

200209-1 Ja 5, 13-20, The Prayer of Faith -CThurman

As is to be expected there is much that can be said about the text before us. We have come to the end of the letter James wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to the Jewish brethren of the churches that were scattered as a result of the persecution that arose about the martyrdom of Stephen.

Ac 11:19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. (cf. Ac.8.1)

As a side note these churches were not organized by any kind of a sanction by the church at Jerusalem, no mission board, or missionaries. There is nothing of this in the Scriptures. Later, Paul & Silas came to some of these churches, not to begin churches, but to help establish or strengthen those churches that were already thriving.

Ac.15.40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

confirming, ἐπιστηρίζων, nom. sing. masc. part. pres. of ἐπιστηρίζω, ἐπί preposition upon + στηρίζω, to be fixed, strengthened, established, stablished; ἐπιστηρίζων, tss. to confirm (3), to strengthen (1, Ac.18.23)

The *missionary* aspect of church organization that we think of today began as God chose certain of these Christian Jews to preach Christ among the Gentiles. But that didn't change anything about how NT churches are organized.

It is to these congregations of Christian Jews that James now bring his letter to a close.

Identifying those faltering in the faith (v.13) – Helping those faltering in the faith (vss.14, 15) – Keeping from faltering in the faith (vss.16-18) – &, Restoring those faltering in the faith (vss.19, 20).

It might be helpful to reacquaint ourselves with the wording of this portion of Scriptures. Read through from vss. 13-20.

ἐν ὑμῖν

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Is any suffering among you (same order in v.14)

is ... afflicted, κακοπαθεῖ, 3ps. pres. ind. of κακοπαθέω, κακός wicked, harm, ill, bad, noisome + πάσχω, tss. to suffer (39), to feel (felt) (1), to vex (1), [his] passion (1); the verb κακοπαθέω, is tss. to endure hardness, suffer trouble, endure afflictions, & to be afflicted; the noun κακοπάθεια is once in the NT & tss. suffering affliction.

let him pray, προσευχέσθω, 3ps. pres. imper. of προσεύχομαι, to pray; cf. v.14

is ... merry, εὐθυμεῖ, 3ps. pres. ind. of εὐθυμέω, tss to be of good cheer, to be merry.

let him sing psalms, ψαλλέτω, 3ps. pres. imper. of ψάλλω, tss. to make melody, sing psalms, sing.

Not everyone experiences the same things at the same time. This applies to everyone whether they know the Lord or not. The experiences in this church at this moment are as varied as the individual. The English word *afflicted* is tss. from the Greek verb, κακοπαθέω. It s a compound word made of an adjective and a verb. κακός is tss. wicked, harm, ill, bad, & noisome + πάσχω, tss. to suffer (39), to feel (felt) (1), to vex (1). Simply put, are any of you feeling bad, suffering. Whatever is the cause of it the fact remains they are presently suffering. I suppose if we made the connection to the previous verses this suffering could be said to be the result of the wealthy taking advantage of the Lord's people. But whatever is the cause James asks, are there any among you, in your churches, suffering. If so, they should pray. This is certainly a time, not the only time, but one of the times when they should be in prayer. In Lk. 18 the Lord Jesus taught us in a parable that we *ought always to pray and not faint*. In the

parable there is a widow that had come into trouble. Scripture reveals that widows and orphans are particularly helpless and targets for abuse by others.

*Lk.18.1 ¶ And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?*

As the widow was resolved to keep this issue before the judge until the matter was resolved, so the child of God should always pray and not faint. Trouble has a way of moving the children of God to prayer. For others, it moves them further away from it.

At the same time there are others of the people of God in the churches, and in this church, who are merry. Like the previous verb, the Greek εὐθυμέω, is a compound made of an adverb prefixed to a verb. εὐ well + θυμέω to be wroth. Together it is to be of a good passion, and so cheerful. Those that are cheerful should use this occasion to sing.

So we have two kinds of people. Some are suffering and some are cheerful. As long as we are in this world there will be both, and very likely all of us will weave in and out of the states of feeling bad and feeling merry. These are feelings. We cannot necessarily change how we feel but we should learn the appropriate response to them as children of God. Let the suffering pray and the merry sing. But also, be sensitive to one another in this assembly.

