

James 5 Expository

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of patience and not setting one's heart on riches, while also highlighting the danger of judging others and the importance of showing mercy.

Duration: 1:05:55

Scripture: Proverbs 10:12, Proverbs 11:30, Daniel 12:3, James 5:1-8, James 5:13-16, James 5:19-20

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Prayer And Repentance"

Description

This sermon by James focuses on various important topics such as the warning to the rich about the dangers of setting their hearts on riches, the importance of patience in waiting for the Lord's coming, the significance of confessing faults and praying for one another, the power of fervent prayer, and the impact of converting a sinner from the error of their ways. James emphasizes the need for genuine faith, practical application of God's word, and the importance of reaching out to those who have strayed from the truth.

Transcript

James begins the fifth chapter with a warning to those that are rich. Probably doesn't apply to many of us tonight, but he is warning about riches. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that are come upon you.

Now the Bible does not condemn a person for being rich. In fact, as we look at Abraham, he was evidently an extremely wealthy man. When the five kings came from the area of Syria, invaded the land and took his nephew Lot as a captive, Abraham took of his own servants over 300 men to pursue this confederate nations that had come against the area where Lot was down in Sodom and so forth.

And so it shows that he had quite a bit of wealth. Job again was a man who experienced the blessings of God as far as wealth was concerned. And surely David was very rich as was Solomon.

I mean, there was probably no one that had greater riches than did Solomon. And so there's nothing wrong with riches. However, the Bible does tell us that if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

That's the danger. The Bible tells us that those that are rich have a lot more problems with temptation than you do. They have the money to indulge their lust, whereas you might lust but you don't have any money to indulge it.

They have the money and so the temptation is worse for them because of the fact that they have that the riches. And in Paul warned Timothy, those that will be rich will fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts that drown men in destruction and perdition. Not wrong to be rich and yet it can be a stumbling block.

It can be a problem if you set your heart upon them. They can draw you away from the Lord and the things of the Lord. So he's warning now the rich of the miseries.

Now a lot of people have the idea that if I would only, if I were only rich, I would be happy. Have you read any of those articles that have come out upon people that have won the lottery and the misery that it's brought to them? You know you often think, oh you know if I could just win the lottery I would be so happy. But if you read the actual stories of those that have won the lottery, so many of them are stories of tragedy.

And can you imagine if all of your friends suddenly hear that you're a multimillionaire, you've just won the lottery, they just, you know, you'll find all kinds of friends you didn't even know you had as they come. And I was dealing with a, that's a bad word I guess to use, dealing, but I knew a fellow and witnessing to him who was in the mafia. And I was in his home and he took me to his safe and he showed me these, this whole, well bunch of bills.

He said there's a hundred thousand dollars there. And I've never seen a hundred thousand dollars before in bills but, and I didn't count them but I just took his word for it. There were enough there that more than I'd ever seen.

And he said, you know, he said right now I have possession of this money. But he said there is this circle of fellows, all connected with the mafia, and he said they all know that I have this money now. And he said all of us are scammers.

And he said I got it by scamming these guys and they know that I have it now and they are all figuring out ways to scam me out of it. And he said one of them will come up with something and I'll bite it. And he said I'll lose it.

And then he said we all know where it's moving to and we then all, you know, sort of pounce on that guy, sort of sharks in a frenzy. As riches don't really solve problems, sometimes they create more problems than they do solve. The Bible speaks about the uncertainty of riches.

But here James is warning those who sort of got their riches through taking advantage of others. And that is an unfortunate thing. And so many people have taken advantage of others in order to gain riches.

And so he says your riches are corrupted. Your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver is cankered.

And the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped up treasure together for the last days. And so it would seem that there perhaps is an element of prophecy here.

And those, he said of the last days, you've heaped up this treasure for the last days. And he said behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped your fields which you have kept back by fraud, cries and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. The Lord heard their cries.

So the riches were not honestly gained. They were fraudulently gained as they held back the wages as they really defrauded those that had worked for them. He said you have lived in pleasure on the earth but you've been wanton.

You've nourished your hearts as in the day of slaughter and you have condemned and killed the just and he does not resist you. So James warning against those who are rich who have gained their riches in an ill-gotten way. And then he turns on the subject of patience.

