

Today ~ We Begin ~ To Look ~ At The Closing Vv ~ Of James' Epistle.

James ~ 5: ~ 13-20 ~ contain ~ James' concluding exhortations.

▶▶2 Topics

▷▷1<sup>st</sup>, ~ instructions concerning prayer, ~ vv 13-18. ⇔⇔ Vv 13-15 today.

▷▷And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ a closing appeal ~ for believers who are wandering from the faith, ~ vv 19-20.

Outline Instructions On Prayer, ~ Vv 13-18 ~ This Way.

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

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

Next, ~ James provides more extended instructions ~ ¶¶

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

Then, ~ James encourages believers to confess their sins to one another ~ and ~ ¶¶

▶▶to pray for each other, ~ v. 16.

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

▶▶vv 17-18 (1 Kings 17:1; ~ 18:41-46) 1/14

Again, ~ Vv 13-15 Today.

James transitions to the section on prayer ~ using rapid-fire questions, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ each one followed ~ by a command, ~ vv 13-14a.

▶▶ 13a ~ Is anyone among you suffering? ~ Let him pray. ~ 13b ~ Is anyone cheerful? ~ Let him sing praise. ~ 14a ~ Is anyone among you sick? ~ Let him call for the elders of the church.

▶▶ All 3 ques. ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. impv.

▷▷<sup>13a</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? ~ ¶¶

↳↳ They must/should pray.

▷▷<sup>13b</sup> Is anyone cheerful? ~ ¶¶

↳↳ They must/should sing praise.

▷▷<sup>14a</sup> Is anyone among you sick? ~ ¶¶

↳↳ They must/should call for the elders of the church.

▷▷ Point.

↳↳ This ~ is what we should do.

↳↳ The proper course of action .... 2/14

▶▶1<sup>st</sup> ~ 2 ~ pres. tense.

▷▷Should keep praying. ⇔⇔ Should keep singing praise.

1<sup>st</sup> rapid-fire question and command, ~ vs 13a.

▶▶Is anyone among you suffering? ~~ They should keep on praying about it.

▶▶Vb translated ~ suffering ~ is broad in meaning.

▷▷And it encompasses ~ any form ~ of external or internal ~ hardship.

▶▶While believers may be tempted ~ to react to difficulties ~ 77

▷▷ with ~ grumbling, ~ anger, ~ or discouragement, ~ 77

↪↪James reminds us ~ there is ~ one ~ clear and proper course of action.

→→And i.e. ~ prayer.

▶▶Exhortations to pray ~ are a feature ~ of several ~ NT letters.

▷▷E.g., ~ 1 Thess. 5:17a, ~ Pray continually.

▷▷Not saying ~ 24/7.

▷▷Rather, ~ the point is ~ prayer is to become ~ a routine part ~ of our daily lives.

▷▷So prayer for the believer ~ can never be a sporadic thing. 3/14

▷▷ Paul was a model of this.

↳↳ E.g., ~ he told the Colossian church, ~ ¶¶

→→ Since the day we heard about you, ~ we have not stopped praying for you (Col. 1:9; NIV).

▶▶ In the immediate context, ~ James directs us ~ to make it a practice ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to turn to God ~ whenever ~ we are in distress ~ and emotional tensions assail.

▷▷ Instead of indulging ~ in inward-looking self-pity, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ or complaining loudly to others of our terrible situation, ~ ¶¶

→→ we must turn to God ~ for refuge and strength.

▷▷ In Ps. 46, ~ the psalmist declares, ~ God ~ is our refuge and strength, ~ an ever-present help in trouble.

▷▷ Prayer ~ may not change our situation.

▷▷ But it can give us strength ~ to bear the situation bravely, ~ as we submit ourselves to the Lord.

▷▷ The psalmist's conclusion in Ps. 46 ~ reflects this.

↳↳ Therefore we will not fear, ~ though ~ the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ~ though ~ its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging (Ps. 46:1-3, NIV). 4/14

The 2<sup>nd</sup> rapid-fire question and imperative, ~ vs 13b.

▶▶ This 2<sup>nd</sup> question ~ stretches ~ to the other end of human experience.

▷▷ Is anyone cheerful?

↳↳ Proper course of action: ⇒⇒ They should ~ continually ~ sing praises to the Lord.

▶▶ A reader ~ might have expected James to ask ~ something like, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Are things going well?"

↳↳ I.e., ~ an inquiry about ~ external ~ realities.

▶▶ James, ~ however, ~ uses a vb that refers ~ not ~ to outward circumstances.

▷▷ The Grk vb refers ~ to the cheerfulness of heart ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that one can have ~ whether ~ in good times or in bad.

