

# James 5 - The Rich; Straight Talk; The Power of Patience; Prayer

## II. Wisdom (James 3:13—5:20)

- (4) Wisdom in the use of wealth (5:1-6)
  - (A) Predicted judgment upon rich oppressors (5:1-3)
  - (B) For reasons for coming judgment (5:4-6)
    - (a) Unpaid wages (5:4)
    - (b) Wanton luxury (5:5)
    - (c) Condemnation of the innocent (5:6)
- (5) Wisdom in waiting for the Lord (5:7-12)
  - (A) Example of the farmer (5:7)
  - (B) Impact of imminency (5:8-9)
    - (a) Strength (5:8)
    - (b) Abstention from complaining (5:9)
  - (C) Old Testament examples of patience (5:10-12)
    - (a) Prophets (5:10)
    - (b) Job (5:11-12)
- (6) Wisdom in prayer (5:13-18)
  - (A) Types of prayer (5:13-16a)
    - (a) Afflicted: prayer of dependence (5:13a)
    - (b) Happy: prayer of praise (5:13b)
    - (c) Sick: prayer by the elders (5:14-15)
    - (d) Sinful: prayer of mutual confession (5:16a)
  - (B) Power of prayer (5:16b-18)
    - (a) General statement (5:16b)
    - (b) Example of Elijah (5:17-18)
- (7) Wisdom in restoring an erring brother (5:19-20)
  - (A) Necessity of warning an erring brother (5:19)
  - (B) Blessings of warning an erring brother (5:20)
    - (a) Salvation from a premature death (5:20a)
    - (b) Covering a multitude of sins (5:20b)

#### (4) Wisdom in the use of wealth (5:1-6)

##### (A) Predicted judgment upon rich oppressors (5:1-3)

**1** Come now, you **rich** people, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

**1** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

**1** Now listen, you rich people! Cry and moan over the miseries that are overtaking you.

**1** Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

- "...rich" - God is not against the rich, He is against the rich who replace Him with their riches. In fact, God supplies our riches, but He doesn't want us to fix our hope on the riches He has given us and use them to allow for boasting (Cf. 1 Tim 6:17).

- James portrays the "miseries" that are coming upon the rich he is referring to as unavoidable—it was already too late to avoid it, it is coming no matter what; it is the "last days" (v3).

— James is pointing ahead to the "next life," and warns that they will "weep and howl" because the next life for them will not be as it is for them today...those who they are oppressing will be on top, and they themselves will be in a place of torment (doctrine of reversal).

— Specifically, these are the prosperous Pharisees and Sadducees, who oppressed Jewish believers (2:6-7). The reason they were to "weep and howl" is because the 70 AD judgment is coming soon and it would destroy their wealth

**2** Your riches have rotted and your **garments** have become **moth-eaten**.

**2** Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten.

**2** Your riches are rotten, your clothes have been eaten by moths,

**2** Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.

- When the day of judgment comes, riches will be of no help to these people (or anyone for that matter)

— These people were banking on their riches being of some value to them on the day of judgment...but they won't be

- The verbs in this verse (and "have rusted" in v3) are in the Greek perfect tense (prophetic past tense) in which a future event (judgment of 70 AD) is looked upon as a past act

- "...garments" - their long outer garments (robes), which were embroidered as a sign of their wealth

- "...moth-eaten" - valueless

**3** Your gold and your silver have **corroded**, and their corrosion will **serve as a testimony** against you and will **consume your flesh like fire**. It is in the **lastdays** that you have stored up your treasure!

3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

3 your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be used as evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasures in these last days.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

- "...corroded" - gold and silver do not rust; this was James' way of saying that their gold and silver will become worthless for them in the day of judgment

— This rust, accumulated from non-use, will function against them as an adversarial witness exhibiting their failure to use monetary wealth for the benefit of others. Instead, they were hoarded, demonstrating no love for their neighbors.