Now I have to confess that I have a problem with patience. I've always had a problem with patience. When I was a kid I could never make model airplanes.

I tried many times, never successful, never finished a model airplane. I would cut out the wing struts and all the things and I would glue them together, pin them down. But I could never wait for the glue to dry.

I was always so anxious to see how it was and you know I would take out the pins and pick it up and the thing would just sort of crumble because the glue was, it did, they had, you know, they've developed I guess now five second glue. Unfortunately they didn't have that when I was a kid. I might have been able to handle that but having to wait all night never, never could do it.

And patience is something that I've never really had much of. But he speaks here of patience and the importance of patience. In Hebrews we read concerning those of the Old Testament who through faith and patience inherited the promises of God.

How many times God tells us wait on the Lord and that's a difficult thing for us to do, to just wait on the Lord. But yet it's such an important thing for us to do. So be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord.

So he's going to be talking now about the Lord's coming but how important it is for us to be patient. Now as far as I'm concerned he should have come a long time ago. And you know you look at the world today and you think Lord, you know, how long are you going to wait? How long are you going to put up with these things that are happening in our world today? And we are encouraged, patience, patience for the coming of the Lord.

And then he tells us why the Lord is waiting to come. Behold the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it until he receives the early and the latter rain. Peter tells us, know this, in the last days there will be scoffers who will come and they will say where is the promise of his coming? Since our fathers have fallen asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

But of this they are willingly ignorant that the word of God, by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, that is the great flood, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now by the same word are kept in store reserved unto the fire against the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that the day of the Lord, a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, a thousand years as a day, but the Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, but he is faithful to us and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

So here James tells us that as the husbandman he is waiting for the complete fruit of harvest. And Peter tells us that he that you know the patience of the Lord is because he's not willing that any should perish. Now he does tell us about Noah and how that people, the scoffers say well where is the promise of his coming? And you remember that Noah was a hundred years building that ark before the flood came.

And you can be sure that there were scoffers when they go out in the desert and see this huge ark being built. And Noah would preach to them of righteousness and tell them that the judgment of God was coming. You know what are you building that thing out here in the desert for? And he said well there's going to be a flood.

And you can imagine how they must have ridiculed him and made fun of him for building that ark. And for a hundred years working on that project. Showing really again the patience of God.

Putting up with the people for that long of a period. And of course we read concerning the people that the imaginations of their heart was only evil continually. Wicked people.

And yet God had great patience with them as Noah was building the ark. We are living in a day and in an age in which man is in almost full rebellion against God. We've turned from the commandments of the Lord.

And we do believe that the Lord is coming. That he is coming we believe very soon. You know the day of the Lord did come when Moses went into the ark.

And God shut the doors and the flood did come that Moses was predicting. And God is not slack concerning his promises as some men might count slackness. He's faithful and he will come and establish the kingdom.

How long God will wait we don't know. He is waiting for the complete fruit of harvest. And I am impatient.

I would like to see him come soon. But I realize that he may not. He may wait a little longer.

And for you who say in the last year have accepted the Lord. Aren't you glad that he waited? Waited for you. And you know 20 years ago I was praying even so come quickly Lord Jesus.

Had he come 20 years ago it would have left a lot of you out in the cold. And so when I think of how that the Lord has brought so many into the family of God. I am thankful that he has waited.

And yet on the other hand I just wonder how much longer can he wait. And so be patient. James tells us unto the coming of the Lord.

He is waiting for the precious fruit of the earth. And he has long patience for it until he receives the early and the latter rain. The church was born in a revival.

When God poured out the spirit on the day of Pentecost several thousand people were saved. During that early period of the church as God was pouring out his spirit upon the church. It multiplied.

It carried the gospel into all the world as Paul wrote to the Colossians. And he said and the word of God which has come to you as it is in all the world. That was the early rain.

God promised that in the last days he would pour out his spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and daughters would prophesy. Your young men would see visions.

Your old men would dream dreams. And upon my servants and handmaidens will I pour out of my spirit sayeth the Lord. So the latter rain.

