

SERMON FOCUS: I must confess and pray in order to experience true healing.

SERMON FUNCTION: The hearer will realize that all situations call for prayer.

BACKGROUND: James was written in the 40s A. D. to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world. His intention was to encourage them to holy living.

SCRIPTURE READING: James 5:13-20

INTRODUCTION: I used to have somewhat frequent debilitating migraines in my late 20s. These would require a trip to the ER. The staff at the ER, as wonderful as they were, could never have helped me if I had not gone to them and admitted that I needed their help. I would have continued to lay there suffering, not having confessed what I needed to those who could help. We can find ourselves in needless physical and spiritual pain by not confessing what we are struggling with.

MESSAGE:

1. CONFESSION IS REQUIRED FOR PRAYER

- a. Confession is not just for sin
 - i. We can confess our illness
 - ii. We can confess our weakness
 - iii. We can confess our struggle
- b. Confession requires vulnerability
 - i. We are not always fine all the time.
 - ii. Allowing someone to know your struggle or weakness takes courage.
- c. Confession requires discretion
 - i. Of course, if we have sinned, we owe it to the person we sinned against to confess to them.
 - ii. Be careful *to whom* you confess.
 1. Is public confession necessary or wise?
 2. Is this confession appropriate for this person?
 3. Can you trust this person?
 - iii. Wisdom in our confession will yield the right results.
- d. Confession is *commanded* in scripture
 - i. (1 John 1:9) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - ii. (Psalm 38:18) "So I confess my iniquity; I am anxious because of my sin."
 - iii. (Psalm 119:26) "I told you about my life and you answered me."
- e. Confession has a purpose
 - i. The purpose of confession is not simply to make ourselves *feel* better, although that may be a result.
 - ii. The primary purpose of confession is for the health of the body of Christ.
 1. If one part of the body is sick, the whole body suffers
 2. Knowing the illness allows it to be treated.
 - iii. When we confess our illnesses, others can pray for us.

- iv. When we confess our weakness, others can pray for us.
- v. When we confess our sin and our struggle, the purpose isn't to relieve our own guilt. It is so that the rest of the body of Christ can join us in the struggle by praying for us!

2. PRAYER IS REQUIRED FOR HEALING

- a. Prayer for ourselves: (v. 13) "Is anyone among you suffering. He should pray."
- b. Prayer *from* others: (v. 13) "Is anyone among you sick. He should call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."
 - i. Anointing with oil: Oil was used to treat many ailments.
 - ii. The key here was the prayer of others.
- c. Prayer *for* others: If we are required to ask others to pray for us, it stands by extension that we are to pray for others who need it.
- d. Confession is required for prayer that we might pray effectively. Prayer is required for us and others, in fact for the whole body of Christ in order to experience healing in the body.

3. TRUE HEALING IS IN FORGIVENESS

- a. Not every illness is direct punishment for sin, as Job observed.
- b. However, every sickness is the result of sin generally. When Christ returns, sickness and death will be completely eliminated.
- c. True healing--ultimate healing is found in the forgiveness that we receive from Christ.
- d. True healing is the restoration of our right relationship with Him.
- e. We may or may not receive physical healing in our current body. But we know that our healing has already come in the form of Christ our Lord.

4. THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLE FORM (adapted from Dr. James Merritt).

- a. Bad News: We are all sinners separated from God.
- b. Worst News: There is nothing we can do about our sin problem.
- c. Good News: Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
- d. Best News: Salvation and eternal life are a free gift, but you must receive it.

INVITATION HYMN # 342 Rock of Ages