



# PV Household Worship

## July 2-7, 2018

### ❖ Daily Memory Verse: James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

### ❖ Song: I Lay It All <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4XmBzDRjCs>

### Monday, July 2, "Prayer should be our first response—not our last resort." Read James 5:13-18

James 5:13 says, *"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."* When you are in trouble, what do you most often do first? Try to remedy the situation right away and take care of it yourself? Go into panic mode? Call a friend and talk it over? Ask God for help? In a recent college class of 35 students this question was asked and only 2 people indicated that they prayed first. Most of them tried to remedy the situation right away taking care of it themselves. Others indicated that they chose to panic. I suspect these responses are typical. Too often, prayer is not our first response to trouble. We often try to figure out a solution using our own skills or financial resources. We may get anxious and worry. Many times we turn to our friends, but when none of that helps, we finally get around to praying. It's amazing what can happen when we take time to cry out to God about an issue and listen to Him speak through His Word and His people. He will give us a fresh way to look at our situation, and help us in our time of need. His goal is to help His people to be more Christ-like. James is quick to emphasize, prayer should be our first response—not our last resort. He writes, *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (5:16). So always pray first!

- When you face a problem, where do you turn first? When everything is going well in your life how do you respond? How does James 5:13 instruct us to respond in these situations?
- How has prayer helped you during difficult times? How has God answered your prayers?
- Memory Verse James 5:16
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to always come to You first when I'm faced with trouble. Help me to praise You when things are going well.

### Tuesday, July 3, "God's people can and should pray for healing." Read James 5:13-18

James 5:14 says, *"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."* What is this verse about? It seems very straight forward in its instruction about elders, anointing, and praying for the sick. First off, this encourages God's people that they can and should pray for healing. People can pray with confidence for complete healing until it is obvious that God has chosen to do otherwise. Secondly, Elders in the church are given a role to act on behalf of the whole church in the name of the Lord Jesus. This doesn't mean that elders in the church have special healing powers. It means they have a privilege and responsibility to pray for sick members in Jesus' name. Also, the oil has no special power. It is simply a symbol to spur on our faith, representing the presence of the Holy Spirit—the One who provides healing, comfort, and assurance. Finally, James reminds us that God is sovereign. We must realize that God is not obligated to heal anyone. Within God's grace and sovereignty, prayer can change things—but He will decide what's best. Bring your prayers about hardships, requested healing, dealing with sin, and more to Him today (James 5:13-16). He's listening! God can and does still heal supernaturally (and also through natural means—

using medicine and physicians). Our responsibility is to be obedient to Scripture and to pray for healing in faith and humility.

- What did you believe about healing prior to reading this passage in James 5:13-18?
- How does the fact that God is sovereign affect the way you will pray for people who are sick?
- Memory Verse James 5:16
- Prayer - God, make me a person of prayer. Strengthen my faith and draw me into a deeper fellowship with You.

**Wednesday, July 4, "Every prayer should be a prayer of faith."** Read James 5:13-18

James 5:14, 15 says, *"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."* Wow! These verses raise some hard questions. What is the prayer of faith? Is James guaranteeing healing in every case? Some say that it is always God's will to heal, and if you aren't healed, you must not have prayed in faith, or you haven't confessed your sins. This view is not only false, but cruel! Even the Apostle Paul was not healed of his thorn in the flesh after praying for God to remove it. Paul did not see Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30) or Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20) healed. He urged Timothy to drink a little wine for his frequent stomach ailments (1 Tim. 5:23) instead of call for the elders to pray. If healing by God is some formula that has to do with us why didn't Paul tell Timothy to work the formula? No matter how many times God heals eventually we will all die. *Every* prayer should be a prayer of faith, because we should not ask anything of God unless we believe that He is able to do it. So, if you are sick and bed-ridden, call the elders for prayer. They will come and talk to you about your situation. They may ask if you are aware of any sins that you need to confess. They will anoint you with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who is mighty to heal. They will pray with you, believing that God can and does heal. But, you must submit to God's sovereign will, and if He chooses to heal you, give Him the glory, because it wasn't the oil, it wasn't our prayers or faith that healed you. It was God!

