

WEEK 14

JAMES 5:13-20

READING PLAN

James 5:13-20

Proverbs 15:8, 29; Psalm 54

2 Kings 20:1-11

Luke 15

INTRODUCTION

As we come to the end of James' letter, we see that his emphasis on the communal aspect of faith becomes more apparent as he encourages believers to contend for one another in mutual confession, prayer, and looking out for one another. In the varying range of human experience, believers are to respond in prayer, looking to God for both physical and spiritual healing. God uses the prayers of his saints as the means of accomplishing his will, and ultimately, as James concludes his letter, has in mind the forgiveness and spiritual well-being of his church.

REFLECTION

¹³Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises.

*¹⁴Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ¹⁷Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! ¹⁸Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. ¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, ²⁰you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins. **JAMES 5:13-20***

Why in verse 13 does James mention such opposite examples ("suffering hardships ... happy") when encouraging believers to respond to God in prayer/praise? On the one hand he encourages us to pray out of dependence, and on the other, to express gratitude. Do you think it's possible to truly be grateful without also being dependent?

Who does James say the sick should call for to pray with them in their affliction? Why should the sick ask for these people to pray with them – is their prayer more effective or powerful, or is there something important about the position they hold?

In verse 15, James says “a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick.” Does this mean that when the sick aren’t healed, their prayers didn’t have enough faith?

Why do you think James mentions forgiveness of sin in relation to healing? How might sin affect our health? Read John 9:1-3. Are health problems always related to sin in our lives?

What does James say believers should do for one another in verse 16? Are these two things a regular part of your Christian community experience?

How does verse 17 say Elijah prayed? Consider each of the following verses and summarize how each relates to what James says about Elijah’s praying:

- Luke 18:1

- Acts 1:14

- Romans 12:2

- Colossians 4:2

Look at 5:19-20. How do you know when someone has “wandered away from the truth”? Is it determined by what they believe, how they think, or the way they live?

What does it mean for someone who has wandered away to be “brought back”? Is this more likely to happen when one is well-connected and in community? What two things does James say in verse 20 will result when this happens?

IMPLICATIONS

WINDOWS What does this teach me about God? How does this text show God’s attributes, character, cares/concerns, tendencies, etc.? What does this reveal about what He’s like and how He acts?

MIRRORS What does this teach me about myself? How does this text show my own attributes, character, likes/dislikes, tendencies, etc.?

PICTURES What does this teach me about the way God and mankind should interact? Look for ways we are to live and respond to God for his glory, our good, and the good of others. Specifically...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?