— The emphasis is on the foolishness of hoarding in light of coming judgment. They did not realize that they were living in the last days before the judgment of 70 AD, and continued to violate the teachings of Jesus in Matt 6:19,21.

- "...serve as a testimony" - their riches (gold and silver) will testify against them because it was attained through oppression of someone else (v4-6)

— All of those who put their confidence and sense self-worth in their money, it will be of no help to them on the day of judgment. In fact, the more they have the more it testifies against them because they obtained it through oppressing others.

— These people thought they were storing up treasure on the earth, but what they were really doing is storing up wrath for the next life

- "...consume your flesh like fire" - while James was written to Jewish Christians outside of the Land, here James uses an illustration from outside of his audience, which is clearly unsaved people.

— As believers, the only burning we will experience is of our works (1 Cor 3:10-15); we will never experience the burning of our flesh in judgment. Our *works* will be tested by fire to test their quality.

- "...last days" - pictures a dam overfilled with water...shortly it will break. For James' audience, it is the "last days" before the dam breaks (judgment is revealed).

— This is a reminder of Gen 15:16, where God said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." Judgment was coming on the Amorites eventually, but not today because their iniquity was not yet complete. But one of these days, the volume of water behind the dam will be so great that you can't stop the dam from breaking. This was the predicament for these wealthy oppressors.

— These rich oppressors were "storing up wrath for themselves" (Rom 2:5)

It's easy to become envious of the wicked rich when you see things from a human perspective...here I am obeying the laws, doing what's right, working hard, but I don't get

ahead. These guys are getting rich doing nothing, or getting rich while trampling on others. However, once you see it from the eternal perspective, you stop envying the wicked and start feeling sorry for them. Read Ps 73:3-12, 16-20: v3-12 is from an earthly perspective; v16-20 is from an eternal perspective.

(B) For reasons for coming judgment (5:4-6)

(a) Unpaid wages (5:4)

4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been **withheld** by you, **cries out against you**; and the **outcry of those** who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of armies.

4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the **Lord of Sabaoth**.

4 Look! The wages that you kept back from the workers who harvested your fields are shouting out against you, and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of the Heavenly Armies.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

- "...kept back" - Greek tense indicates that the laborers will never get their salaries

— Thou shalt not steal. This not only prohibits socialism, it insists that we should pay our bills.

— These workers' meals were dependent upon this daily pay. Because of this, withholding pay from them was specifically prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14-15) and the prophets (Jer 22:13; Mal 3:5).

— Matt 20:1-16 describes the system of the day

— Our God is a "blue collar" God; He constantly looks out for the worker or laborer

- "...cries out" - a loud cry or shout; the money itself cries out for vengeance against this injustice

- "...outcry of those" - the workers who were robbed also cry out

— After Cain killed Abel, the "voice of Abel's blood" cried out to God, and God answered.

When injustice happens, we think God either doesn't see it or doesn't care. The wealthy oppressors are banking on the fact that God doesn't see it, but Scripture is clear that God sees it all, and they'll receive their "payday" at some point.

- "...Lord of Sabaoth" [NASB95] - lit. The Lord of Hosts—used in the OT; hints of judgment (Rom 9:29; Cf. Is 1:9)

(b) Wanton luxury (5:5)

5 You have lived for pleasure on the earth and lived luxuriously; you have **fattened** your hearts in a day of slaughter.

5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

5 You have lived in luxury and pleasure on earth. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

- "...fattened" - a farmer "fattens" his animals to get them ready for slaughter; these wealthy oppressors are doing the same thing by obtaining riches through ill-gotten gain — After robbing their workers to accumulate their wealth, the rich indulged in the most extravagant lifestyle. Like a fatted calf before the slaughter, they indulge as much as possible before judgment.

— Amos 4:1 provides a good word picture, and was probably in James' mind as he wrote this verse

— All wealth is owned by the Lord (Ps 50:10). He permits us to be stewards of His wealth for His glory.

— Luxury also reaches a point of diminishing returns.

