

## Sermon Discussion

### 17 May 2020

Read James 5:13-20

#### **Dig Deeper**

It is not surprising to find that James dealt with sickness (Gr. “asthenai,” weakness). He referred to the fact that departure from the will of God sets the Christian on a course that, unless corrected, may result in his or her premature physical death (1:15, 21; 5:20). Spiritual weakness, and sometimes physical sickness, result from sinful living. James gave instructions about how to deal with these maladies in verses 14-20.

The fact that the sick person was to summon the elders gives a clue that this person’s sickness connects with some spiritual condition. This proves to be the case in verse 15. Today a skilled physician normally provides the medical attention. The elders need to deal with the spiritual factors affecting the sick person, if any, since they have a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the flock (Heb. 13:17).

In this context James had a sickness with spiritual roots in view. Really all sickness is traceable to the Fall.

It is interesting that James did not tell his readers to call for someone with the gift of healing. Evidently such people were rare even in the very early history of the church when James wrote.

Probably the oil mentioned reminded the sick person of the power of the Holy Spirit that anointing with oil symbolized in the Old Testament.

1. With whom does James direct believers to pray? How does this challenge our individualistic approaches toward prayer and confession?
2. In this passage, James draws parallels between sin and sickness, confession, and health.

What do you believe is the relationship between sin and sickness?

What biblical support can you cite?

What is the relationship between confession and healing?

3. Do you think that sin can be overcome by human effort and goodness alone? Before you answer that question, take a look at the way you practice confession and requests for healing – what do your actual practices reveal about the way you “deal” with your sin?
4. In what ways would you like to grow as a person who prays powerfully? How could your Home Group engage more faithfully in prayer for one another?

5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes confession as the “break-through to community.”

What do you think he means and what do you make of that claim?

How does this claim challenge or support the kind of community you experience within your Home Group?

### **Application**

- Talk about why it may be hard for you to confess your sin.
- What habits of prayer do you feel could be improved?
- Spend time as a group praying for one another in your areas of need.

### **Pray**

Lord, guide me by Your Spirit to confess those things I have hidden or chosen to ignore. Bring brothers and sisters into my life who would hear my confession, pray for me, and love me as You do. Grant me boldness to help them while remaining humble so as not to seek attention. Show me the areas of healing I need in my life.