

Personal Study

JAMES PART 12 FAITHFULL / FAITHLESS

"IN GOOD SEASONS AND HARD SEASONS, CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO FAITHFULLY PRAY, COMFORT, AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER. THIS STIRS OUR FAITH AND POINTS US TO CHRIST".

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Read James 5:13-18

When enduring hard seasons or experiencing good seasons, the people of God are called to deep community, care for one another, time in prayer with the Lord, and a life lived that shares all of who we are for the glory of God and the good of His people.

In this text James invites us into a life of simply that. In the midst of sufferings that he had previously mentioned, and seasons of joy, we love and care well for each other. We do this by inviting each other into communion with the Lord in prayer and community with one another through confession and acts of mercy.

As we continue in James chapter 5, allow the following to serve as a guide as you examine the scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to form in us Christ-likeness.

1. We pray and sing in good seasons and hard seasons: vv. 13.

What is prayer? –Simply put, prayer is communion with the Lord. In prayer we speak to Him, sing to Him, enjoy Him, listen to Him. We often narrow the idea of prayer to simply asking for things. This is a small part. But prayer is relationship with the Lord.

Here are a few ideas on prayer from theologians such as FF Bruce and DL moody:

-Prayer is a delight not a duty:

When we pray, we are FREE to love and enjoy the presence of the Living God. This is not a duty that is performed begrudgingly, but a deep delight. We GET to pray. We GET to enjoy the presence of the God of the universe. If this does not drive us to our knees, I'm not sure what will.

-Powerful prayer is planned prayer:

We plan things that are important to us. This should also be the case with our prayer lives. Plan our prayer times in a way that our time is protected and not interrupted. Diligently block off times for communing with the Living God.

-Prayer is more than asking:

Prayer is WAY more than asking for things from God. While this is an important piece, we are invited into deep communion, relationship, and experience of His presence. This can look like:

- Thanking & praising (in good and bad seasons)
- Praying the scriptures back to the Lord.
- Declaring the attributes of God (sovereign, mighty, all powerful, loving, just, full of mercy).
- Silence (“be still and know that I am God”)

2. Are you sick? Have elders pray over you vv. 14-15

-Are you sick? Have the elders pray:

-This is where we exercise being a body. Are you sick? Lets pray and ask for healing. Are you not well? Pray and ask the Lord to touch you. We are invited to be the body of Christ and call on the leadership of the church to pray over us and for us.

-We pray in faith: This is simply the humble belief that God is able, sovereign, ruling and reigning, and meets us where we are at. This is acknowledging that God is God, God is able, and God is with us.

-What happens if we do not get healed? For the Christian, we ask to be healed. We believe that the Lord is able. But we also grow more and more comfortable with the sovereignty of the Lord over all things. If He chooses to heal us, He will. If He does not, our ultimate healing is in heaven. While this is so hard for us left here, it is our ultimate hope and delight to be with the Lord forever. (the tone here suggest James is referring to both a current view of physical healing and an eternal resurrected healing).

Here is the big idea when it comes to prayer for healing: We pray in faith. We believe that God is able. But our core delight is to seek the miracle worker not just the miracle. When we do that, we have greater delight. It is our delight to simply be in His presence in prayer (now) and forever more.

-Anoint with oil:

2 possible take away here:

- James is referring to medicinal oil (medicine) to heal the sick. The application would be to pray for the Lord to touch, us physically and pray for blessing in use of medicine. This would be consistent with accounts in the gospel writings of Mark 6 and Luke 10. The word “anoint” here is used in a medicinal sense “apply”.
- James is referring to the sacrament of anointing oil, symbolizing the Holy Spirits power on the believer to heal and deliver.

3. We are invited to pray and confess to one another vv.16-18

-Confess sins: This takes community! Its hard to hide our junk when we are in community with other believers. This creates accountability and gives opportunity for others to pray with you.

-Use wisdom when confessing: If you confide in a non-trustworthy person, confessions of sin can lead to the sin of gossip very quickly. So, confess in wisdom.

