

# Go, Love, Invite

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## James 5:15-20

James will end his letter with the most important thing that he practiced, **praying and worshipping God.**

**Worship: It is the relationship between God and us.** Worshipping God is a Christ-centered lifestyle.

**Prayer: It is consciously and deliberately speaking/listening to God.**

**-Praying *together* for healing is vital in church life.**

**-Praying in faith is important as well.**

### 1. The relationship of sickness and sin.

And the prayer of faith will save the one who is **sick** (*astheneō*), and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has **committed sins** (*hamartia*), he **will be forgiven.**

Therefore, confess your sins (*paraptōma*) to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (effective) NIV. (5:15-16 ESV)

a. God did not create us so that we would be sick. In the beginning, we did not have sicknesses. Sickness and disease are part of our lives after Adam and Eve sinned. **We live in defective world under the curse of sin.**

**Yet,** we should be careful not to relate any sickness with a sin that one has committed. They asked Jesus about this:

**As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.**

On the other hand we read in Mark 2: 1-12, Jesus healed the paralyzed man saying: ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ and ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? Here in the

context Jesus is teaching that our main healing is not just physical healing. Jesus is the Lord who will heal us from the SIN, who spate us from God.

Also I would like to add we do crazy things in life and had consequences. We do stuff that can bring harm to our lives; we could “sin” and bring trouble to our head. We could be angry and break a window or glass and injure ourselves. Or because of some illness or pain we could start blaming others, cursing God and falling in sin.

b. There is another type of sin which is a disease that destroys the church community, or any relationship: the sin of **gossip** and **judgment**. Many similar sins hurt the body of Christ and cause wounds. The word that is used for *sick* (*Kamno*) is different; it means a **despairing heart, a dark loss of hope** that requires the intervening prayers of the church.

James encourages us to **confess to each other our sin (*paraptōma*)**. This **confession is for healing, for the body of Christ to be edified and encouraged**. Sin can damage us, externally and internally, but when we confess to God and to each other, God will bring a miracle and healing to the community.

When David confessed his sin, he experienced the joy of release and he praised God with songs and psalms as a result.

**Do we confess to each other?** We Armenians are too proud to accept that we make mistakes in the first place. We have difficulty to accept that we have sinned. I wonder how we can ask God for healing when we are not broken.

## **2. Steadfastness in Prayer (Keep praying, praying fervently, earnestly)**

**Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently, (*earnestly*) (*proseuchē*)<sup>1</sup> that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.** (James 5:13-18 ESV)

The story of Elijah is a good example of praying fervently, earnestly for 3.5 years. It is described in 1 Kings 17-18. Ahab was a wicked king who worshiped Baal. He married Jezebel from Sidon, (wrong marriage) who worshiped Baal (Read the

story in 1 King 17-18). Elijah prayed in faith for a long time for Yahweh to be in control of the situation of the drought. Elijah was simply a righteous man of God obeying Him.

### **3. Go, Love, and Invite**

**My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,<sup>20</sup> let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.** (James 5:19-20 ESV)

These are the last words of James for his letter.

People all over are wondering for the truth. People are searching, people don't know, people did not hear. Who will tell them? Who will love them? Who will invite them?

I will ask three persons from our congregation to tell me about their understanding about these verses and how they obey God's command.

Two questions:

1 What do these verses mean to you?

2 How do you apply them in your life or the church's life?

Christian Tufenkjian

Linda Thomas Matoian

John Eleazarian

### **Finally:**

James finishes the letter with a mission mind. Go, love, and invite.

James is the brother of Jesus. He has seen how his brother was hanged on the cross, died and rose from the dead so the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would spread all over the world.

I would love to end my sermon series from NT Wright's conclusion:

Jesus himself embodied new life and forgiveness. He had hung at the place where new life and forgiveness came bursting through from God's world to ours. Everything James has been saying flows from that astonishing fact. To learn, with James, to understand and obey 'the royal law' of love is to get to know Jesus himself. And as that happens, so the patience and humility, the love and the prayer, the wisdom and the true speech on which he has been insisting will become part of our lives. These are the 'works' which will demonstrate our faith.<sup>2</sup>

Let me finish with a verse from Peter:

**"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."** (1 Peter 4:7,8)

Amen.

1. Fervently, earnestly (*proseuchē*) the word in Greek means:
  - a. Prayer addressed to God
  - b. A place set apart or suited for the offering of prayer.
2. N.T. Wright *The Early Christian Letters* P 43,44

*Father, thank you for your word to us this morning. Thank you for the book of James that has rebuked us, encouraged us and shown us the way of faith, wisdom, humility, and holiness. Thank you for the gracious reminder that we must not isolate ourselves, but live together in intimate community. Help us to be a loving fellowship, open and honest, sharing each other's burdens. We know that you are the One who gives us both the will and the desire to obey, and we thank you Lord for your power and presence within us to love others as you have loved. In Christ's name, Amen. Andrew Drake*