11/14/21

Sun pm

James: Life as a Servant of Jesus, p14

“The Prayer of Faith”

James 5:13-18

Main focus: Prayer, well-being and the community of faith

To the suffering, persecuted church

* Suffering? Pray.
  + A first reaction to suffering, not a last resort
  + What an amazing privilege
* Have you received comfort, deliverance, restoration as an answer? Then Praise Him!
* Have you not? Or are you so weak, weary and defeated that you feel like you can’t even pray? Are you “sick”?
  + Sick? consider the wording and the context:
    - v14 – sick = astheneo. Used 32 times in NT, 18 referencing physical sickness, 14 referencing emotional/spiritual weakness
      * one of those is 2 Cor 12:10, also similar context as James
      * In the epistles, only 3 times does it refer to physical, most refers to spiritual weakness
    - v15 – sick = kamno. The only other use is in Heb 12:3. Note the weariness that it describes. (see also Gal 6:9)
    - v15 – save = to restore or deliver
    - v15 – raised up = to awaken or arouse
    - v15 – note that the healing or restoration is guaranteed. This is another reason that we should come to the understanding that the sickness that James is speaking of is not physical, but in reference to the spiritual weariness and weakness…the battle-weary, faint-heartedness, exhaustion, etc.
    - Note also that James has not been talking about physical problems to the believers in this letter
    - The suffering that we endure sometimes brings this weariness. When it does, James says, “pray”. Are you in a place so low that it feels like you just don’t have the strength to? Then…
* Call for the elders
  + We’re designed for community/body life.
  + Pray over him
    - Remember the friends that carried the paralytic to Jesus? It’s kinda like that
  + Anoint him with oil
    - Oil sometimes represents the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, also frequently associated with blessing
    - This also infers a hands-on, up close and personal ministry to the broken by the leadership
    - 1 Thess 5:14
      * Ministry of the “strong” to the “weak”
* The prayer of faith will save him and the Lord will raise him up
  + Faith of the elders, and the faith of the one.
  + The Lord will respond by awakening or arousing…or restoring the strength and vitality of the spiritual battle-worn believer
* If he has sinned, he will be forgiven
  + Sin causes weakness and weakness from suffering can set the stage for temptation
  + That meeting with the elders and the prayer of faith would certainly result in confession and repentance
* Together
  + Confess your sin to each other. Not to be forgiven, but to be healed. To be restored spiritually.
    - Accountability
    - Bringing the struggles into the light has a way of breaking the power of a sin that we continue to struggle with.
      * Are you struggling? Are you utilizing this invaluable tool or neglecting it?
  + Pray for one another
    - Specific, related to the struggles
* The prayer of a righteous person is powerful
  + Positionally righteous (faith in Jesus gives us access to the throne of the Most High)
  + Walking in righteousness or not will affect our prayers
  + There is amazing power in prayer. Not in our prayers, but in the One to whom we have the privilege of praying!
* Illustration of Elijah
  + Nature like ours. He had been afraid, depressed…isn’t it a refreshing reminder that he wasn’t a super hero? We have access to the same God by the same means
  + The prayer brought rain – refreshment – to parched, dry ground. This is what the Lord will do through our prayers for the weak, weary, beat and broken down warrior in the spiritual battle of life that often accompanies the suffering that we will endure!