Jesus said, "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (Luke 12:15). ***Luxury and self-indulgence has a way of ruining character.*** Money is not sinful; it is neutral. But "Love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim 6:10).

"Thou shalt not covet" is the only commandment that deals with motivation rather than visible practice. It is a sin of the heart. Abraham was a rich man but maintained his faith and character. When his nephew Lot became rich, it ruined his character and ultimately ruined his life. "If your riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Ps 62:10). "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Prov 22:1). Riches are always accompanied by uncertainties. The only certainty is that of God's judgment (v9, below).

#### (c) Condemnation of the innocent (5:6)

6 You have **condemned** and put to death the righteous person; he offers you no resistance.

6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous *man*; he does not resist you.

6 You have condemned and murdered the one who is righteous, even though he did not rebel against you.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

- Sinful progression: selfishness > hoarding > fraud > self-indulgence > over-indulgence
- The rich are so desperate to maintain their extravagant lifestyle that they will do anything to sustain it
- "...condemned" - the wealthy oppressors condemned to death innocent people, who never opposed them in the first place
- James 2:6 - the rich drag the poor into courts to exploit them.
- "He that hath the gold, rules." Wealth, power, and control of "due process" are the issue (Cf. James 2:6; Deut 17:8-13).
- Judges were not be greedy (Ex 18:21); not partial to the rich (Lev 19:15); not to tolerate perjury (Deut 19:16-21)
- Bribery was condemned (Is 33:15; Micah 3:11; 7:3); Amos condemned the judges who took bribes and "fixed" cases (Amos 5:12,15)

In 2 Sam 11:15 David told his general to place Uriah in the front of the fiercest battle, so that Uriah would be killed in battle. David did this to cover his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. Nathan, when he confronted David about his sin, told him a story (2 Sam 12:1-7) about a rich man oppressing a poor man. David's anger burned against the rich man and said he deserved to die, and make 4-fold restitution. David was livid, then Nathan told David that he was that rich man.

***It is good to have the things that money can buy, provided you also have the things that money cannot buy.*** What good is a \$1,000,000 house if there is no home? Or a million-dollar diamond ring if there is no love? Are you buying things we don't need, with money you don't have, to impress people you don't like?

What we keep, we lose. What we give to God, we keep, with interest added.

(5) Wisdom in waiting for the Lord (5:7-12)

(A) Example of the farmer (5:7)

**7** Therefore be **patient**, brothers *and sisters*, until **the coming of the Lord**. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

**7** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

**7** So be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious crop from his land, being patient with it until it receives the fall and the spring rains.

**7** Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

- "...patient" - with people, not with trials; patient with the oppressive rich
- "...the coming of the Lord" - a veiled Rapture reference
- James does not point to any signs that must precede the Rapture (Cf. John 14:3; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3; 1 Thess 4:15; 1 Cor 15:51 [note "we" in the last two references as Paul includes himself])
- The idea is to wait for the Lord's return in wisdom
- James now gives examples of patience in daily life...his first example is the farmer
- Farming takes both patience and faith...you don't put a seed in the ground and get a tree in 15 minutes. It takes time, it's a process, it doesn't happen right away.

The secret of strategic patience is to keep focused on the imminence of the Rapture. Some Greek scholars believe that "long-suffering" refers to patience with respect to persons; and "endurance" refers to patience with respect to circumstances.

David was troubled by the prosperity of the wicked (Ps 37:35-36). In this same Psalm, he also gave the same advice that James gave: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass" (Ps 37:7).

#### (B) Impact of imminency (5:8-9)

##### (a) Strength (5:8)

8 **You too** be **patient**; strengthen your hearts, for **the coming of the Lord is near**.

8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

8 You, too, must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is near.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

- "You" - this command is given to believers (Cf. v7)

- "...too" - James is drawing from the example of the farmer (v7)...just as the farmer is patient from the time he plants the seed until harvest, we too must be patient

- "...patient" - the belief in the imminent return of Christ should effect our patience; we demonstrate that we believe in the Lord's imminent return when we're patient

— If you don't have patience in traffic or patience with other people, maybe it's because you are not considering the imminency of Christ's return. You don't want the Lord to come back when I'm in an impatient, carnal state.

