**"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"**

**A Call To Prayer And Praise**

**(5:13-18)*****13Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.14Is 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:15And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.17Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.18And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.***

**INTRODUCTION**

 In the New Testament epistles, we find various commands and

 exhortations then when we draw near to the end of the epistle

 of James, we find this wonderful call to pray and sing praises,

 and with guidance as to what to do and when to do what.

[For example...James mentions…..]

1. **IN TIMES OF SUFFERING, LET US "PRAY" verse (13)***13Is any among you afflicted?*

 *let him pray.*

**The Question we could ask here is ……**

1. **WHAT KIND OF SUFFERING DOES JAMES REFER TO?**
2. I believe he refers to suffering of any kind.

A better breakdown would be… Such as sickness, bereavement, disappointment, persecutions, loss of health or property, how about suffering for the sake of the Gospel?

 3. Later, in the epistle James deals specifically with sickness.

1. **But FOR NOW, WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?**
2. **Allow me ask this question?**
3. **Should we pray for the REMOVAL of suffering?**

 **Paul wrote in 1 *Cor. 7And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.8For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.9And 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.10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***

 I BELIEVE WE SHOULD….

1. Rather pray for the STRENGTH to endure the suffering, if it be the Lord's will that we bear with it.

[**1Co 10:13**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2010.13)**…*13There 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.***

1. YOU SEE, God may not always remove the source of our suffering,

for it may be for our ultimate good. So, he allows it to be so!!

[**Ps 119:67**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.67)***, 67\*\*Before I was afflicted, I went astray:\*\* but now have I kept thy word.***

[**71**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.71)**,** ***71It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.***

[**75**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.75) ***75I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast***

 ***afflicted me.***

 b. But He promises to help us endure it!

1. **FOR WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY?**

 1. Certainly for ourselves, as implied above.

 2. But also for those who may be the source of our suffering

 a. As Jesus taught in

[***Lk 6:28***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%206.28) ***28Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.***

 b. Doing this can help greatly to endure the suffering.

[So in times of suffering, let us pray! It is a wonderful privilege to

pray, and a great source of comfort when afflicted.

Next, we learn from James that...]

1. **IN TIMES OF CHEER, LET US "SING PRAISES"**

**SONG….”SING PRAISES UNTO GOD,SING PRAISES”**

 **A. THE WORD "CHEERFUL"...**

 1. Means pleasantness, joyfulness.

 2. It suggests a state of mind free from trouble--the opposite

 of affliction--happy!

 **B. IN SUCH A STATE OF HAPPINESS, ONE SHOULD SING PRAISES!**

1. Singing praises should be a natural for God's people!

 a. Consider the attitude of David, the sweet singer of Israel!!!

***P***[***s.92:1-2***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2092.1-2)***; It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:2To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,***

***Ps.***[***96:1-2***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%2096.1-2)***; 96 O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.2Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.***

***Ps 101:1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.***

***Ps.***[***111:1***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20111.1)***; Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.***

***Ps.***[***113:1-3***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20113.1-3)***; Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord .2Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.3From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.***

***Ps.***[***146:1-2***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20146.1-2)***; Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.2While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.***

***Ps.***[***147:1***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20147.1)***; Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.***

***Ps.***[***149:1***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20149.1) ***Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.***

 b. If David was a man after God's own heart, shouldn't we be also?

1. Beloved, I believe singing praises has the power to make a good

Situation even better.

Let us look at these two scriptures….

[**Ep 5:18**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%205.18)**; *18And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;***

[***Col 3:16***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col%203.16)***.. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.***

**So, then the questions arise….**

1. **WHY DON'T SOME CHRISTIANS SING PRAISES MORE OFTEN, MORE FERVENTLY?**

 1. Hasn't God done enough in our lives to prompt us to praise Him

 fervently in song?

 2. What excuse can we possibly give for refusing to praise God

 for His glory and goodness?

 a. You see, we cannot use the excuse that we cannot sing!

 b. God "commands" all to sing, and unless we are "mute" the

 command applies to us!

 c. Fortunately, God is not concerned with how it sounds, but

 that it is coming from the heart, therefore all who can speak

 can and should sing!

 4. Heaven is described by John in the Book of Revelation as a

 place where singing praises to God and Christ is an on-going

 activity

 a. If we don't sing praises to God on earth, though able...

 b. Can we really expect to be allowed to praise God in heaven?

**[Singing praises to God is just as important as praying to God!**

Perhaps our prayers would be answered more often, if we would praise God more

often!

**AMEN!!!**

The text scriptures also deal with prayer as it applies to a special

need...