Ro 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

J. Vernon McGree wrote,

‘Sometimes a song leader will get up in a service and say, “Now everybody sit up and smile.” I used to have a song leader like that in a church I pastored years ago. I told him, “Don’t you know that in this congregation there are people who are really burdened? As I look out there, I see one man who is a doctor and who has been busy all week taking care of patients. I also see a lady who is a buyer in a department store. She is weary and tired. And you ask them to sit up and smile!” No, you don’t have to sit up and smile. The afflicted are to pray. The merry are to sing psalms.’ *Thru the Bible Radio Network, James*, J. Vernon McGee, p.110

Be sympathetic.

13 Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν προσευχέσθω εὐθυμεῖ τις ψαλλέτω

ἐν ὑμῖν

14 Is any sick among you?

is ... sick, ἀσθενεῖ, 3ps. pres. ind. of ἀσθενέω; tss. to be sick (17, all but 4 of those fall at and before Ac.9.37), to be impotent (2), to be diseased (1), & weak (16, all of these fall at and after Ac.20.35); the noun ἀσθένεια, is tss. infirmity (17), sickness (1), & weakness (5), disease (1); the adj. ἀσθενής, is tss. sick (6), weak (incl. weaker, weakness, weak things, 15), impotent (1), without strength (1), feeble (1); more often than not this refers to weaknesses of the flesh (Ac.20.35; Ro.8.3; 1Co.8.9-12; 2Co.11.29; 2Co.13.4; He.4.15; He.11.34).

Here we come to the issue that appears to refer to the gift of healing.

*Mt.10.6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ...

1Co 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

There are various thoughts on this. First, probably the majority of professing believers in Christendom today will say that all of the gifts have continued to this day. The gift of prophecies, tongues, knowledge, and healing are as valid today as they were in Jesus' day. To this I strongly disagree. Working of miracles, gifts of healing, visions, etc., are sign gifts that ceased from the first century church with these other gifts of prophecies, tongues and knowledge.

Mr 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Ac 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

1Co.13.13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Second, the next group says that the gift of healing has passed away when the gifts of prophecies, tongues and knowledge ceased and failed in the first century. These say that these instructions by James applied only to the first century churches, much like the instructions that Paul gave to the Corinthian church concerning those early gifts. Therefore, this in which James instructs the Christian concerning healing has no application.

At this place (Ja.5.14) the 1599 Geneva Bible footnotes the following remark: 'This was a sign of the gift of healing: and now seeing we have the gift no more, the sign is no longer necessary.'

I agree that these gifts, including healing has passed away. But does this of which James speaks refer to this kind of healing? First turn to the book of the gospel of Mark.

*Mk.6.12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.
13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed [them].*

I want you to consider that there are three distinct acts here. The pronoun *them* at the end of this verse is supplied. Look at this verse with this in mind and I think you'll begin to see what I mean.

they cast out demons – they anointed the sick with oil – & they healed

They cast out many, not all, demons.
They anointed with oil many, not all, that were sick. And,
They healed many, not all that were sick.

In Matthew chapter 9 Jesus came to Capernaum. Once there some men brought in another sick of the palsy. Note that the Lord would have forgiven the man's sins and left him he was except that others doubted His authority to forgive sins. At this, as a sign he healed the man.

Mt.9.1 ¶ And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

I would suggest that the Holy Spirit through the pen of James would have the Christian that is sick with various maladies to be strengthened to bear this to the glory of God rather than removing the sickness. Bear in mind that not all sickness, *ἀσθενέω*, refers to sicknesses as we think of them, but include becoming weakened, particularly in our faith. Think about the instructions in this letter and how healing was otherwise applied to the sick. James writes of something quite different than this.

The gift of healing was by momentous and instantaneous acts. It was by a healer touching the sick or the sick touching the healer. Sometimes it was by a spoken word whether the sick was present to hear the words or not. At other times healing came through handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched. There was an instance when healing was effected even by passing of the shadow of Peter. (cf. Mt.8.15; Mk.5.30, 31; Lk.22.51; Mt.8.8; Ac.19.12; Ac.5.15) That's the kind of healing that Christ and His disciples worked. And even then it was not the will of God to heal everyone that was sick, not even of His own people.