- "...the coming of the Lord" - a reference to the Rapture

- "...is near" - *engizō*, at hand, close by; imminent

— The verb tense is the third person singular perfect active indicative, the exact same parsing used in the Offer of the Kingdom (Matt 3:1-2; 4:17; 10:5-7)

- This is a reference to the imminence of the Rapture; see [Doctrine of Imminency](#)

- The imminence of the Lord's return is not a "pie in the sky" doctrine, it is designed to have a real, daily impact in the lives of believers

— In this verse, James outlines that imminency should impact both our patience and our strength. We have strength for the next day if we walk in the belief that Jesus can come back at any time.

If you go through the NT and mark every reference to the coming of the Lord and the use made of that teaching about His coming, almost without exception it is followed by an exhortation to godliness and holy living.

(b) Abstention from complaining (5:9)

9 Do not complain, brothers *and sisters*, against one another, so that you may not be **judged**; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

9 Do not complain about each other, brothers, or you will be condemned. Look! The Judge is standing at the door!

**9** Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

- Notice that James takes the imminent return of the Lord at the Rapture much further and applies it to our daily lives. If we fully believe that the Rapture is imminent, and that the Judge is standing right at the door, how should that affect our daily lives?

1. Be patient (3x in v7-8) - if I allow the doctrine of the Rapture to affect my life, I should be more patient with things and with people. James is saying that if you aren't a patient person, you don't understand the imminent return of Christ.
2. Do not complain (v9) - if I understand that Jesus could come back at any moment, I won't be a person who complains all the time
3. Patient in suffering (v10) - if I understand that the Judge is standing right at the door, I will be more patient during suffering/trials

— There is much more to the teaching of Bible prophecy (eschatology) than just making sure you have your end times prophecy chart filled out correctly. Bible prophecy should have a positive affect, a positive impact on our daily lives and our daily walk with Christ (Cf. 1 Peter 3:10-11; 1 John 3:2-3).

- "...judged" - God judges complaining? Yes, just see the Book of Numbers (14:2; 16:41, et al); the Israelites complained both horizontally (about one another, or one of God's leaders unjustifiably) and vertically (against God Himself).

— In Num 16, Korah and his group complained against Aaron, one of God's chosen leaders, and God became angry and the earth opened and swallowed them up, sending them to *Sheol* (death).



— So God obviously judges complaining, so it will be embarrassing at the Bema Seat judgment if I'm constantly in a mindset of complaining

(C) Old Testament examples of patience (5:10-12)

(a) Prophets (5:10)

10 As an example, brothers *and sisters*, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

10 As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

- The OT prophets would speak to the kings of Israel the words of the Lord, and were often ignored (because their job description was not politically correct)

— They demonstrated suffering (Cf. Matt 5:10-12) and patience in that they continued to obey the Lord

We are promised persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Our Lord was obedient and it led to the cross. Elijah announced to wicked King Ahab that there would be a drought for 3-1/2 years. Elijah himself had to suffer the same drought. They not only suffered at the hands of the nonbelievers, but at the hands of professed believers! Jeremiah was arrested as a traitor and thrown into an abandoned well to die. Ezekiel and Daniel also had their share of hardships, but God delivered them.

The NT presents the persecution of the prophets as proverbial (11x): Matt 5:12; 21:35-36; 22:6; 23:29-37; Luke 13:33; Acts 7:51-52; Rom 11:3; 1 Thess 2:15; Heb 11:32-38; Rev 16:6; 18:24.