▷▷ It was this sense of well-being ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that Paul encouraged his fellow-travelers to have ~ ¶¶

→→ even though their ship ~ was in imminent danger of destruction (Acts 27).

↳↳ Acts 27:22, ~ Yet now I urge you ~ to take heart, ~ for there will be no loss of life among you, ~ but only of the ship (cf. vs 25). 5/14

▶▶ When our hearts are comforted, ~ it is all too easy to forget ~ 77

▷▷ that this contentment ~ comes ultimately from God.

▷▷ Thus, ~ perhaps even more than when suffering, ~ 77

↳↳ we must be reminded in times of happiness ~ of our glad obligation ~ 77

→→ to acknowledge ~ God's supreme role in our lives.

▶▶ This inner sense of well-being ~ is to be expressed outwardly.

▷▷ We should ~ continually ~ sing praises to the Lord.

↳↳ Ps. 145:2, ~ Every day I will praise you! ~ I will praise your name continually!

In referring ~ to suffering and cheerfulness, ~ 77

▶▶ James covers ~ the broad swath of human experience ~ in this beautiful but broken world.

▶▶ Whether we find happiness or pain in life, ~ we should always go ~ to the Lord.

▶▶ He is a loving heavenly Father ~ who cares for us.

▶▶ Matt. 7:11 (NIV), ~ If you, then, ~ though you are evil, ~ know how to give good gifts to your children, ~ how much more ~ 77

▷▷ will your Father in heaven give good gifts ~ to those who ask him! 6/14

14a, ~ 3<sup>rd</sup> rapid-fire question & command.

▶▶ Is anyone among you sick?

▶▶ Proper course of action.

▷▷ They should call ~ for the elders of the church.

▶▶ The elders are to be called ~ not ~ because they are invested with special powers.

▷▷ The power to heal ~ is invested in prayer, ~ not the elder.

↳↳ Healing ~ comes from the Lord.

▶▶ The elders are to be called ~ because ~ they represent the church ~ as a whole.

▷▷ And their prayers ~ are an expression ~ of the prayers of the entire congregation.

↳↳ Rather than the whole church come.

▶▶ 2 noteworthy things.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ this command stresses ~ the importance ~ of intercessory prayer ~ and ~ 77

↳↳ of the willingness to request it.

▷▷ And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ James assumes ~ there will be ~ a plurality of elders ~ 77

↳↳ in the local congregation. 7/14

↪↪ The modern model ~ of a "lone ranger" pastor ~ is a departure ~ 77

→→ from the biblical model ~ of plural eldership.

Next, ~ James provides extended instructions ~ concerning how ~ the elders should care for believers who are sick (vv. 14-15).

▶▶ (CSB) 14, ~ Is anyone among you sick? ~ He should call for the elders of the church, ~ and they are to pray over him, ~ anointing him with oil ~ in the name of the Lord.

▷▷ Procedure to follow ....

▷▷ Oil ~ symbolizes 3 things.

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

→→ And so provides a natural symbol for healing.

→→ E.g., ~ Lk. 10:34a, ~ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

→→ And Ps. 45:7, ~ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. ~ Therefore God, ~ your God, ~ has anointed you with the oil of gladness ~ beyond your companions.

↪↪ 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.

→→ Acts 10:37-38a, ~ you yourselves know ~ what happened throughout all Judea, ~ beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ~ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth ~ with the Holy Spirit ~ and with power. 8/14



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

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

→→ E.g., ~ Ex. 29:21.

↪↪ Then you shall take part ~ of the blood that is on the altar, ~ and of the anointing oil, ~ and sprinkle it ~ on Aaron and his garments, ~ and on his sons and his sons' garments with him. ~¶¶

↪↪ He and his garments shall be holy, ~ and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

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

↪↪ that God is responsible for taking care of them.

▷▷ Anoint sick believer ~ in the name of the Lord.

↪↪ This phrase implies ~ that the elders were acting ~ in trustful dependence ~ ¶¶

→→ upon Jesus and His authority.

↪↪ Not depending on themselves or their own authority.

↪↪ Elders have no power or authority w/in ourselves.

↪↪ Jesus has all authority and power. 9/14

↪↪ We, ~ elders, ~ have ~ delegated authority ~ and ~ ¶¶

→→ the privilege of calling upon Jesus' to use his power to help others.

↪↪ Diff. context but applicable here.

→→ Do not rejoice in this, ~ that the spirits are subject to you, ~ but rejoice ~ that your names are written in heaven.

15a, ~ continues his extended instructions concerning how the elders should care for believers who are sick

▶▶ (CSB) The prayer of faith ~ will save the sick person, ~ and the Lord will raise him up.

▶▶ The prayer of faith. ⇔⇔ Chap. 1.

