

PLEASANT VIEW PROCLAIMER

May 22, 2022

James: A Faith That Works When Should We Pray? (James 5:13-20)

At the conclusion of this great letter, James addresses circumstances in life that are worthy of offering prayer. Let's consider these circumstances as we allow James to answer the question - **When Should We Pray?**

S_____ **(13)** Because affliction and suffering are always with us, we have the choice to either blame God for it, or to go to God for relief from it. James is instructing that we should always choose to go to God when facing trial. Back in chapter one, James had told his readers to "Count it all joy...when you meet various trials" **(1:2)**. He then added that if anyone does not have the wisdom to see the benefit of trials, "let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach" **(1:5)**. So, whether asking God for relief from the suffering, or to give us the wisdom to see the benefit of the affliction, the point is that we should always go to Him in prayer. In **2 Cor 12:7-10**, Paul explained how he had asked God to remove his "thorn in the flesh" three times, but instead of taking it away, God had helped give him a different perspective. This is also a form of relief.

S_____ **(13)** James next turns to being "cheerful." While James' instruction here is to "sing praise," consider how many of the Psalms (the hymnal for the Jews) were prayers. Two examples include **Psalms 71 and 148**. Maybe it feels more natural to reach out to God when we are suffering or sick, but James reminds us that we also need to offer God our praises even when things are going well in our lives. This includes any way that we can offer praise, whether in prayer or song (or both at the same time).

S_____ **(14-15)** Sickness is clearly a type of suffering, but James again reminds his readers that this is a worthy time to offer prayers to God. In this case, he adds the additional instruction to call for the "elders of the church" to "pray over him," while "anointing him with oil." Of these two, prayer is the more significant of the two ministries performed by the elders. In the original language, the main verb here is "pray" and "anoint" is a participle. Also, since prayer is the focus of the entire paragraph, it can be assumed that anointing is the secondary action.

As for the significance of the elders anointing with oil, one possibility is that this application was as medicine rather than sacrament. It is a well-



*"Make a joyful shout to God,
all the earth!"*

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I've dreamed many a dream
that never came true
I've seen them vanish at dawn
But I've realized enough of my
dreams, thank God,
To make me want to dream on
I've prayed many prayers when
no answer came
Though I waited patient and
long
But answers have come to
enough of my prayers
To make me keep praying on
I've trusted many a friend that
failed
And left me to weep alone
But I've found enough of my
friends true blue
To make me keep trusting on
I've sown many seed that fell by
the way
For the birds to feed on
But I've held enough golden
sheaves in my hands
To make me keep sowing on

documented that oil was one of the most common medicines of biblical times (**Isa 1:6; Lk 10:34**). Another possibility is that since this was still during the time of the spiritual gifts of healing (**1 Cor 12:9**), that this is what was intended here, and that the anointing was done in conjunction with the miraculous healing as was evidenced by the apostles of Jesus (**Mk 6:13**). Whatever the case, the takeaway for us should be the same. Prayer is prescribed during times of sickness.

S_____ (15-16) Forgiveness of sins is promised in addition to the healing of his body. Of note is that repentance and turning away from the sin must be implied in this passage. The Lord only forgives the sins of His people when they repent and turn away from them (**1 John 1:7-9; 2:1**). So, when we sin, we must repent and pray to God for forgiveness. James goes on to explain that this is such a powerful thing that we should confess our sins to each other so that we can pray for each other. Mutuality is certainly implied by this as there is no class of men set up in God's church to hear confessions.

S_____ (17-18) Clearly here, James is using Elijah as an example of the "great power" of prayer (**16**). While we should not necessarily expect for God to stop the rain for three and a half years if we pray, this is a good reminder that in Christ we should not be afraid to pray big, because we serve a God who is supernatural and bigger than anything we will ever face in this life (**Isa 40:27-31**).

S_____ (19-20) While prayer is not specifically mentioned in these verses, what we are being called to do in reaching out to a straying brother is one of the more difficult tasks of the Christian life (**Gal 6:1-2**). When presented with this situation, we should not only pray for our brother who is off course, but also for ourselves to have the courage, gentleness, and patience needed to help restore our brother or sister. This is clearly a situation worthy of prayer.

Conclusion - So, when should we pray? Always! (**1 Thess 5:16-18**)

PRAYER LIST

- **Faye Waller** is at home and doing better
- **Doug Demonbreun** has been suffering from cellulitis
- Sympathy for the family of **William Darrell Davis** who passed away
- **Patricia Stroud** has been dealing with shingles
- **Nick Phifer's** stem cell transplant is scheduled for the 1st, and his mother will be the donor.
- **Isabel Johnson** is at home recovering from a stem cell transplant.
- **James Craig** is home undergoing rehab
- Continue to pray for **Delores Coleman, Ann Reed, Rosemary Douglas, Kristine Garrett, John Hayes, Gaynell Walker, Rebecca Brown, and Jim Sims**

SERVING TODAY (May 22, 2022)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Read: M. Reed
Prayer: J. Baker

WORSHIP

Read: C. Baker
Wait On Table: J. Gupton
Serve: J. Demonbreun, D. Billingsley
Prayer: L. Gregory