Paul could do nothing about his own eye infirmity. Luke, the beloved physician, doubtless applied various ointments and such but he didn't heal him. Peter couldn't do anything for him. Paul was likewise unable to heal a number of brethren that had fallen ill as they traveled together preaching Christ among the nations.

Paul:

Gal.4.13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

6.11 ¶ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Timothy:

1Ti 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Trophimus:

2Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Epaphroditus:

Phl.2.25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

The healing to which James refers is quite different. This kind of healing has purpose (*let him call*), order (*call for the elders*), and predictability (*and the prayer of faith shall heal*).

Think about this. The time when James wrote this letter is said to have been about the year 60 A.D. The gifts of healing had been in practice since Christ began His earthly ministry and that was around 30 A.D. It is certain that the gift of healing was still in practice in the day when this letter was written by James. The focus of this letter which James wrote is upon that which is most important, which is the strengthening of the saints to bear with all manner of sickness that is in the world.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

2Co 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

What are sicknesses, diseases, injuries, disabilities & all manner of reversals in life to the children of God but trial. Consider well that perhaps the greater part of Job's trial involved loss of wealth, family, health & friends. That is the trial. Then persecution began by those closest to him.

Though the gift of healing would fall away from the practice of the Lord's churches this to which James refers continues. Get this point. God calls upon many of His children to bear all manner of sicknesses, disabilities, diseases and impairments. But He promises to give them the strength to bear them. And when we begin to fail we should resort to this.

let him call for the elders of the church;

let him call for, προσκαλεσάσθω, 3ps. aor. **imper.** of προσκαλέομαι, to call, bid; προσκαλέομαι, to call, call to, call for.

sick, κάμνω

'(a) Participle, one whose strength gives way in consequence of excessive labour, (whence, κάμουντες and κεκμηκότες (but not κάμνοντες) are the dead, whose labours are ended.

faint, & wearied (be), κάμνω

'to work one's self weary, be weary (or even sick), (occ. Heb. xii.3; Jas. v. 15.'

Liddell & Scott,

κάμνω, '1. intr. to be weary, tired, exhausted, or worn out: ... 3. to be worsted or beaten. 4. to be sick or ill; generally, to be afflicted, distressed, harassed.'

*He.12.3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be **wearied** (κάμνω) and faint (ἐκλύω) in your minds.*

Here in He.12.3 the word for faint is the Gr. ἐκλύω, ἐκ of, out, out of, from, forth + λύω, to break, loose, put off, melt, dissolve, destroy.

*Re.2.3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and **hast not fainted**.*

Fainted from that labour, or perhaps in spirit.

LXX:

*Job 10.1 ¶ **Weary** (κάμνων) in my soul, I will pour my words with groans upon {1} him: I will speak being straitened in the bitterness of my soul. {1} Alex. myself }*

Job is tired of living. KJV, *My soul is weary of my life ...*

This has absolutely nothing to do with saving the soul. (cf. v.20) It is to preserve, to help, to heal the wearied that has been exhausted under the burden of this physical malady.

‘No reference here to salvation of the soul.’ *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A. T. Robertson, vol. 6, p.65

and the Lord shall raise him up;

lift

shall raise up, ἐγερῆ, 3ps. pres. ind. act. of ἐγείρω; tss. to arise, to rise, to awaken, to lift out, to lift up, to stand, to rise again.

The sick has become exhausted *laboring* under this affliction. This says, the Lord shall raise *him*, who is now called the *wearied* or *faint*. The focus is laid upon the exhaustion, not the disease itself. What is the antithesis of being *wearied* or *faint*? What is the result of raising up the wearied, but to give him strength? The sick are renewed in their strength to bear the sickness.

And as this continues James informs them that some sicknesses are a result of sin.

and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

[then]

and if, κἄν, combination of the conjunction καί and εἰ, generally, and & if.

have committed, πεποικώς, nom. sing. masc. part. perf. act. of ποιέω, to do.

[it] *shall be forgiven, ἀφεθήσεται, 3ps. fut. ind. pass. of ἀφίημι; tss. to let, to suffer, to leave, to forgive, to forsake, to yield up, to send away, to let alone, to omit.*

It is not uncommon for sickness and disabilities to be the result of sin.

1Co.11.28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Through the commission of sins many are sick, diseased, injured, or disabled, but not always. Sickness can be a means for showing the works of God in us.