▷▷ As noted, ~ faith = confidence in prayer.

▷▷ It means the petitioner's faith, ~ his belief and trust, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ that God will heed his prayer, ~ and ~ grant it ~ or ~ only in his superior wisdom ~ deny it.

→→ That would cover ~ all prayer requests.

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ is the unwavering confidence ~ that ~ God ~ is who he says he is.

↪↪ And that ~ he is generous ~ ¶¶

→→ and ~ that he gives ~ without any ~ negative, ~ critical, ~ or discouraging ~ response. 10/14

▶▶(CSB) The prayer of faith ~ will save the sick person.

▷▷Not salvation. ⇨⇨ Save/free from disease.

▷▷NIV: And the prayer offered in faith ~ will make the sick person well.

▶▶Adds, ~ And the Lord will raise him up.

▷▷Here James undoubtedly means ~ to raising the sick person up from the bed.

↪↪I.e., ~ restoring that person to health.

→→And the Lord will restore him to health.

▷▷James is making it crystal clear ~ that the power to heal ~ is not ~ from the elders.

▷▷Neither ~ is the prayer ~ a magic spell.

↪↪It is the Lord, ~ and the Lord alone, ~ who will heal the sick believer.

↪↪To borrow from the old hymn, ~ elders, ~ all believers, ~ & prayer ~ are channels only.

Now, ~ should we take this as ~ James guaranteeing ~ that the sick person will be healed?

▶▶Only ~ if one takes this promise in isolation.

▷▷I.e., ~ if one ignores the context of James and of the rest of the NT. 11/14

▶▶ Within this promise of healing, ~ there is an important ~ but unstated ~ condition.

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

▷▷ We saw this principle ~ in James' discussion of making plans . . . .

▶▶ John make it explicit.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 5:14-15 (NIV), ~ This is the confidence we have in approaching God: ~ that ~ if we ask anything ~ according to his will, ~ he hears us. ~ ¶¶

↪↪ And ~ if we know that he hears us ~ whatever we ask ~ we know ~ that we have what we asked of him.

▷▷ When we ask according to God's will, ~ we will receive an answer ~ that lines up ~ with his will.

▶▶ To properly ask of God, ~ a believer ~ must always ~ submit to God's perfect and omniscient will.

▷▷ Jesus . . . .

▶▶ All prayer ~ is subject ~ to the reservation ~ that God's will be done.

▷▷ Sometimes God intends ~ not to heal ~ and ~ to allow that person ~ to trust more deeply in God's grace.

↪↪ Paul's thorn . . . .

▶▶ Also, ~ sometimes remaining in sickness ~ is God's plan for the individual. 12/14

▷▷ Paul advised Timothy about ~ how to deal ~ with his stomach problems & frequent illnesses.

↳↳ The advice did not hold out hope for immediate healing, ~ ¶¶

→→ but contained information ~ for treating the illness.

▷▷ In 2 Tim., ~ Paul announced ~ that he had left Trophimus ~ sick in Miletus.

↳↳ Paul did not feel encouraged ~ to expect immediate healing for his friend.

▶▶ So, ~ if healing is not God's will, ~ the person ~ will not be healed.

▶▶ However, ~ we can be assured ~ that God uses all prayer for healing ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to accomplish ultimate good ~ in the life of the sick believer.

▶▶ Sometimes ~ the good which God does ~ ¶¶

▷▷ will provide immediate strength and an experience of divine grace, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but not ~ instant healing.

In 15b, ~ James finishes ~ his discussion on praying for sick believers ~ ¶¶

▶▶ with a note on the relationship ~ between sin and sickness.

▷▷ (CSB) 15b, ~ If he has committed sins, ~ he will be forgiven. 13/14

▶▶ The conditional clause ~ *If he has committed sins* ~ makes it clear that ~ 77

▷▷ not all sickness ~ is the result of sin.

▶▶ But the clause also shows ~ that at times sickness ~ is caused by sin.

▶▶ Scripture testifies to both facts.

▷▷ All, ~ no.

↪↪ Man born blind . . . . ⇔⇔ Job . . . .

▷▷ At times, ~ yes.

↪↪ Scripture shows that ~ some sickness, ~ even death, ~ comes upon believers ~ 77

→→ as a result ~ of God's fatherly discipline.

→→ Acts 5:1-11.

→→ 1 Cor. 11:30, ~ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

▶▶ While not ruling it out, ~ we should be wary ~ 77

▷▷ of drawing a one-to-one correspondence ~ between sickness and sin.

▷▷ Most human sickness, ~ while not outside of God's divine will, ~ is simply ~ 77

↪↪ the result ~ of living in a broken world. 14/14