

**Be Real!**  
**James 5:13-18**  
**“Faith Works”**

**<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”**

**The Passage before us today is one that can be difficult.**

A)It is a passage that has created some tension amongst students/teachers of the Bible. –

B)See it is easy to read what James is saying here and think it sounds like he is guaranteeing a healing to those who follow what he says here:

**C)Tension: Most of us have prayed for someone that didn't get healed.**

1)Most of us have been prayed for at times by someone – NOT BEEN HEALED.

D)Tension: what is Wrong with me – what is wrong with them? How come the prayer didn't work?

1) Why did they get healed and I didn't ?

**Because of the tension in this passage – I found that many teachers/commentators Spend more time**

A)Dealing with what James IS NOT saying about **Prayer & healing** - Than what he is saying

B)TODAY I WANT TO DO THE OPPOSITE.

C)UNDERSTAND: James is not giving a dissertation on healing and PRAYER - **that is not the point**

**SEE James knew that not everyone gets healed.**

A)James knew that in Jesus' earthly ministry – he healed many – but not everyone.

B)Pool of Bethsaida: Many laying there – Jesus healed one guy.

C)James **was a friend of the apostle Paul** – One of the guys who validated his ministry amongst the gentiles

D)Paul was a great man of faith – who had a physical infirmity that he was NOT HEALED OF.

**James is not giving a dissertation on healing –**

A)His Focus to these suffering saints in the 1<sup>st</sup> century/US, is to teach us about Praying with Faith

B)Being Real with God – Real with Each other  
1)Real with ourselves

C)Outline today:

**#1 BE REAL WITH GOD**

**<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray**

**We live in the world of Wireless – Cell phones Wi-Fi –**

A)People can conduct business, send emails from Cell phones PDA's laptop computers – Starbucks / Panera / Parks on the beach in Australia.

B)You know who was the first to go wireless? God! – Prayer

**Before Cell Phones – Rabbi visiting the Pope in Rome – saw two phones – Red and Black –**

**Black was regular – Red – God phone**

A)Call God on that phone – Cost you \$100 dollars

B)A few months later – Pope was in Jerusalem – visiting the Rabbi

C)He also had two phones – Black & Blue — Blue – his God phone.

1)Pope asked, God Phone? Asked how much – Rabbi said: \$1 dollar - \$1 dollar why so cheap –

D) Rabbi – Calling from here is a local Call! – Israel

1) **Always a local call – Prayer**

**James was a man who believed in the Power of Prayer**

A) Tradition tells us that James was nicknamed, "Camel-knees" **calloused** - persistence in prayer

**IS ANYONE suffering? – Pray – talk to God**

A) James' readers were suffering because of their Christian testimony.

B) The Greek word for suffering refers to any difficulty.

1) Whether spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, or relational.

C) If you're going through trials of any sort, James' answer (a single word in the Greek text) is like a rifle shot to the bullseye: **"Pray."**

Been said

**"You can do more than pray after you've prayed, but you shouldn't do anything until you've prayed."**

**Prayer should be our -FIRST RESPONSE:**

A) Too often it is a last resort!

B) Last week- Speaking in Orange County – Traffic – accident

1) First reaction was: App – Saw there was a wreck

C) Couldn't get the dumb App to work – We're dumb{ **TECHNOLOGICALLY – challenged**

1) After sitting still 15min Bright idea – Coast – many other people had that idea too.

D) Finally 20 minutes not even traveling 1 mile – I prayed – heading back to FWY – turn there.....

1) Why last Resort - Phone – Chair

**1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**

A) Casting = Demonstrative – Energy –

B) Give it to the Lord – **Guy in traffic**

C) Lord take this: Give him the backpack OF BURDENS - and leave it there.

Phil 4:6-7 **<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

D) Anxious because we are trying to carry it – dependent on us

1) Pray – Dependent on Him

E) **Promise: Peace of God that surpasses all understanding** - Guard your heart

1) So when we are suffering we need to pray – 1<sup>ST</sup> RESPONSE

**What about when we are satisfied. Sing ! Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.**

A) Now I understand why James would need to remind us to pray when we are suffering –

B) But why does he need **to remind us** to sing when we are Satisfied ?

**Tendency when things are going good is to forget the Lord and start walking in the confidence of our flesh.**

A) That is why Moses warned the Jews as they were about to enter the promise land – **Deuteronomy 6:10-12 not to forget God.**

B) For the same reason, David talks to himself in Psalm 103:2, **"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits."**

C) David is Commanding his Soul – Be a worshipper

1) Bless the Lord – give him glory - Remind yourself of his blessings

D) That is one of the great things about Worship Songs – Remind us – God's greatness!

1) His power and His unfailing love

E) #1 Be Real with God – Suffering or Satisfied – Have a Godward -Focus

1) **Song: Jesus be the CENTER** – Good and bad – Focus is on Jesus

**#2 BE REAL WITH EACH OTHER**

**14 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. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

I think it is worth noting here that James is not giving us a formula for healing – Are you Sick ?