And I do believe that we are going to see a glorious outpouring of the spirit of God upon the church in these last days. And I pray that we'll be prepared for it. And that God will just raise up our young people to go out and to share the word of God with the world.

I thought that when we had that hippie movement maybe this is it. As God turned so many of these kids on. And they were going around the world witnessing for Christ.

But I do believe that there is going to be one. Now I can't give you scriptures for this. But I do believe that God is faithful.

God is loving. And that there will be one great outpouring of the spirit. And then the Lord will take his church home.

So the latter rain. And there are other passages of scripture that speak of the early and the latter rain. And the latter rain would exceed even the early rain.

So he said be patient. Establish your hearts. For the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh or it is getting close.

And what can you say? The coming of the Lord is one year closer than it was a year ago. Just when he's coming we're not sure. But it is closer than it was.

And the Lord is coming again. I'm convinced of that with all of my heart. But there are scriptures that indicate that the Lord will wait a while before he comes.

Now you see the early church, they believed that the Lord was going to come almost in their lifetime. When Jesus was with his disciples after his resurrection, just before he left them to return to heaven, he was with them there on the Mount of Olives. And he was telling them, now you wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father which I've told you about.

For John did indeed baptize unto repentance. But you're going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days. And the disciples said, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? You're going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.

Lord, will you come again in just a few days? And is that how close we are to your coming? Just a few days? And Jesus said, it's not given to you to know the times and the seasons that are in the Father's hands. But you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Now, in the writings of the apostles, all of them in their writings seem to indicate, especially the earlier writings, that Christ would be coming again during their lifetime.

Towards the end of that early, as many of them had been martyred and were gone, some of the later writers began to encourage, as does James, patience for the coming of the Lord, because he's waiting actually for the precious fruit of the earth, and he has long patience toward it. Had they listened carefully to Jesus, they probably would have realized that the coming of the Lord was not as soon as they were

anticipating or expecting it. In Luke chapter 20, verse 9, Jesus spoke a parable to the people, and he said, a certain man planted a vineyard, and he let it out to the husbandmen to take care of it.

And he went into a far country for a long time. In other words, indicating that he wasn't going to be coming back real quick as they were anticipating. And had they been listening carefully to the parable, they would have realized that he is saying that he will be coming back in a long time.

But let me say, it's been a long time. And so, you know, I really believe that we are living very close to the return of the Lord. So, patience as we're waiting for the Lord.

Verse 9, don't grumble. The word grudge not is don't grumble one against another, lest you be condemned. For behold, the judge is standing before the door.

That is, the Lord is coming. He's coming soon. And so be careful.

It's so easy to get caught up in sort of a negative judgmental kind of an attitude. I have observed that when a person develops this critical negative attitude, that they soon become critical of just about everything. They're looking for the problem in every situation.

And they become hyper critical. We had an attorney here at the church who had accepted the Lord and was just really excited about the Lord and the things of the Lord. And for several years, he just was very fruitful and just was a wonderful friend.

But then he began to become judgmentally, judgmental and critical of certain things that he saw. And he started writing these letters of criticism. And it affected his whole walk with the Lord.

And it was tragic, because he became so critical that nothing really pleased him. He could find fault with just about everything. He finally moved from the area, and it became such a bad thing with him that his wife ultimately left him, couldn't stand the fact that he was so critical about everything and everybody.

And it's sort of sad when you get in that kind of a mode. It can really just destroy your effectiveness for Christ. And the Bible tells us, judge not lest you be judged.

And it's a sad thing when a person gets that kind of a judgmental attitude towards others. And so here, we are told really that we are not to grumble one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned for the judge, the true judge, the only one who is really capable of judging, stands at the door. Have you ever wondered why the Lord doesn't give us that privilege of judging? It tells us, judge not lest you be judged.

And whatever standard you use for judging others, that's the standard that God will use in judging you. So blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Now, why doesn't God allow us to judge? I like to judge situations.

But to be perfectly honest with you, I have misjudged many things because I didn't have all the facts. I thought I knew. I made judgment in what I thought was right.

But I didn't have all the facts. And when I got all the facts, I realized I made a wrong judgment. Years ago, when Kay and I were pastoring in Tucson, Arizona, we lived in a little room when we first went to Tucson behind the church.