Jn.9.1 ¶ And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Sicknesses brought on by sin might or might not go away. The body can be weakened and permanently injured because of what we do. There's no question that if someone spends a lifetime abusing and neglecting his body it is very likely that in many instance the health begin to fail permanently. For this the Lord can forgive us. However, He will also give us grace to bear the results of that sin for the rest of our lives.

It is hard to bear physical illness. Every single day some are called upon to awaken in great pain: feet, knees, back; faint from a weak heart, the strength perhaps that was once enjoyed is gone for the remaining days of our lives; arthritis, kidneys, gout, is the day after day. That gets old. What do we do? When we become under the circumstances we are not without help. We may cry out to God, call for the elders and receive new strength for the day. James prescribes the remedy for our souls so that we might not faltering in our faith.

Brethren, it is unwise to cancel our doctor's appointments or discontinue taking our prescription medications. But always look to the Lord first.

Notice the emphasis or focus of healing is proved not to be upon the body but upon the life of the Christian.

15 καὶ ἡ εὐχή τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος
κὰν ἀμαρτίας ἢ πεποικῶς ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ

16 Confess your faults one to another,

confess your, ἐξομολογεῖσθε, 2prpl. pres. **imper.** mid. of ἐξομολογέω, ἐκ of, from, out, out of, forth + ὁμολογέω, is tss. *to profess, confess, promise, give thanks*; ἐξομολογέω, is tss. *to confess* (8), *thank* (2), *promise* (1)

faults, παραπτώματα, acc. pl. of παράπτωμα, tss. *a trespass* (9), *an offence* (7), *a fall* (1), *a fault* (2), *sin* (3).

Mt 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Mt 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Dictionary: of trespass & transgression:

to trespass: verb, to pass through; unwarranted, uninvited incursion. noun, to cross, go across; an unlawful act.

to transgress: verb, to step beyond or across; to go beyond set limits; to go over a boundary. noun, an infringement or violation of the law.

καὶ εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων
and pray **one for another,**
for the sake of, in behalf of each other

pray, εὐχεσθε, 2ppl. pres. imper. of εὐχόμεαι, vss.13, 14, for the same with the prefixed preposition προς.

ὅπως ἰαθῆτε
that ye may be healed.
whole

ye may be healed, ἰαθῆτε, 2ppl. aor. subj. pass. of ἰάομαι; tss. to be healed (26), to be made whole (2).

Again, healed in what way? We are sick of soul and fainting in the way; turning out of the straight paths. (He.12.13; Ja.5.16; 1Pe.2.24).

He.12.12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

1Pe.2.24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

With reference to Ja.5.16, 'There are a hundred who will confess to a priest or to God, where there is one who will make frank and full confession to the aggrieved party.' *Systematic Theology*, A. H. Strong, p.834 And I would add, few of us apply to this remedy.

Confess your faults one to another, I have for many years drawn a line between *fault* and *sins*. I think we need to use wisdom and discretion about making confessing to others. And this is brought out by James here. It seems to me that both the noun for *faults*, παράπτωμα, and the noun for *sins*, ἄμαρτία, are synonymous. But I would point out that

παράπτωμα, is most often tss. *a trespass* (9) and *an offense* (7), whereas ἄμαρτία is tss. *sin* (172), and *offense* (1). I think we should be careful about telling our sins to others. There are faults that we might need help with, but our sins, for the most part should be left private between us and God. Particularly sins that we commit which offend our brother are those which we should confess to him. James would have us to be helped through our faults by confessing them to those which can be trusted to pray *with us* about them. We should not ask others to pray for us if we are not willing to enter into prayer ourselves.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

effectual fervent, ἐνεργουμένη, nom. sing. fem. part. pres. mid. of ἐνεργέω, tss. Mt.14.2, *to shew forth*; 1Co.12.6, *to work*; 2Co.1.6, *to be effectual*; Gal.2.8, *to work effectually*; Gal.2.8, *to be mighty*; Ja.5.16, *effectual fervent*.

prayer, δέησις, noun tss *prayer, supplication, & request*.

availeth, ἰσχύει, 3ps. pres. ind. of ἰσχύω; tss. *can, to be able, to prevail, avail, to be of strength*.

much, πολὺ neut. sing. adverbially

... to help bring the healing we need most in our lives.