A) Step 1 Get the elders together

Step 2 Anoint with oil

Step 3 Pray in Faith – and presto –  
GOD WILL HEAL THEM!

B) **GOD IS NOT INTO FORMULAS** – Why JESUS never did anything the same way twice –

1) One blind guy – spit mud – put on eyes.

2) Another blind guy – just spit on his eyes –

3) another blind guy – just touched –

4) Blind Bartimaeus – just spoke.

C) God is not into formulas – He knows our tendency to package things.

Three fold purpose -1<sup>st</sup> to encourage those who are sick – to be open about it

A) Even if the sickness has to do with Sin - And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

B) Sometimes sickness is related to sin. Don't be embarrassed –

1) Remember the man lowered through the roof – Mark 4 – Paralyzed – tradition tells us – his paralysis was connected to sexual sin

C) The text I think supports that – because Jesus says: Son your sins are forgiven you.

1) Friends – What – all that work for this?

D) Why did Jesus say that ? – Jesus knew his sickness was connected with his SIN

1) JESUS KNEW THAT WAS HIS GREATEST NEED!

So to those who are sick – simply saying – be REAL with each other

A) So when a person is sick – really sick – let him call for the Elders –

B) **NOTE THAT** – the sick person is initiating this.

C) Doesn't say that the elders need to be searching for the sick people in the church so they can go to them.

1) Sometimes people say, "I was sick – no one called – no one came to visit."

D) I didn't know – or else I would have come.

E) So if you are sick – You initiate this – the Elders are available.

His 2<sup>nd</sup> Purpose is to encourage the ELDERS to pray in Faith! Pray believing that God is able to do this.

A) Again we struggle with this: TENSION

B) We struggle with being so bold – what if I pray for the person and they don't get healed.

Bb) Somewhere along the line – someone created this

**Disclaimer to praying for healing "if the Lord wills."**

**C) You know that is not in the Bible:**

1) Can't find it anywhere!

D) There was a leper – who came to Jesus once and said: Lord if you are willing you can heal me.

1) Jesus wasn't like – let me see – how am I feeling today –

E) Nor did Jesus ask him a ton of questions to see if the guy was worthy of a healing

1) Jesus simply smiled – said: I am willing

That is the only place where that phrase is recorded in scripture in conjunction with a prayer for healing.

A) So Why do we do that? I used to pray that way – why did I do that ?

B) Because it gave me an out – just in case the person didn't get healed

1) Heard guys pray – Lord we know you don't heal everyone – **Making excuses for God – If you are willing**

C) Because of this passage here in James 5:15- I don't pray that way any more.

1) I pray with confidence that God is able to do this.

C) Nothing too hard for God is there? Nothing too great?  
Nor is there anything too small for him to care about.

D) God's attitude is NOT - "Oh you have a headache"

1) that is minor - take a Tylenol and come see me when you have cancer or something serious.

E) Nothing is too great or too small - to bring to God  
HE SAYS COME.....

Jesus said: Must become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven.

A) Children believe God can do anything -  
Children believe God is interested in EVERYTHING!

B) God is a Father who loves us - thinks about us.

1) Jar of Sand - start counting -  
thoughts of good not evil .....

C) Hairs on your head

1) Apple of His eye - Most sensitive part

SO Precious Church - let's be those who pray in Faith - Pray with confidence - Pray Boldly!

A) But what if they don't get healed?

B) You can deal with that after - if the person comes back and says - I didn't get healed - Problem?

C) Timing: Keep asking / seeking / knocking

1) CC Philly - Blind son - every Sunday for a Year

On the last Sunday - God healed him.

D) SOMETIMES - TIMING

Platform: 2 Cor. 12 - JESUS told Paul not going to heal you!

A) Grace is sufficient power made perfect in weakness

B) Your life - Platform - God to manifest His strength

C) 3<sup>rd</sup> thing - All will be healed eventually! - HEAVEN

What about this anointing with oil? What is that all about?

A) Some say that it refers to the ancient medicinal application of oil to wounds, such as the Good Samaritan did with the wounded traveler (Luke 10:34).

B) They think the verse means, "Pray and use medical means."

1) While I agree that we should at times use medicine especially if we don't get healed,

C) I am not convinced that James is saying that.

Others say that the oil was a physical point of contact

A) That was used to stimulate the faith of the sick person, much as

B) Jesus used mud to anoint the eyes of the blind man in healing him (John 9:6-11).

C) Paul's sweat bands - That IDEA is possible, BUT I prefer the view that the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who is the divine agent in healing.

A) A way of acknowledging - this is going to be a work of God

B) I PRAY - Do a work of healing by the power of your Holy Spirit!

