

Today, ~ We'll Finish Looking ~ At James' Instructions ~ Regarding Prayer, ~ 5: ~ 13-18.

In the context of James' closing exhortations, ~ vv. ~ 13-20.

▶▶2 Topics

▷▷1<sup>st</sup>, ~ instructions concerning prayer, ~ vv 13-18. ⇔⇔ Vv ~ 16-18 today.

▷▷And 2<sup>nd</sup> topic, ~ restoring a wayward believer, ~ vv 19-20.

Outline Instructions On Prayer, ~ Vv 13-18 ~ This Way. ⇔⇔ Vv ~ 13-15 ~ last wk.

James begins ~ by commanding prayer ~ for a variety of possible situations.

▶▶Suffering, ~ rejoicing, ~ & sickness, ~ vv 13-14a.

▶▶3 rapid-fire ques. ~ each one followed ~ by a command.

▷▷Proper course of action.

Next, ~ James provides more extended instructions ~ ¶¶

▶▶concerning ~ how the elders should care ~ for believers who are sick, ~ vv. 14-15.

▶▶Procedure, ~ prayer & anointing w/ oil. 1/13

▷▷ Oil ~ symbolizes 3 things.

↳↳ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ oil ~ is medicinal ~ and ~ is associated with joy.

→→ And so provides a natural symbol for healing.

↳↳ 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ anointing with oil ~ symbolizes the power and presence ~ of the Holy Spirit.

→→ So that the joy of healing ~ is connected with the work of the Spirit.

↳↳ And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ in the OT, ~ anointing with oil ~ symbolizes that ~ ¶¶

→→ something is set apart ~ as belonging to the Lord.

↳↳ The person who is anointed with oil ~ belongs to God, ~ meaning ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that God ~ is responsible ~ for taking care of them.

▶▶ 2 things of note in these extended instructions.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ within the promise of healing, ~ there is an important ~ but unstated ~ condition.

↳↳ Namely, ~ leave room for the will of God.

▷▷ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ included a comment ~ on the relationship ~ between sin and sickness.

↳↳ The conditional clause ~ **If he has committed sins** ~ makes it clear that ~ ¶¶

→→ not all sickness is caused by sin. ⇨⇨ **But also shows ~ some definitely is.** 2/13

Moving on in the outline, ~ encourages believers to confess their sins to one another ~ & ~ ¶¶

▶▶to pray for each other, ~ v. 16.

After that, ~ James points to Elijah ~ as an example ~ ¶¶

▶▶that the prayer of a righteous person is powerful in its effect, ~ vv 17-18 (1 Kings 17:1; ~ 18:41-46).

Again, ~ today, ~ vv 16-18.

### Vv. 16-18 Wrap Up James' Discussion On Prayer.

In vs 16a, ~ James encourages believers to ~ confess their sins to one another and pray for each other.

▶▶And i.e., ~ for the purpose of healing, ~ James says.

▶▶Vb tense for both vbs for confess & pray ~ emphasize ~ habitual ~ practice.

▷▷Therefore, ~ make it ~ your habit ~ to confess your sins to one another ~ and ~ ¶¶

↳↳to pray for one another, ~ so that ~ you may be healed.

▶▶As a consequence of the promise ~ that God ~ responds to prayer and forgives sin (vv. 14-15), ~ ¶¶

▷▷believers should be committed to habitually ~ ¶¶

↳↳confessing our sins to one another ~ and ~ praying for one another. 3/13

▶▶ 3 interesting observations come from this verse.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ the entire church is to be involved in this praying.

↳↳ It is not confined to the elders.

↳↳ While it is appropriate ~ that those charged with the spiritual oversight of the church ~ ¶¶

→→ should be called to intercede for those seriously ill, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ James makes clear that ~ all believers ~ have privilege & responsibility ~ to pray for healing.

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup> interesting observation

↳↳ Again, ~ the power to heal ~ appears in the act of praying, ~ not ~ ¶¶

→→ in the elder or the other one praying.

▷▷ And the 3<sup>rd</sup> interesting observation.

↳↳ The significance of the order of the commands ~ must not be missed.

↳↳ Confession ~ then prayer.

↳↳ Why?

→→ Is. ~ 59:2 (NIV), ~ But your iniquities have separated ~ you from your God; ~ your sins ~ have hidden his face from you, ~ so that ~ he will not hear. 4/13

→→And Ps. ~ 66:18, ~ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, ~ the Lord would not have listened.

↪↪To get our prayers ~ heard & answered, ~ confession 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ prayer 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Break vs 16a down.