Seek out those who prove to be faithful in their walk and prayer. The worst thing that we could do is confess our faults to known busy-bodies and loud mouths, tattlers, tale-bearers, & gossips! Find someone that can keep your trust between them and the Lord.

16 ἐξομολογεῖσθε ἀλλήλοις τὰ παραπτώματα, καὶ εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων ὅπως ἰαθῆτε πολὺ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are,

subject to like passions, ὁμοιοπαθῆς, noun, ὅμοιος always tss. like as in similar, resembling + πάθος, affections; only once more in the NT, Ac.14.15, of like passions.

'It cannot be said that he was so raised above us as to afford no example to common mortals.' *J-F-B Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p596*

Paul & Barnabas at Lystra upon the healing of the impotent man:
Ac.14.15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God ...

προσευχῇ προσήυξατο
and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain:
with prayer prayed not to rain

prayed, dat. sing. of προσευχῆ, the noun from of the verb directly below; instrumental

earnestly, προσήυξατο, 3ps. imperf. of προσεύχομαι, v.18.

rain, βρέξαι, aor. infin. of βρέχω, tss. to rain (4; water or fire), to wash (2; with tears or water).

ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.
upon

rained, ἔβρεξεν, 3ps. aor. ind. of βρέχω.

17 Ἡλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν καὶ προσευχῇ προσήυξατο τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἑνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἕξ

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain,
v.17

gave , ἔδωκεν, 3ps. aor. ind. act. of δίδωμι, to give, bestow, bring forth, grant.

rain, ὑετὸν, acc. sing. of ὑετός, huetos, and always tss. *rain* (6)

and the earth brought forth her fruit.

brought forth, ἐβλάστησεν, 3ps. aor. ind. of βλαστάνω, tss. *to spring forth, to bud, & to bring forth.*

Ahab had just come to rule over the northern province of Palestine, called Israel. Against Israel and this wicked monarch the LORD raised up the prophet, Elijah. James refers to this first work that that Elijah did by prayer.

1Ki.16.30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

17.1 ¶ And Elijah (his first mention in the OT) the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

In the meantime, as we know a time of 3 ½ years, the LORD sent Elijah to the brook Cherith and fed him with the ravens until the brook dried up. Then the LORD sent him to Zarapheth, to a widow where the miracle of the barrel of meal never empties and the cruse of oil never fails; in process of time her son falls ill and dies, but the LORD has Elijah revive him. Then Elijah has Ahab to called together the 450 prophets

of Baal which ate the Jezebel's table to come prove before Israel the reality of this god, of their failure and destruction at the hands of Elijah. The came the time for rain.

1Ki 18:1 And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

...

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

What did Elijah do? The LORD revealed that it was time for rain. Elijah then prayed for rain. He prayed according to the will of God and the LORD answered. Pray believing. If we want to receive strength to be of service to Christ *as we are* then pray. If we don't believe, if we won't order our lives, our homes, our jobs after the will of God, if we are unwilling to seek the kingdom of God first, why pray. There'll be no answer, not an answer that will be to strengthen us in the faith of Christ. But if we desire to live as witnesses of Jesus let's commit our lives to Him.

And finally, James closes the letter with this encouragement. I think it speaks to the susceptibility of every child of God without exception to err from the truth.

18 καὶ πάλιν προσήυξατο καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν ἔδωκεν καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς

ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,
among (v.14) go out of the way

do err, πλανηθῆ, 3ps. aor. subj. pass. of πλανάω, tss. to go astray, to err, to deceive, to go out of the way, to wander, to seduce; see the noun πλάνη, v.20.

To you whoever you might be, young or old, new born or matured, weak or strong, this is for all...

truth, ἀληθείας, gen. sing. of ἀλήθεια, true, truth, truly, verity.

2Ti.2.16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred (ἀστοχέω, cf. 1Ti.1.6, to swerve; 6.21, to err), saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 ¶ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

and one convert him;

turn him again (to the truth);

convert, ἐπιστρέψῃ, 3ps. aor. subj. of ἐπιστρέφω, ἐπί upon + στρέφω, to turn, turn again, convert, turn about, turn back; ἐπιστρέφω, tss. to turn about, convert, to return, turn again, to come again, to go again; v.20.