1. **IN TIMES OF SICKNESS, LET US "PRAY" verses 14-18)”Is any sick among**

 **you..**

**Technically speaking, THIS PASSAGE IS somewhat DIFFICULT...**

1. Because …Many questions can arise concerning it!

**For Example,**

 a. Is the sickness physical or spiritual?

 b. Is the anointing with oil, medicinal or symbolic?

 c. Is the healing through providential means or miraculous?

 d. Is the healing spiritual or physical?

 2. First, I believe the sickness and healing in this passage is

 physical, though spiritual needs should be taken into consideration.

 a. This is in view of the phrase "and IF he has committed sins,

 he will be forgiven"

 b. This implies the sickness is physical, though it MAY be

 accompanied with spiritual sickness as well.

 c. But the word **"IF"** makes it clear that the illness

 may not be accompanied by sin, which if true, would mean the

 illness is not spiritual, but a physical sickness!!

 3. With the assumption that physical illness is being discussed,

 then there are two feasible alternatives...

 This passage refers to a MIRACULOUS HEALING!!

 1) The elders are called because they possessed the gift

 of healing.

 2) The anointing with oil was symbolic, representing the

 influences of the Holy Spirit.

[***Mk 6:13***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%206.13)***13And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.***

 3) In other words, the healings were miraculous!!

1. This passage refers to **PROVIDENTIAL HEALING**

 1) The elders were called because they were **likely** the most

 righteous in a congregation. Not necessary so!!!

**Jam 5:16*.. 16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.***

 2) The anointing with oil was very much medicinal, as was commonly practiced in those days….there were no cat scans, x-ray machines, heart transplants units, not many doctors or hospitals, no echo Doppler studies, no flu shots, the horse was the dentist, in other words they didn’t have the luxuries we enjoy today!!!!

[**Lk 10:34**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2010.34)***.. 34And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.***

 3) The healing was providential!!!

1. I lean toward the healings being providential!!!

 a. The first explanation assumes that the elders in every

 church possessed the gift of healing, which is not likely

 for two reasons:

 1) We have no record of such in the New Testament

 2) The qualifications for elders did not require this gift.

[**1Ti 3:1-7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Ti%203.1-7)**; *This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.2A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;3Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;4One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;5(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)6Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.7Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. IT NEVER SAYS THEY HAVE THE GIFT OF HEALING!!!!***

[***Tit 1:5-9***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Tit%201.5-9) ***5For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:6If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.7For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;8But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;9Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.***

[***1 Kings 18:41-45***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Ki%2018.41-45)***41And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.42So 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,43And 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.44And 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.45And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.***

 1) God was indeed answering Elijah's prayer

 2) But God did so, providentially, working through natural

 Means!!

 **B. WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, LET'S MAKE THE APPLICATION...**

 1. In times of physical sickness, call for the elders of the church

 a. You want the prayers of the "righteous" working in your

 behalf, don't you?

 b. Notice: You are to call for them, not wait for them to

 call on you!

 c. Have the elders pray with you...

 1) In faith (trusting in the Lord's power to heal, if it be

 His will)

 2) Fervently (**"the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous**

 **man, avails much."**)

1. Elders should not only pray, but they must see to it that

appropriate medical aids are provided!!!

 a. In a century where hospitals were non-existent, and

 physicians were rare, anointing with oil was a common

 treatment.

**The good Samaritan….**

[**Lk 10:34**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lk%2010.34)**..*****34And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.***

 b. In our present century, this would involve the elders making

 sure, that the sick receives the treatment needed!!!

1. The sick should also confess their sins, if they have any...

 a. **Verse 15** makes it clear that sickness is not always the

 consequence of sin!!

 b. But **verse 16** and others like ([**1Co 11:29-32**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2011.29-32)) ***29For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.30For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*** Suggests that illnesses may be God's loving chastisement for sin, to direct us back to Him.

 c. In any case, sins need to be confessed and forgiveness

 sought if we hope to have God hear our prayers!!!

**CONCLUSION**

1. However one interprets [**Jm 5:14-16**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jm%205.14-16), there is no dispute over the

 main thrust in these scriptures...

1. Prayer and praise are very special privileges for the Christian!

 b. There is not a time in our life when we shouldn't be doing one

 or the other!

 c. We must be careful not to underestimate:

 1) The importance of praise or

 2) The power of prayer

2. But to truly benefit from these two spiritual exercises, we need to

 be in a right relationship with God

1. Which involves being open to God's Word:

**\*\*\*\* Pay close attention to the following scriptures \*\*\*\***

1. **He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer [shall be] abomination.**

 **([Pr 28:9](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Pr%2028.9%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))**

 b. And being a doer of God's will: **Not every one that saith unto me,**

 **Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that**

 **doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (**[**Mt 7:21**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%207.21)**)**