Confess your sins to one another.

▶▶Vb form implies ~ full and open confession.

▷▷Acts ~ 19:18 (NET), ~ Many of those who had believed came forward, ~ confessing ~ and making their deeds known.

▶▶(16a) The mention of healing ~ at the conclusion of vs 16, ~ ¶¶

▷▷and the previous vs dealing with prayer for the sick, ~ ¶¶

↪↪make it likely ~ that the sins to be confessed ~ are those which have caused illness.

▶▶Since the intent of the confession of sins ~ is to experience physical healing, ~ ¶¶

▷▷it seems best to refer the command ~ to the confession of sins ~ which may hinder healing.

▶▶The confessor of sins ~ is seeking healing ~ by the act of admitting sins.

▷▷Placed so close to the discussion of prayer for the sick, ~ this verse likely ~ ¶¶

↪↪has its primary application ~ in confession of sin ~ by people who are sick. 5/13

▷▷ However, the application ~ is easily extended ~ to confession of sin ~ 77

↳↳ in any of life's situations.

▶▶ The confession of sin entails ~ humble honesty ~ about the fact ~ of having committed sin.

▷▷ It is not ~ a public retelling ~ of the details of the act.

▶▶ This way of confessing sin ~ can be detected in the classic text of OT confession, ~ Ps. 51.

▷▷ Ps. 51: ~ 1-2 (NIV), ~ Have mercy on me, O God, ~ according to your unfailing love; ~ according to your great compassion ~ blot out my transgressions. ~ 77

↳↳ Wash away ~ all my iniquity ~ and cleanse me ~ from my sin.

▷▷ Curiously, ~ the subtitle adds this detail.

↳↳ When the prophet Nathan came to him ~ after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

↳↳ But this subtitle ~ is not ~ a part of the psalm itself.

▶▶ (16a) Furthermore, ~ this confession of sin ~ 77

▷▷ seeks to secure faithful prayer support for stumbling Christians ~ 77

↳↳ from trusted & spiritually mature friends. 6/13

▷▷ It is not urging ~ a careless confession ~ to just ~ anybody.

▷▷ Such a type of confession ~ might cause ~ more harm than good.

▷▷ It is confession ~ to ~ dedicated, trusted prayer warriors ~ who will intercede for us with God.

James continues in vs 16a.

▶▶ And pray for one another.

▶▶ We note again ~ that all believers in the church, ~ not only the elders, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ are encouraged to take part ~ in the ministry of intercession.

▶▶ Specifically ~ for the cure of bodily afflictions.

▶▶ Applies generally as well.

▷▷ Intercessory prayer is to be a part of our lives.

▷▷ In Eph. 6, ~ Paul exhorts to ~ always keep on praying for ~ all ~ of the Lord's people.

▶▶ The command to pray ~ is connected to the command to confess ~ with the conjunction ~ and.

▷▷ This suggests ~ that confession and prayer are two activities ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that are to be performed ~ together. 7/13

▷▷IOW, ~ James isn't advocating ~ confession one day, ~ and prayer the next.

▷▷He intends both actions ~ to be executed together.

↪↪They are ~ complementary ~ activities.

▷▷Prayer ~ is the appropriate follow-up response ~ to the confession ~ of one's sins.

▷▷And again, ~ the order ~ is crucial.

Next in vs 16a, ~ purpose of confession and prayer.

▶▶That you may be healed.

▶▶In packaging the 2 commands ~ as a unit, ~ the subsequent purpose clause ~ 77

▷▷is rightly understood ~ as bearing a relation ~ to both commands.

↪↪I.e., ~ both confession and prayer ~ are part of the process ~ for healing.

▶▶The Lord is, ~ of course, ~ the agent of healing.

▷▷Confession, ~ prayer, ~ and believers ~ are simply channels ~ through which the Lord works.

▶▶Again, ~ this is not a guarantee that physical healing will take place.

▷▷Once more, ~ the understood but unspoken condition is ~ if the Lord wills, ~ he will heal the person. 8/13



▷▷ What James is no doubt saying then ~ is that ~ confession & prayer ~ 77

↳ ↳ removes a major hindrance on our part ~ to God healing us ~ if ~ he so chooses.

▶▶ Now, ~ physical healing ~ is the primary focus here.

▷▷ Yet, ~ with confession of sin being encouraged, ~ the additional sense ~ 77

↳ ↳ of restoring the spiritual health of the sick believer ~ cannot be ruled out.

▷▷ And, ~ certainly, ~ spiritual healing ~ is guaranteed ~ every time ~ we sin and then repent.