We had just one child at the time. And it was just a bare room. We had a hole through the block wall and a single faucet coming in for our kitchen.

No sink, but we had a pan. No hot water. We had to heat the water on the stove.

And we did our best to fix it up and made it into sort of a little three-room kind of an apartment. We had to use the church restrooms, and they were clear up at the front of the church. And so at night, we would have to get the flashlight and go through the church to get to the restrooms.

We learned to brush our teeth with a glass of water out the back, spit the water on the grass, you know, but with just a glass of water. I mean, it was, well, we were serving the Lord, and we were happy. I mean, what can you say? We were just totally happy because here we had the opportunity of serving the Lord.

And we received a letter from our bishop who warned us, and it was sort of a general letter. It wasn't direct. It was just a general letter sent out to the churches warning us of this couple who were going around scamming the churches.

It described the couple, and it gave a description of how they would talk, you know, about the leaders of the denomination with, you know, first names and like they knew them personally and real well, but they were scamming the churches. And so it was just a letter, just watch out for them, beware because, you know, they're going around scamming. Well, we received a knock on our door, and here was this couple, and they fit the description of the letter that we got.

And so they introduced themselves, and they began to talk about the bishop and the others of the denomination. And they told us, oh, you know, we pastored this church at one time. And we said, oh, you know, thought, yeah, yeah, you know.

And we were just cold, just cold, because I thought, man, you know, I know who you are. I've got a letter on you. And so they said, could we see the church? Because when they were there in Tucson, the church wasn't there.

Can we see the church? We said, sure, you know, and we took them in. And they stood on the platform, and the guy very dramatically said, honey, it was worth it all. And I was just so cool and cold.

And when do you have services, you know? And we said, well, we've got a service going tonight. And they gave me the story, well, our car broke down just out of Tucson. We had it towed in, and it's getting repaired.

And I thought, yeah, here it is, you know. They're going to need money to get their car fixed, you know. And I thought, man, I've got you wired, man, you know.

But they came to church that night, and to my surprise, some of the older members of the church came up to them and hugged them and said, oh, how are you? And I realized, man, I've misjudged this couple. And they never did hit me up for the money, but I thought, you know, how sad that I so badly misjudged them. Looking for the scam, expecting them to try to scam us and judge them so wrongly.

God doesn't give us the privilege of judging because we don't know all the facts, nor do we always know the motives. What's in their heart? We can't see that. When I was a little guy, I had an older sister.

And when the parents, our parents had gone to the store, she found some paint. And she decided that we ought to paint the garage. It was red paint.

And so we got some brushes and we were out there painting the garage door red. And in my mind, my thought was, when my folks get home, they're going to be so happy and so proud of the way we painted this garage door. So when they drove up, and they saw the paint on the garage door and on the sidewalk and all over us, my dad got out and he spanked me and I was so disappointed.

I thought, surely he's going to be happy. But to see his anger and his reaction, I was really devastated. Years later, when we were pastoring in Huntington Beach, Kay and I went to the store.

When we got home, Jan, our oldest, had enlisted her younger brothers. To help her paint the garage. And as we pulled into the driveway, Kay screamed and I said, wait a minute, honey, let me handle this.

Because I remembered my own experience. And so I called Jan aside and I said, honey, as you were painting the garage door with your brothers, just what were you thinking? She said, I was thinking we're going to get in a lot of trouble for this, but it's a lot of fun. So you see, you don't know what's going on in a person's mind.

And that's why God doesn't allow us the privilege of judging. Because we are not certain of the facts and we don't know the motives. Sometimes we think we do, but sometimes we can be so wrong.

And thus God says, judge not, lest ye be judged. So we are not to be grudging against another. The Lord is the true judge.

And when he comes, his judgment will be righteous. Then James tells us, take my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience. In other words, look back, the Old Testament, the prophets of God, who because of their speaking the word of God to the people, they suffered affliction, and yet they were patient.

They endured the suffering at the hands of the people. You remember with Jeremiah, because they got so angry with his prophecies, telling them to submit to Babylon, don't try to resist. He was accused of being unpatriotic and of demoralizing the people.

And he was put in the dungeon. And there in the dungeon, he said, you know, here I'm speaking the word that God told me to speak, and look what it does. It gets me in this dungeon, you know.