19 Ἀδελφοί ἐάν τις ἐν ὑμῖν πλανηθῆ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν

[Then you, brethren] ἐκ πλάνης
20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of

delusion

let ... know, γινωσκέτω, 3ps. pres. **imper.** act. of γινώσκω, tss. *to know, to perceive, to understand, to be aware, to be resolved.*

which converts, ἐπιστρέψας, nom. sing. masc. part. aor. act. of ἐπιστρέφω; **v.19.**

error, πλάνης, gen. sing. of πλάνη, a noun, tss. *deceit* (1), *deceive* (of deception) (1), *delusion* (1), *error* (7); see **the verb** πλανάω, **v.19.**

Let him know, Remind this one of the importance of faithful ministry; of not only the personal blessing but the corporate blessing of faithfulness. I think sometimes we might forget, or take for granted, or aren't aware how *vital* our relationship is in this church.

a sinner, many overlook who this sinner is. It is one of us, one of the elect of God, one that has professed faith in Christ.

Jas 5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one [among the brethren] convert him ...

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.
[he] preserve [he] cover

shall save, σώσει, 3ps. fut. ind. of σώζω, tss. *to save* (93), *to make whole* (10), *to heal* (3), *to do well* (1), & *to preserve* (1); **v.15, shall save.**

soul, ψυχὴν, acc. sing. of ψυχή, tss. mostly *life, soul, mind.*

death, θανάτου, gen. sing. of θάνατος, tss. most often tss. *death*; the verb θανατόω, is tss. *to be put to death, to cause to be put to death, to become dead, to be killed.*

shall hide, καλύψει, 3ps. fut. ind. act. of καλύπτω, tss. *to cover or hide*.

multitude, πλῆθος, a noun tss. *multitude, company, bundle*; the verb πληθύνω, *to multiply, to abound*.

This brother has done a great service to another to deliver him from wasting his life, and being subject to the chastening of the Lord which we should know well include *death* for disobedience (1Co.11.30).

What is this which this brother has done to recover another from a life of sin but shown to him the love of Christ? In this way love covers a multitude of sins.

Pr 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

1Pe 4:8 And above (πρό, before) all things have fervent charity (or, without ceasing) among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

fervent, ἐκτενῆ, acc. sing. fem. of ἐκτενής; only other place in the NT, Ac.12.5, tss. **without ceasing**; the noun ἐκτένεια, tss. as an adv. *instantly* (Ac.26.7, Wigram marg. 'intensity'); the adv. ἐκτενέστερον, *more earnestly*, Lk.22.44; and the adv. ἐκτενῶς, *fervently*, 1Pe.1.22.

Ga 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save (σώσεις, 2ps. fut. ind. act.) thyself, and them that hear thee.

Ps 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Lu 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

This completes the study through the book of James. Let me quote one that sums up this letter very well.

‘We may say that the theme of this epistle is *the proofs of true faith*. Many of us would do well to face up to these proofs again and again. They are expressed here and there in severe tones, yet always there is a warm brotherliness atmospherizing them (the address, “my brethren^{*}” or “my *beloved* brethren^{*},” occurs more frequently here than in any other epistle ...’ *Explore the Book*, J. Sidlow Baxter, pp.287, 288 (the rest of the quote was incorrect, and ^{*}brethren was changed from ‘brothers’; *my brethren* [8 times], *my beloved brethren* [3])

What a loving Lord! He has provided for us the means to be faithful in every condition of life, in health and in sickness. If it were up to us we all prefer to be in good health and wealth. But this is not the will of God for so many of us. And until our Lord Jesus comes it is almost certain that every single one of us will become seriously afflicted with some bodily disorder. But He is with us! He will neither leave us nor forsake us. Rather His will is that we be strengthened in those trying hours, days, months and years. Apply to this remedy when needed. He will raise up the *exhausted* and give them strength to bear whatever is the will of God. Would He have us to come into trial in vain without the means to continue? Never! He also supplies the grace sufficient to bear it. Look to Christ!

I hope that you found some blessings in this study. God bless.

20 γινωσκέτω ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστρέψας ἀμαρτωλὸν ἐκ πλάνης ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ σώσει
ψυχὴν ἐκ θανάτου καὶ καλύψει πλῆθος ἀμαρτιῶν