

The Power of the Prayer of Faith (various Scripture)

For most of my life as a disciple of Christ and a student of the written word of God, I have puzzled over what James meant in the fifth chapter of his letter beginning with verse fourteen concerning the prayer of faith. So, I have prayed about my conundrum and I'm satisfied with the answer that has come out of my research.

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;

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.

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.

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.

¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

(Jas. 5:14-18 NAU)

In James' letter to the church, he instructs anyone in the congregation of that local church who is sick, if they so desire and if they want God to heal them, to call for the elders of that local assembly to pray that he or she might be healed. So, this particular prayer is done in the local assembly by the elders. That does not mean, of course, that others can not pray for the sick in other situations. But in this particular setting, in a local assembly, the elders are to be called to pray the prayer of faith. And I will say this as well, when there are others present in the local assembly who want to pray with the elders over the sick, that is not

forbidden. But when the sick person wants God to heal him/her, he/she is to initiate the call for the elders.

And, in our 21st century church with our hospitals with their er's and surgery centers and ICU's, the patient does not have the luxury of being gathered with the body of Christ in close proximity. What we do have is the power of the prayer of faith from afar. The elders cannot pray over the one in the ICU except on rare occasions, so God has given us the prayer of faith that reaches His ear no matter where the ones praying are located. ¹⁴ *This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

¹⁵ *And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.*

(1 Jn. 5:14-15 NAU) I have Peggy's permission to mention her in my sermon. If Peggy were with us in person, she would give a big amen to this wonderful truth. And what about those of you who are here this morning via this video sermon who have experienced the answered prayers of our family here at Eastway?

I talked with Peggy this past Thursday and she was so exuberant about the effect our prayers had had on her. Her testimony over the phone built my faith up. Her saying over and over how she knew that she knew that she knew that it was the prayers of her family here at Eastway Baptist Church answered by Almighty God that had brought her through her latest trials. She kept emphasizing the fact that our prayers had been answered and she wants us all to know how powerful our prayers are. That's right, our prayers. Ordinary Joe's like you and me. Imagine that. I thought it took special people with special powers or something to get answered prayer like that. No, beloved, read this:

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

But, preacher, I'm not righteous. Oh, but if you are in Christ you most certainly are. Your faith in Him made you righteous, not your behavior. If that were the case no one would be righteous.

¹⁷ *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,*

“No way! Elijah was the great prophet. There’s no way I’m like him.” You’re pretty ordinary and human, am I right? Then you’re like Elijah.

and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

Now we see Elijah’s secret, he prayed the prayer of faith, *he prayed earnestly*. Elijah was a man just like us. He had the same sins and the same weaknesses and the same foibles we have yet that didn’t stop him because he knew that God was with him and had his back. He had heard from the same God you and I now hear from.

¹⁸ *Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (Jas. 5:14-18 NAU)* If you and I pray in accordance with God’s will and God’s word in the name of Jesus, beloved, we will see more testimonies like Peggy’s and Carolyn’s and others in our number who know the reality of answered prayers.

I will close with this:

The prayer of faith is an “of-faith” kind of prayer.

When I say that the prayer of faith is an of faith kind of prayer it’s because that’s the nature of the Greek phrase “of faith.” It both describes the prayer and gives us the source of the prayer. It’s our God-given faith.

The prayer of faith is a “knowing” kind of prayer.

This is the most important word about the prayer of faith. Faith is knowing, not hoping, not doubting, but knowing that God is going to heal this person. Faith when praying over the sick is God the Spirit speaking to our hearts and minds telling us that He is going to heal the sick. Healing faith is the gift of God. The prayer of faith is the prayer prayed because we know that God is going to heal the person for whom we are now praying. Faith is knowing. Faith is substantial. Faith is the inner witness, the inner evidence of God working through our prayers.

Hebrews 11:1 *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1 NAU)*

KJV Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1 KJV)

The prayer of faith is an effective kind of prayer.

*James 5:15 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. (Jas. 5:15 NAU)*

Will, will, will. Do you see them? The “three will’s.” *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.*

And Peggy says? Amen!

In Jesus’ name, amen.