(b) Job (5:11-12)

11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

11 We consider those who endured to be blessed. You have heard about Job's endurance and have seen the purpose of the Lord—that the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

- Job is the perfect example of endurance
- The person who is blessed is not just the person who is persecuted and suffers, but the person who endures through suffering
- After Job lost everything (health, wealth, family), his speech was above reproach. Job 1:22 indicates that through all this, Job did not sin nor blame God.
- In fact, after Job's wife told him to "curse God and die," Job replied that she spoke as a foolish woman, and that we should accept adversity from God just as we accept good from Him (Job 2:9-10).
- God blessed Job for his attitude and perseverance through suffering and persecution (Cf. Job 42)
- James 1:12 indicates that such a person who endures through suffering and persecution for Christ's sake will be given the Crown of Life at the Bema Seat judgment of Christ. Note that James says you must be "approved" to receive this crown.

Why do some of those who proclaim the Lord endure difficult trials? So that their lives might back up their messages...endurance counts. ***Faith is not believing despite the evidence; it is obeying in spite of the consequences.*** God never wastes the sufferings of His saints. Job met God in a deeper way (Job 42:1-6).

***An impatient Christian is a powerful weapon in Satan's hands.*** Moses' impatience robbed him of a trip to the Promised Land; Abraham's impatience led to the birth of Ishmael; Peter's impatience almost made him a murderer.

**12** But above all, my brothers *and sisters*, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you do not fall under judgment.

**12** But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

**12** Above all, brothers, do not swear oaths by heaven, by earth, or by any other object. Instead, let your "Yes" mean yes and your "No" mean no! Otherwise, you may fall under condemnation.

**12** But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

- James is quoting from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:33-37) before Matthew had written his Gospel. This means that either James (an unbeliever at the time) was either there to hear Jesus' sermon, or Jesus told him this at a later time.

- James' last command is around rashly taken oaths. This command does not prohibit believers from ever taking an oath, but is a warning for taking an oath rashly.

- It's also a warning about swearing truthfully, and having such a reputation that your word is true and it does not require you to swear on something bigger than yourself.
- Essentially, James is telling believers to not swear to something greater than yourself to convince the person you're making an oath that you're reliable.
- James again stresses that a person's speech provides the most revealing glimpse of his spiritual condition.
- Straight-forward, honest speech – our reputation should be such that when we say "Yes" or "No", the person can take it to the bank
- Our integrity rather than our oath should be enough to convince others that we are speaking the truth.

#### (6) Wisdom in prayer (5:13-18)

##### (A) Types of prayer (5:13-16a)

(a) Afflicted: prayer of dependence (5:13a)

(b) Happy: prayer of praise (5:13b)

**13** Is anyone among you **suffering**? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to **sing praises**.

**13** Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

**13** Is anyone among you suffering? He should keep on praying. Is anyone cheerful? He should keep reciting psalms.

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

- "...suffering" - afflicted, encountering difficult circumstances

- The first type of prayer offered is one of dependence on God; there are circumstances in your life that are larger than yourself, that you can't solve, and you're afflicted or suffering because of those circumstances.

— It's easy to become discouraged when you're under affliction or suffering, but Jesus tells us to not lose heart during these times (Cf. Luke 18:1)

— Paul prayed a prayer of dependence to keep him humble (after, 14 yrs earlier, he was caught up to 3rd heaven and heard incredible revelations, 2 Cor 12:7-8)

— God can transform troubles into triumphs. He can turn weakness into strength (2 Cor 12:7-10; James 4:6).

[Jesus prayed (3x) in Gethsemane that the cup might be removed, but it was not...]

- "...sing praises" - if something great happened to you...you pray a pray of praise to God

— Singing praise blesses the Lord because He blessed you (Ps 34:1)

Different situations or circumstances should result in different types of prayer. We don't go around praying in the same format all the time (Cf. Matt 6:7). The types of prayers that we

pray are dependent upon the circumstances. Here, James describes five different circumstances that result in five different types of prayer.

(c) Sick: prayer by the elders (5:14-15)

14 Is anyone among you sick? *Then* **he** must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, **anointing** him with **oil** in the name of the Lord;

14 Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

14 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:

- "...he" - the person who is sick "must" summon the elders of the local congregation to pray for them

- "...anoint" - *aleipho*, a medicinal term (Cf. Matt 6:17, to prepare oneself); it could be translated "massaging." Here it seems James is assuming its application as a medicine.