↳ ↳ 1 Jn. ~ 1:9, ~ If we confess our sins, ~ he is faithful and just ~ to forgive us our sins ~ and ~ to cleanse us ~ from all unrighteousness.

↳ ↳ And Ps. ~ 32:5 (NIV).

→ → Then I acknowledged my sin to you ~ and did not cover up my iniquity. ~ I said, ~ "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." ~ And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Verse 16 concludes ~ with a reminder ~ of the great power of prayer, ~ 77

▶▶ providing a fitting capstone ~ to the exhortations to pray ~ in vv. 13-16a.

▷▷ Vs 16b (CSB), ~ The prayer of a righteous person ~ is very powerful ~ in its effect.

▶▶ The righteous person ~ is simply the believer. 9/13

▷▷ I.e., ~ the person ~ who is righteous ~ ¶¶

↳↳ by virtue of receiving forgiveness through Jesus ~ ¶¶

→→ and is therefore part ~ of the people of God.

▷▷ Prayer, ~ James wants to make clear, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ is a powerful weapon in the hands of even ~ the humblest believer.

▷▷ It does not require ~ a super saint ~ to wield it effectively.

▷▷ It does require, ~ however, ~ that confidence in prayer ~ that we've talked about before.

▶▶ A complicated Greek construction.

▷▷ Open to interp.

↳↳ Trans various ways.    ⇔⇔ Line up w/ majority.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ grammatically, ~ means prayer is very powerful ~ in its working, ~ or ~ in its effect.

▷▷ Reason I agree is that ~ James' follow-up illustration supports this view.

↳↳ The focus ~ of James' illustration of Elijah ~ is on the effect ~ of a believer's prayer.

▷▷ (CSB) The prayer of a righteous person ~ is very powerful ~ in its effect. 10/13

▶▶ Understood here but not stated.

▷▷ Not the prayer ~ but God.

↪↪ Powerful in its effect ~ because God is the One who is answering.

▶▶ Understood but unstated condition.

▷▷ The prayer of a righteous person ~ is able ~ to be very powerful in its effect.

▶▶ Phrase, ~ very powerful in its effect.

▷▷ The results of prayer ~ are often greater ~ than we think possible.

▷▷ That's because ~ we have ~ a great and generous God.

▷▷ God's grace ~ is like an ocean ~ that is infinite ~ both in depth and size.

▷▷ Can never be exhausted.

▷▷ And he delights ~ in causing his grace ~ to overflow into our lives.

▷▷ Let us approach the throne of grace ~ with boldness, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ so that ~ we may ~ receive mercy ~ and find grace to help us ~ in time of need.

Vv. 17-18 (NIV) ~ offer illustrative proof ~ that ~ the prayer of a righteous person ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is very powerful ~ in its effect. 11/13

▷▷ NIV: Elijah ~ was a human being, ~ even as we are. ~ 77

↪↪ He prayed earnestly ~ that it would not rain, ~ and it did not rain on the land ~ for three and a half years. ~ 77

→→ Again he prayed, ~ and the heavens gave rain, ~ and the earth produced its crops.

▶▶ Elijah, ~ James says, ~ was as human as we are.

▷▷ He had no ~ superhuman powers.

▷▷ He was ~ no super-saint.

▷▷ As evidenced ~ by the aftermath of his triumph ~ over the prophets of Baal.

▷▷ He was by nature ~ a human being ~ and nothing more.

▶▶ And yet ~ when he prayed earnestly ~ that no rain would fall, ~ none fell ~ for three and a half years!

▷▷ Then, ~ when he prayed again, ~ the sky sent down rain ~ and the earth began to yield its crops.

▶▶ The explanation ~ of his power in prayer ~ is twofold.

▷▷ #1, ~ he was a believer.

▷▷ And, ~ #2, ~ he prayed earnestly.

↪↪ I.e., ~ he was ~ sincere & very serious ~ in prayer. 12/13

▶▶ So James assures his readers ~ that such answers to prayer ~ 77

▷▷ are within the reach ~ of any believer.

▶▶ The key was not ~ that Elijah was ~ a super saint.

▷▷ The key was ~ that he prayed ~ sincerely, ~ seriously, ~ and ~ with utter confidence in God.

### What An Awesome Blessing We Have.

We can talk ~ with our heavenly Father.

▶▶ And we can come ~ boldly ~ at any time ~ to the throne of grace.

▶▶ Doesn't need our prayers ~ to accomplish his purposes ~ or to provide our needs.

▷▷ But he involves us. 13/13