And I, he said, I decided I'm not going to speak for the Lord anymore. I resign, I quit. But he said his word was like fire in my bones, and I couldn't hold back.

It's interesting when Stephen was called before the council there in Jerusalem, Acts, that as he began to address the council, sort of rehearsing their history, he was really giving a very brilliant defense for Christ. He was showing them that their fathers, who they were so proud of, and with the Jews, they were always talking about, well, our fathers, and our fathers this, and our fathers that. And so Stephen was showing them how that their fathers weren't as perfect as they thought they were.

How that when Joseph had these dreams that his brothers were going to bow down and worship before him, how that they decided to kill him, and opted to sell him as a slave to slave traders going to Egypt, rather than to kill him. And they rejected the dreams, and his interpretation of their dreams. However, the

second time they saw Joseph, little did they know that this ruler in Egypt was their brother Joseph.

Seventeen years had passed by, and he had changed, and they didn't recognize him, though he had recognized them. And then when he revealed himself to them, how that they really bowed down before him, but they rejected him the first time. But yet the second time, they realized their mistake, and they accepted him the second time.

Moses, the first time they rejected him. Now the Bible tells us he thought that they knew that God would, had ordained that he should lead them out of their bondage in Egypt. And when he presented himself the first time, he saw the Egyptian beating this slave, the Israeli slave, and so he looked around, didn't see anybody.

He killed the Egyptian and buried him there in the sand. The next day, he saw two Israelis fighting with each other, and he went to break up the fight. He said, hey guys, you're brothers, you know, shouldn't be fighting each other.

And they said, who made you a ruler over us? Are you going to kill us like you did the Egyptian yesterday? And he realized that what he thought was done in secret was known, and so he fled, knowing that the Pharaoh would be upset with him. They rejected him the first time. The second time, when God sent him back to the Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel, they accepted then his leadership.

Can you see how he's building up? Jesus came the first time, they rejected him, they crucified him. When he comes again, they're going to recognize that he is a Messiah. They're going to accept him, and he's building up this great position.

It's very reasonable, very logical. But then he sort of lost it. He said, which of the prophets, your fathers, you know, you're talking about your father, which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute, put into prison? And he was really rebuking them for, you know, he said, your fathers rejected those that God did send, the prophets and all, which of them did they not persecute, did they not put in prison? And he said, but you're worse than your fathers, because you have rejected his son, the Messiah, the Savior that he sent.

And of course, they became so incensed, they took him out and stoned him to death. But the fact that they missed the first time. So here, James is saying, take my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of those who suffered affliction, to speak God's word truthfully, straightforward and plain, is not going to make you the most popular person in the neighborhood.

But you will find that they will reject and turn on you. They don't want to hear the truth. They want to hear that God loves everybody, and everything is going to be fine.

And God doesn't care what you do. And you can live however you want. And when you die, you know, the preacher will stand up there and talk about, you know, how wonderful that you're there now in heaven, and say nice things about you.

It sort of reminds me again, a mafia story, where this member of the mafia, a very wicked man, had died. And his brother came to the pastor. And he said, I want you to do the service for my brother who died.

And he said, I want you to say to the people how wonderful and godly a man he was. And the minister thought, I can't do that. Everybody knows what a crook this guy was.

And he said, I'm sorry, I just can't do that. And he said, preacher, I know that you're wanting to build a new annex on the church, and I'll give you a million dollars for the church if you'll just tell the people how wonderful a man and godly a man my brother was. And the preacher thought it over.

And so as he stood up there at the funeral service, he said, this man who is here, you all know him well. And compared to his brother, he was a wonderful, godly man. Consider the prophets suffering affliction, because they dared to speak the truth, God's truth to the people.

And he said, behold, we count them happy, which endure. And you have heard of the patience of Job. You've seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very merciful.

He's a tender mercy. And so he shows us the picture of Job, the afflictions that he endured, but how in the end of these things, God blessed him and gave him more than he had at the beginning. But above all things, James says, my brothers, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yes be yes, let your no be no, lest you fall into condemnation.