- What is one role of the elders according to this passage?
- Read Mark 11:22-24. How can we pray in faith when we don't know God's sovereign will in advance?
- How long should we continue praying if God doesn't seem to be answering? Is there a point at which we should give up?
- Memory Verse James 5:16
- Prayer – Father, please use the elders of our church to be examples of holiness and prayerfulness.

**Thursday, July 5, "The prayer of faith is not linked to the outcome, but to God!"** Read James 5:13-18

Author E. M. Bounds writes, *"Prayer can do anything that God can do."* That is a true statement because prayer is the means and God is the object! But, to be honest, I struggle because I have experienced many *"unanswered"* prayers. I have prayed for healing of sick people that did not get better. I have prayed for repentance for sinning church members, and yet they have gone on in their sin. I have prayed for salvation for some for many years, and yet they have not come to faith in Christ. I am not aware of any unconfessed sin in my heart or lack of faith in God. It's easy to become discouraged at this issue of *"unanswered"* prayer. Sometimes God answers *"no"* to keep us in humble dependence on Him. That was the situation with Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Sometimes God waits to answer to keep us seeking Him or for other reasons that we may not understand. Sometimes God answers *"yes"* for His own sovereign purposes. He knows all the factors, which we never know. Think about it. Most of us

would have prayed for a long and fruitful ministry for John the Baptist, but that was not God's plan. We would have prayed for Jesus to avoid the cross, but that wasn't God's plan, either. We need to remember that prayer links us with the omnipotent God, who spoke the universe into existence. The prayer of faith is not linked to the outcome, but to God! He can interrupt the normal laws of His creation if He chooses, to accomplish His will. And, He has chosen that He accomplishes His will through the prayers of His people. And so we should pray big prayers and expect God to accomplish much through them, according to His purpose and for His glory.

- Read 1 John 5:14. How does this verse link the prayer of faith with God's will?
- Read Matthew 18:19, 20; John 15:16; John 16:23. What does it mean to ask in "Jesus name"?
- Memory Verse James 5:16
- Prayer - Father, help me to pray in ways that believe prayer can do anything God can do.

**Friday, July 6, "The effectiveness in prayer is when His will becomes our will." Read James 5:13-18**

James 5:16-18 says, *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit."* The power of prayer is not limited to prayers offered in our church meetings, or to prayers offered by ordained pastors, or to prayers spoken in eloquent speech. If you know Jesus, then wherever you are, in whatever need you find yourself, call out to God and He will hear and answer according to His will. You may only have time for a quick, silent prayer. God doesn't weigh the value of the prayers by their length or by how many people get together to pray or by how much you agonize in your prayers. Sometimes we think, *"If we can just get a lot of people praying, it will be more effective."* But James 5:16 says, *"a righteous man,"* not *"a really big group of righteous people."* The more who pray, the more get blessed when God answers. So it is good to enlist as many in prayer as possible. But if it's just you and God, the prayer may be as powerful and effective as if a whole group prays. Elijah's prayer was earnest, and ours should be in earnest, too. The more serious the situation and the more we are burdened by it, the more intensely we will pray. But God answers our prayers on the basis of His will, not on the basis of our working up certain feelings. The effectiveness in prayer is when our hearts are so satisfied in Him that His will becomes our will.

- What are some things that will strengthen our faith as we pray?
- How does the life of Elijah illustrate James point about prayer?
- Read James 5:16. What two pursuits does James spur us on to? (righteousness, prayerfulness)
- Memory Verse James 5:16
- Prayer – Lord, please change my heart to make my will, Your will.

**Saturday, June 30, Read James 5:19, 20**

**Review memory verse.**

**Prayer:** Father, make us ready to hear your Word. Reveal your truth to our hearts. Give us grace to listen and obey. Bind the enemy of our souls and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Give us joy as we meet with your people for doctrine, prayer, and worship.