 1. The Christian life is not all sorrow
 - a) The believer in Jesus has great joy
 - b) The word “merry” means to “be cheerful” or “to be in good spirits”
 - c) “Is anyone in a happy mood?”
 - 2. It’s an easy time to forget God when you are joyful
 - a) The danger of forgetting God when life is good
 - 3. “Let him sing psalms” (v. 13)
 - a) To strike a chord
 - b) It is a sign of a Spirit-filled life
 - 1) (Ephesians 5:18-20)
 - c) “I will bless the Lord at all times...” (Psalm 34:1)
 - 1) Do you praise in good times and bad times?
 - d) Illustration- Acts 16- Paul and Silas in prison

IV. In Times of Sickness (James 5:14-16a)

- A. “Is any sick among you?” (v. 14)
 - 1. Christians do get sick
 - a) We live in a fallen world in an unredeemed body
 - b) Sickness came into the world because of original sin
 - 1) Personal sin
 - c) Personal sin is not always the cause of sickness
 - 1) Illustration- Job, Paul, Timothy
 - d) Sometimes personal sin is the cause of sickness
 - 1) “If he has committed sins” (v. 15)
 - e) The steps:
 - 1) The sick person should call (v. 14)
 - 2) Who should he call?
 - a. “The elders” (v. 14)
 - 3) What do the elders do?
 - a. “Let them pray over him” (v. 14)
 - b. “Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord”
 - c. One action
 - d. Why the oil?
 - i. “...in the name of the Lord” (v. 14)
 - ii. In his authority
 - iii. For His glory
 - 4) How should they pray?
 - a. “And the prayer of faith” (v. 15)
 - b. “In faith”
 - 5) The promise (v. 15)
 - a. Does God always heal?
 - i. No
 - ii. “According to His will” (1 John 5:14)
 - iii. Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12)
 - iv. It’s a sin that caused sickness (v. 15)
 - 1. (1 Corinthians 11)

V. In Times of Spiritual Darkness (James 5:16b-18)

- A. Elijah was a prophet of God called at a very dark time in Israel's history
 - 1. The wicked King Ahab and Jezebel
 - a) (1 Kings 17-18)
 - 2. At times of national apostasy, it is time to pray
 - 3. The power of prayer (v. 16b)
 - 4. The person who prayed (v. 17)
 - a) Elijah was a man just like us
 - 5. "He prayed earnestly" (v. 17)
 - a) "He prayed with prayer"
 - b) "He really prayed"
 - 1) "The rain stopped for 3.5 years" (v. 17)
 - 2) God used a man just like us
 - 6. "And he prayed again" (v. 18)
 - a) (1 Kings 18)
 - b) How he prayed:
 - 1) Based on God's promises
 - a. "I will send rain"
 - 2) It was definite
 - a. For rain
 - 3) It was humble
 - a. "He cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees"
 - 4) It was expectant
 - a. "He said to his servant, go look toward the sea"
 - 5) It was persistent
 - a. "Go again seven times"
 - 6) It was answered
 - a. "There was a great rain"
 - b. "The Heaven gave rain"
 - c. God answers prayer
 - d. There is power in prayer
 - e. Jesus is coming again
 - f. When He comes, will we be found praying?
 - i. (Luke 18)
 - ii. (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

VI. Conclusion

- A. When should we pray?
 - 1. Sad times
 - 2. Glad times
 - 3. Sick times
 - 4. Dark times
 - 5. "Thou are coming to a King, Large petitions with thee bring, For His grace and power are such, None can ever ask too much." – John Newton

6. “The effectual prayer...” (v. 6)
7. Let us pray until Jesus comes!