There are people who feel it necessary to confirm what they say as true, to sort of swear, take an oath. I swear by God that I'm telling you the truth. I swear by my mother's honor.

Or, you know, they want to sort of affirm what they are saying to is the truth. James said, you shouldn't take an oath. You shouldn't swear that you're telling the truth.

You should just be a man of your word. And when you say yes, mean yes. When you say no, mean no.

But don't be so dishonest that in order to convince people that your yes is a yes, you have to sort of swear. I swear that it is so. Jesus spoke about taking oaths.

There in Matthew 5, Sermon on the Mount, he said, you have heard that it has been said by those of old time, you shall not forswear thyself, but perform your oaths before the Lord. But I say unto you, don't swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, because it's his footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of a great king. And neither should you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair black or white.

That's before Lady Claro. But let your yes be yes, and let your no be no, and whatever is more than this comes of evil. So Jesus is basically saying, or James is really repeating what Jesus said earlier, that just be a person of your word.

Don't be the kind of person that in order to convince people that you're telling the truth, you have to swear on a stack of Bibles, you know, that this is so. Jesus later said, woe unto you blind guides, which say, whoever swears by the temple, it isn't binding. But if you swear by the gold of the temple, then that's binding.

You fools and blind, which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? Whoever swears by the altar, that's not a binding oath. But if you swear by the gift that is on the altar, then that is binding. You fools and blind, what is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? And so Jesus is basically saying, tell the truth.

Don't be the kind of a person that people can't trust your word. When you say yes, let it mean yes. When you say no, let it be no.

Now he's going to talk about afflictions and sicknesses and just prayer. Is any among you afflicted? Now an affliction is the suffering that we experience, pain that we experience. Oftentimes, as a work of God in our lives, to keep us on the right track.

If I start to go astray, God is faithful and he will allow an affliction. Maybe a loss of a job. Maybe the loss of money.

Maybe some kind of a tragedy in my life. Maybe an auto wreck. And I wonder, why did God allow this to happen to me? Why is it that I'm suffering these reverses in my life? And so he said, if that happens to you, if you're afflicted, you should pray.

If there is any sick among you, this is a little different. Well, is any merry, happy? Then sing psalms. Have you ever done that? I do that a lot.

Just singing unto the Lord, singing songs of praises unto the Lord. And to me, it's just a wonderful thing. And if you're merry, if you're happy, sing songs to the Lord.

Is there any sick among you? Now, this seems to be different and separate from afflictions. All of us are prone to the germs that are around us. And oftentimes we do get sick.

It isn't that God is necessarily seeking to teach us a lesson from this, but it's just life. And we're not immune from sicknesses. But if there is any sick among you, 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 sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. And if they've committed sins, they will be forgiven. Maybe indicating that the sickness could be the result of sin, and some sicknesses are.

But the elders of the church call them, let them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. On Saturday night, here at the church, we have men, elders, who do gather and they pray for the sick who come. They anoint with oil in the name of the Lord.

John, in his Thursday morning Bible study here at Calvary, has the time after they study of laying hands on people and praying for their healing. And we're thrilled to report that God is working in a wonderful way. Many people are being healed of all types of sicknesses.

And we have just so many people are testifying of God's touch upon their lives and upon their bodies, healing them. And that's scriptural. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up.

And if they've committed sins, they will be forgiven. And then one further thing, confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. Now, I think I should give a word of warning on this.

In confessing your faults, be careful who you confess them to. I heard about these three ministers that met for coffee about once a week. And they decided on this scripture that they would confess their faults to each other.

And the first fellow said, well, you know, I have a problem with lust. A pretty woman comes into the office for counsel, and I counsel them. And he said, but I sort of, when I'm praying for them, I hold their hands, and I sort of continue to hold their hand.

And he said, I get some kind of a thrill out of just holding their hand. And he said, I know I shouldn't, but I have a problem with that. The second one said, well, I have a problem with drinking.

Now, I know I shouldn't do it, but he said, I keep a bottle in my desk drawer. And he said, I just have this problem with drinking. The third one said, I have a problem with gossip.

And he said, I can't wait to get out of here. So, take care who you are confessing your faults to. Make sure they don't have the problem of gossip.