- "...oil" - symbolizes healing and the Holy Spirit (Mark 6:13)

- Some people take this verse as a formula for guaranteed healing...if I'm sick and I go to the elders, God will "raise me up" and my sins will be forgiven

— That's not exactly what James is saying: James is not giving us a formula, that if followed, will result in healing 100% of the time. We have to match this verse up with other teaching in Scripture (1 John 5:14; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20).

— Here, James is referring to those circumstances where it is the Lord's will to heal someone

There are no blanket formulas: we're dealing with the sovereignty of God. It is a cruel hoax to teach that none of us are ever to be sick. Those who claim that God heals in every case, and that it is not His will for His children to be sick, are denying both Scripture and experience. Paul had to leave Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim 4:20); Epaphroditus was "ill and almost died" (Phil 2:27); Paul prayed three times for his own healing (2 Cor 12:7-10) but had to endure it until he died.

15 and the **prayer of faith** will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and **if he has committed sins**, they will be forgiven him.

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

15 And the prayer offered in faith will save the person who is sick. The Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

15 And 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.

- "...prayer of faith" - prayer is an act of faith because we rarely see an instantaneous result; we're often praying for God to give us an invisible result

— When we're praying, we're often tempted about whether it is really working and effective; I have a thousand other things to be doing right now, is this the best use of my time

- "...if he has committed sins" - the implication here is that this sick person is in this situation because of sin

— Sometimes sickness is attributed to sin; some people become sick because of sin in their lives. This is the situation here.

— Jesus healed the paralytic who had been in bed for 38 years; after the healing, Jesus told him to "go and sin no more" (John 5:14), implying that his sickness was caused by sin. This is the same cause as the person described by James.

- However, not all sickness is caused by sin:

— Job even offered burnt offerings for the sin of his sons; he was blameless. However, when struck by Satan, Job became sick (Job 2:7-8).

— Paul had constant physical sickness (Gal 4:13; 2 Cor 12:7-8)

— If we land on the fact that if someone is sick because of sin in their life, we take on the thought pattern of Job's counselors (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar & Elihu). They were certain that Job's sickness came from unconfessed sin.

— John 9 - a man blind from birth; disciples asked who sinned, this man or his parents? Jesus told them neither, but so the works of God could be displayed in him.

1 John 5:14: This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if we ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.

- It is not always God's will to heal people...sometimes it's His will for one to remain sick
  - Paul the Apostle was not healed (Gal 4:13; 2 Cor 12:7-10)

1 Tim 5:23: Do not go on drinking only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and **your frequent ailments**.

- Evidently Timothy had on-going health issues that were not healed

2 Tim 4:20: Erastus remained at Corinth, but **I left Trophimus sick at Miletus**.

Gal 4:13: but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;

2 Cor 4:16: Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner *person* is being renewed day by day.

(d) Sinful: prayer of mutual confession (5:16a)

(B) Power of prayer (5:16b-18)

(a) General statement (5:16b)

16 Therefore, **confess your sins to one another**, and **pray for one another** so that you may be healed. A prayer of a **righteous person**, when it is brought about, **can accomplish much**.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

16 Therefore, make it your habit to confess your sins to one another and to pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

16 Confess 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.

- "...confess your sins to one another" - we confess our sins to God for forgiveness and cleansing, but there may be a special circumstance where we need to confess a sin to one another

— If you sinned against someone directly, we should rectify the situation first before we come to worship the Lord (Matt 5:23-24). We should remedy the situation horizontally first, then we can worship vertically.

— This verse says nothing about getting to God only through priests, which is how some denominations (and Roman Catholicism) use this verse

— In the Church Age, all believers are priests (Rev 1:6; 5:10). One of the biggest believers in the priesthood of all believers was Martin Luther. This is why he translated the Greek NT into German, then later translated the OT into German.