C) The main point here is especially to the Elders - Pray in Faith - Pray with boldness

So James is encouraging us - to Be Real with God - be real with each other - Sick pray

A) Another way he encourages us to be real with each other is to confess our sins

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

B) Another thing that causes Tension: Confession - I thought that was a Catholic thing - Rid of that.

1) True - One mediator between God and Man - Jesus - Confess your sins to Him

C)But it is also good to confess to someone else  
1)CONFESSION CAN BE SCARRY! – Takes Trust

Three guys on a fishing trip – decide to get real with their struggles –

1<sup>st</sup> guy - been stealing from my company

2<sup>nd</sup> Guy – struggling with drinking – got drunk a few times

3<sup>rd</sup> guy – My struggle is gossip and I can't wait to get home and tell someone about our conversation.

C)Many of us have experienced that sort of thing. - I am never being real with someone again.

True – You have to be careful who you confide in.

A)But Why is confession important?

B) **Confession can free us!** James says – Confess that he may be healed – the word there for healed is made whole.

C)Confession can free us from the heavy burdens (physically and spiritually) of unresolved sin,

1)and removes hindrances to the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Confession also opens up the door for accountability.**

A)Confession to another in the body is essential because sin wants to isolate you from others.

B)Condemnation VS Conviction

C)Accountability is important –

1)You need Someone who can check up on you! – Pray for you – stand with you.

So Be Real with God –  
Be Real with each other

**#3 BE REAL WITH OURSELVES**

A)Another source of tension in this passage is found in the end of V.16 **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.**

B)And James follows that statement by using Elijah as an example. V.17-18

**17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”**

The fact that James using Elijah as his example of an effective prayer warrior at first glance might seem discouraging to most of us.

A)Elijah is one of those guys who seems larger than life.

B) He ministered at a time when Israel under the leadership of King Ahab

1)and his wicked wife Jezebel had led the nation into gross immorality through the worship of Baal

C)The worship of Baal was not only idolatrous, but immoral, with temple prostitutes.

The First time we meet Elijah in the OT is in 1Kings 17

A) He marched in before the wicked, powerful King Ahab announcing that it would only rain by his word

B)His word came true it didn't rain in Israel for 3 ½ years

C))During that time of drought ELIJAH was miraculously fed by the ravens.

C)ELIJAH also miraculously enabled the widow of Zarephath's flour and oil to be replenished through-out the drought.

1)Prayed for her son – died – came back to life

D)Then there was the big showdown on Mount Carmel

450 Prophets of Baal –

1)They cried all day – Elijah mocks....

**Soaks his Sacrifice Extra – “Father show your stuff”**

A)Fire from heaven came down to consume his waterlogged sacrifice in front of the 450 prophets of Baal. And the people of Israel

B)Then he ordered the execution of them all.

C)He parted the Jordan river to walk across.

1)His final act was to be taken to heaven without dying in a chariot of fire.

**D)That's the stuff legends are made of!  
That is what would make a man like Elijah more  
of a hindrance to my prayer life than an  
encouragement,**

A)because I could think that he's in a totally  
different league than I am.

**B)That is why James tells us that Elijah was a  
man with an nature like ours.**

1) Elijah was 100% human – not superhuman  
Same feelings / emotions / struggles

**C)See although Elijah moved in the miraculous,  
and showed great faith and boldness**

1)True he had some **Radical Highs in the Lord}**

**He was also a man who experienced extreme  
lows**

A)After his big victory over the 450 prophets of  
Baal on Mount Carmel –

**B)Elijah became afraid of a woman – Queen  
Jezebel**

**C)He was ready to quit the ministry – He ran  
away from God's call**

1)Ran out into the desert

**D)In complete despair pleaded for God to Kill  
Him!**

1) I am the last of your prophets.....

**This encourages me greatly because I too  
experience great highs and lows in my walk with  
the Lord.**

**A)Here is James' point: Elijah was a man of like  
passions:**

**B)You and I are weak and feeble just like Elijah  
but we can experience Elijah like moments if we  
get our eyes off of ourselves and keep them on  
Jesus! –**

**C)See we have to GET REAL WITH  
OURSELVES**

1)Admit that we **NEED GOD** –

**D)Trust that God is willing and Able to meet the  
need!**

**1 John 5:4 Declares – that the Victory that  
overcomes the world is found in our Faith – not  
our feelings or emotions**

**A)Faith in the Lord / His word / His promises  
B)Daniel 11:32 “the people who know their God  
shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”**

**The People who KNOW THEIR GOD!**

A)Knowing Him – He is great –

B)Song – Our God is mighty for us – Always

Elijah was a man of like Passions –

**Precious Church:**

**BE REAL WITH GOD**

- Suffering – Pray
- Satisfied – Sing

**BE REAL WITH EACH OTHER**

- SICK – HEALING
- CONFESS – ACCOUNTABILITY

**BE REAL WITH YOURSELF**

- Not a super Saint
- Not an island
- Need Jesus