Confess your faults one to another. Pray one for another that you might be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. Does that mean that some prayers are not fervent? I would think so. I think that sometimes we pray in sort of a perfunctory manner, and there really isn't a fervency, a feeling of, God, you need to work, you have to work in this.

And we're prone to just say, oh, Lord, just help now and minister and thank you, Jesus, you know. But it isn't really a fervent kind of a prayer. I can remember when I grew up, my mother was a woman of prayer.

When things would happen, we would never go to the doctor. Mom would always pray. We'd get hurt, we'd go to mom, she'd pray.

I was in a clod fight. Clod hit my eye and sort of pushed it out. I went home and mom just pushed it back in and prayed and didn't go to the doctor, just trusted the Lord.

And so I was hurt, and I went to mom to pray, and she prayed, oh, Lord, touch Charles, you know, and heal him now and thank you, Jesus. And I was still hurting. And so I said, mom, pray again.

This time, pray like you really mean it. And that's the effectual fervent prayer. Pray like you really mean it.

And the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Now he points out Elijah. When you think of Elijah and you think of the miracles that were wrought as the result of the prayers of Elijah, we have a tendency of classifying people into different degrees.

Oh, he's a saint. Oh, he's a super saint. He's a reverend.

He is a right reverend. He is the most right reverend. And you know, you keep adding on to titles.

And we seem to have Elijah in that category of, oh, you know, he's beyond anything I could ever be. I mean, he was such a godly man. God spoke to him in such wonderful ways.

And yet, James tells us, hey, he was a man just like you, just like me. He had the same kinds of testings. He had the same kinds of emotions.

He is just like us. He's a man of like passions as are we. And yet he prayed, and God shut up the heavens for three and a half years.

Here's a man praying, Lord, don't let it rain until I pray again. And it didn't rain for three and a half years, and there was a great drought in the land. Because here's a man praying, God stop the rain.

Now you think, wow, that's powerful. Hey, he was just like you. Man of like passions, just like we are.

And yet, God answered his prayer. And then he prayed again, and it rained on the earth, and it brought forth her fruit. He closes his little epistle by saying, brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him, let him know that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death, and will hide a multitude of sins.

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 11 30, the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that wins souls is wise. If you do convert a brother who is erring from the truth, he that wins souls is wise. Daniel wrote in 12 3, and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Again in Proverbs 10 12, hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. So if any of you do, if a brother errs from the truth, and you convert him, know that he which converts the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and will hide a multitude of sins. Goodbye, James.

Enjoy being with you the last few weeks. Hate to see you go, but we'll meet Peter next week, and listen to what he has to say to us, and we'll find that he also will capture our hearts with his great instruction. Father, we give thanks to you tonight for the opportunity of studying this book of James, and for the practical lessons that he teaches us.

And Lord, we ask now that you would help us that we wouldn't be just hearers of the word, but let us become doers also, that we not be deceived, and just thinking because I've heard it, I'm okay. But Lord, may we put it into practice in our lives, and help us, Lord, that we might be faithful. Faithful in our devotions, faithful in prayer, faithful in encouraging one another, faithful, Lord, in reaching out to those that have erred from the way, bringing them back to the path, helping them, and encouraging them, Lord, along the way.

In Jesus' name we ask, Amen. Shall we stand? Pastors are down here at the front to pray for you tonight. Whatever the need might be, if there are any sick among you, the elders are here.

They'll be happy to pray for you tonight, and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up. The effectual fervent prayer we read, of a righteous man availeth much. And so, we would encourage you to cast all of your cares upon the Lord, because he cares for you, and he wants to meet your needs tonight.

And so, you're invited to come forward after we dismiss, and receive prayer. Also, remember over in the fellowship hall, there will be those that will be gathering for prayer over there, and for a time of waiting upon the Lord, and you're welcome to go, and just sort of get the week started on the right foot. Now, may the Lord be with you, and may the Lord bless you this week.

May this be a special week in your life, of experiencing the work of God's Spirit within your life, as God reveals himself to you, and as he reveals his love for you. May it be a week of growth, as you grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May you be blessed, blessed abundantly in him.

I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice to worship you. Oh, my soul rejoice. Take joy, my King, in what you hear.

May it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear. God bless you.

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