

16 January 2024

James 5:13-18

James 5:13-15: From (V13-V18), the emphasis is that if you're God's people, you should be people who pray in every season of life!

PRAY when you are afflicted, tried, or going through difficult times! When you are merry and cheerful in heart, sing Psalms, PRAISE and THANK the LORD! When you are weak, gravely ill, or sick, call for your pastors to pray for you. I think there is "among us" at times, ALL OF THE ABOVE!

Psalm 62:1, 5-8. "ONLY toward God is my soul still and silent!" Trust in Him "at all times" ye saints of God, in afflictions, hardships, when you're cheerful, successful, and gravely ill!

In every situation or providence that God brings into your life, my brethren, you should be praying, praising God, and resting (by faith) in what He has assigned to you for your sanctification and His glory!

Luke 18:1, Philippians 4:4-7, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

James 5:14-15: This sickness is not your typical cold and sniffles; but an illness or sickness that is perhaps terminal and could result in death.

How do I know this? Because THIS SICK ONE CALLS for the elders or pastors of the church to come and pray over him or her.

The first thing I want you TO SEE in (V14) is that it is the one who is sick who calls for the elders of the church to come and pray for them.

You who are believers in Christ... I hope you can see the importance of being a committed and devoted member of a local NT church! And the importance of having pastors ~ overseers!

If you're not saved, you may go to church and sit under a pastor, but until you turn from your sins to Christ in repentance and faith, and you're ADDED to the church, and commit yourself to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, you don't "actually" have a pastor(s).

To you who are believers and members of this local church, I hope you see from this passage the importance of having pastors ... and men who shepherd you, watch for your soul, and pray for you daily...

Each one of us (in all probability) has a Primary Care Physician, a PPP, whom we trust and whom we call when we're sick, who can tell us what's wrong with our bodies and prescribe "the right medicine" for us.

While there is nothing wrong with CALLING your PPP when you're sick, (and you should), James teaches us here, that in times of grave sickness, though you will call your PPP, you MUST NOT fail to call for your Primary Care Pastor(s) whom God has called to watch for your soul! Hebrews 13:17

Your PRIMARY CONCERN in times of grave sickness should not be for your body but for your soul. T. Manton: Sickness is God's messenger to call us to meet with God!

YOUR FAITH in your God and Heavenly Father should provoke you to CALL for your pastors when you may be sick unto death!

But why can't ANYONE pray for me when I am gravely ill, (in short, they can), but why must I call for my pastors? Because God has appointed them to shepherd and care for your soul, to speak the Word to you until the time of your departure in death. And, when you call for your pastors, the whole church will be engaged in prayer for you!

Sadly... In the age of online sermons, the importance of the local church and pastoral care has been greatly diminished. Christians TODAY too often depend more on celebrity preachers and on YouTube and Online preachers rather than on their pastors and their churches.

I've said this before and I'll say it again, sitting in front of a computer screen or listening to online sermons is NOT gathering with the saints! Who are you going to call when you're sick unto death? Your online preacher?

James, in our passage, brings a different, but very important aspect of praying into plain view for us. Although you and I ought always to be praying people, there are times when you will need to call your pastor(s) to come to you and to pray for you and pray over you!

Praying Pastors ~ and ~ anointing the one who is sick with oil:

I can tell you that I have never done this... I do know that some pastors do and have anointed the sick with oil. Is there extra power from God dispensed toward the sick one because of the oil? NO!

The prayer of faith shall save the sick if it is God's will to heal them.

Your elders/pastors have no power to stop death when God calls for your soul. But if you're gravely ill and in danger of dying, YOU SHOULD CALL for your pastors, who have cared for your soul to pray for you and over you.

So, what of the anointing with oil? The Roman Catholic Church uses this passage along with Mark 6:12-13 for what they call "extreme unction", or the sacrament of the last rite administered by a priest for healing, but mainly that their sins will be forgiven before they die. This is an abhorrent and deceptive practice, and it is detestable to God!

Beloved, olive oil and a catholic priest administering a last rite WILL NOT and CANNOT forgive sins. ONLY "BY FAITH ALONE" in the precious blood of Christ can your sins be forgiven!

So, what of the oil? And I do believe this was olive oil.

Am I opposed to "anointing" a sick and dying saint with oil, James wrote, "Let the elders pray over (the sick one) anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord". I certainly

do not oppose this, but then the question arises, where do I anoint the one who is sick? On their Forehead? Wrist? Arms? Consider that olive oil had many uses in James' day, and still does, one of its uses was medicinal. Luke 10:33-35, Isaiah 1:5-6, 2 Kings 20:1-7.

The Lord Jesus at times used means: John 9:6-7, 10-11, Mark 7:31-35

My current position is that the oil was used medicinally. I think TOO MANY depend SOLELY on DOCTORS and MEDICINES, and while God, no doubt has given us medicines and doctors as means toward healing, if GOD doesn't grant healing, all the doctors and medicines in the world will avail nothing, nor will being anointed with oil.

James 5:15: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; (that is, if it is the Lord's will to raise him up), and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him".

Consider how often you have been sick, and God has raised you up, and made you well again when you didn't pray at all! Remember God sends sickness to our bodies so that we might turn our attention to our never dying souls! When we are healthy in our bodies, we may be prone to stray from God.

God often uses serious sicknesses or physical suffering to STOP US in our tracks, it is often the means that God uses to bring us to ourselves.

GOD WILL use sickness to reveal our sins to us, this is another reason to CALL for your pastors because they care for your soul and will tell you what you need to hear. Hebrews 13:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

But serious sickness does not always mean that there is unrepentant sin in your life, it may simply be God's way of focusing your attention on Christ, your Lord and Savior, and death, eternity, and the judgment to come.

If you're lost and gravely ill, all the more reason for you to repent of your sins and believe Christ!

Finally, God doesn't always heal those who are afflicted or sick!

If it is NOT God's will, they will not be healed or raised up; or, their affliction will continue as long as they live.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 2 Timothy 4:19-20,

Trust in God at all times ye people of God and pray at all times!

In those times when you are gravely ill or sick, YES, call your PPP, listen to them, take what they prescribe for you, do what they say, but don't fail to call for your pastors to pray for you, they are your PPP for your souls!

Your doctors watch for your body, but your pastors watch for your never-dying souls!

But how often do we want medicine and not prayer, the doctor and not our pastor, the hospital and not the church?