- "...pray for one another" - feeling compassion for them is a good first step, but don't let our compassion end there, it must be translated into prayer

— We can intercede for them in prayer without even letting them know that someone is interceding for them

- "...righteous person" - all believers are righteous positionally but that's not James' point here

— James' point here is practical (experiential) righteousness: he's talking about believers who keep short accounts with God (habitual confession and repentance), and moving in the direction of growth (maturity)

— Essentially, a Christian whose practice is catching up with their position

- "...can accomplish much" - here is our reminder about how powerful prayer really is; prayer is far more power than we think
- God does not promise to bless a man, a method or a movement, but He does promise to bless two things: His Word and prayer
- In the early church (Acts 6:4), everyone wanted the apostles involved in their community service project; instead, they delegated those things out to worthy men (deacons) to free up the apostles for the ministry of the Word and prayer.
- Once that happened, the early church began to grow like crazy [Ps 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7]

(b) Example of Elijah (5:17-18)

- 17 Elijah was **a man with a nature like ours**, and he **prayed earnestly** that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for **three years and six months**.
- 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.
- 17 Elijah was a person just like us, and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and rain never came to the land for three years and six months.
- 17 Elias 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.
- Elijah prayed and it stopped raining for 3.5 years in Israel (1 Kings 17:1)
  - "...a man with a nature like ours" - Elijah was not super-human, he was a regular guy walking with the Lord
  - He had a sin nature, he had the same limitations as we do, he got discouraged just like the rest of us. In fact, he got so discouraged he wanted to die (1 Kings 19:4).
  - "...prayed earnestly" - "he prayed in prayer." Many people do not pray in the prayers, they just mouth religious words and their hearts are not in them.
  - "...three years and six months" - same timeframe as given in Luke 4:25
  - Same timeframe will occur in the Tribulation for the ministry of the Two Witnesses (Rev 11:3); the Witnesses will have the power to stop rain during their (3.5 year) ministry (Rev 11:6)
- 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.
- 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.
- 18 Then he prayed again, and the skies poured out rain, and the ground produced its crops.
- 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.
- After the famed confrontation with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the nation needed rain. He prayed and sent his servant seven times until a little cloud appeared and the rain

came (1 Kings 18:42-45). Persistence is essential.

Identity of the Two Witnesses		
CATEGORY	REVELATION 11	MOSES & ELIJAH
Protection	Rev 11:5	Num 16:35; 2 Kings 1:10-14
Activities	Rev 11:6	Ex 7:12-21; 1 Kings 17:1
Duration	Rev 11:3	Luke 4:25; James 5:17
Rapture	Rev 11:12	2 Kings 2:11

#### Identity of the Two Witnesses: Moses & Elijah

- Transfiguration (Matt 17:3)
- Ministries cut short in the OT (Num 20:12; 2 Kings 2:11-12)
- Future appearance predicted in the OT (Mal 4:5-6; Jude 9)
- Never fulfilled in the NT (Luke 1:17; John 1:21)

(7) Wisdom in restoring an erring brother (5:19-20)

(A) Necessity of warning an erring brother (5:19)

**19** My brothers *and sisters*, if anyone among you **strays from the truth** and someone turns him back,

**19** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

**19** My brothers, if one of you wanders away from the truth and somebody brings him back,

**19** Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

- "...strays" - *planao*, err, wander; from which we get the word "planet," a heavenly wanderer

— A person who turns from the faith they once professed



- There is a time and place to get involved in the life of a wandering believer, but it's a delicate operation
- Jesus was likely referring to this in Matt 7:1-5...Jesus didn't say not to remove the speck from your brother's eye, He just said to make sure that the log is out of your own eye so that you can see clearly.
- Essentially, when we embark on helping a backslidden believer get back on track, we need to make sure that we're not walking in hypocrisy
- Anything related to the eye requires great care; this is the illustration that James is giving here: when we confront a sinning believer, we must do so with great care.

Gal 6:1: Brothers *and sisters*, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in **a spirit of gentleness**; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well.

(B) Blessings of warning an erring brother (5:20)

(a) Salvation from a premature death (5:20a)

(b) Covering a multitude of sins (5:20b)

20 let him know that the one who has turned a sinner from the error of his way will **save his soul from death** and **cover a multitude of sins**.

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

20 you may be sure that whoever brings a sinner back from his wrong path will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

20 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.

- There are two blessings to rescuing a backslidden believer:

- "...save his soul from death" - the misinterpretation of this is that you can lose your salvation; if this doesn't mean that you can lose your salvation, then what does it mean?

— What happens to a believer who has turned their back on the Lord, stopped believing and is living like the world? They start to face death at a temporal level (not an eternal level), because the wages of sin is death (Cf. Rom 6:23; Gal 6:8; Prov 13:15; the life of David post-1 Sam 11).

— "death" - *thanatos*, doesn't always mean eternity in hell; the Bible uses the term "death" in many different ways. In the widest sense, it includes all the miseries arising from sin.

— In this instance, James may be referring to "maximum divine discipline" (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30; 1 John 5:16; Rev 2:22-23) rather than eternal death in the Lake of Fire, or he could be referring to the concept of temporal death, which would've been a concept very familiar to the Jewish believers in the 1st century.

— Temporal death is the concept that a believer can go off into sin and it will wreck all kinds of things in your life, but at the same time it doesn't mean you're not a Christian. Examples of temporal death in Scripture include:

- Covenant curses (Deut 28:15-68)
  - The Mosaic Covenant was clear about covenant blessings and cursings. The cursings outline the concept of temporal death.
  - Even though Israel experienced most if not all of the curses because of their sin, they never stopped being God's firstborn son
- Proverbs is filled with the concept of temporal death (2:18; 5:5; 14:12; 21:16)
- Life of David (2 Sam 12:10)
  - While David's sin brought temporal consequences (death), when he died he was ushered straight into heaven
  - For example, you can go out today and max out all your credit cards...by doing this, you haven't sent yourself to hell, but you've brought death to your future financial prosperity

— So if you go to a believer who is wandering away from the Lord, under God's gracious power with the delicate care of an eye surgeon, and turn that person back to the Lord, you have saved that person from a lot of David-like temporal consequences that they will experience in their life (had they continued down that path).

— "save" - *sōzō*, to rescue from danger or destruction; doesn't refer to salvation (*soteria*). Here it means to turn someone around to rescue their soul from *death*, not hell.

— The Greek word *sōzō* can mean salvation from hell in other contexts, but many times it is used to indicate being saved from danger or destruction (Cf. Phil 1:19; Heb 11:7). You are actually "saving" them (sparing them) from divine discipline (Cf. Heb 12:5-11), up to and including Maximum Divine Discipline .

— Maximum Divine Discipline is God taking a Christian's life prematurely because of the destruction that they are bringing to their own life and other people's lives (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:30; 1 John 5:16; Rev 2:22-23)

- "...cover a multitude of sins" - if you're effective at your ministry of turning someone around who was backslidden, you have cut off habitual patterns of sin in their life

— Sometimes the most loving thing to do for another believer is to confront them under God's grace about their sin in the hope that they will heed the warning and repent so they are spared ("saved") from David-like temporal consequences (Cf. 1 Peter 4:8)

— Nothing requires more wisdom than restoring an erring brother

John 10:27-29:

27 **My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;**

28 and I give them eternal life, and they **will never** perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

- "...will never" - *ou mē*, the strongest negation in the Greek language; it is the most decisive way to negate something in the future
  - It rules out even the *idea* (of losing your salvation) as even being a possibility

29 My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

- "My (Jesus') hand" (v28) and "the Father's hand" (v29) = the "double grip of grace"
- For some unknown reason, the English translations don't include the Greek word *ionios* (forever) at the end of this verse

But what if a Christian stops believing? - see 2 Tim 2:13.