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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

James 5.

(2013)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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James 5.

INTRODUCTION: James is commonly referred to as the Proverbs of the New Testament. It practically and faithfully reminds Christians how to live and covers topics such as perseverance, true faith, controlling the tongue, submitting to God's will and having patience. James aids readers in living authentically and wisely for Christ it is one of the earliest of the New Testament writings (A.D. 40–50). It is believed to have been written by Jesus' brother James.

Many have claimed that James and the apostle Paul differed on the question of faith versus works, but in reality the spiritual fruit that James talks about is the outward evidence of inward faith. James gives us a picture of what inward Christian faith looks like practically on the outside it demonstrates the true faith of which Paul wrote. James and Paul's writings rather than being contradictory beautifully complement each other.

Topics.

- Weep and howl you rich for miseries are coming upon you.
- The farmer waits patiently for the precious fruit of the earth.
- The judge is standing at the door.
- Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
- Call for the elders and let them anoint with oil and pray.
- The prayer of faith will save and the Lord will raise them up.
- Confess your sins and pray for one another, that you may be healed.
- The prayer of a righteous person has great power.
- Elijah was a man with a nature like ours and he prayed fervently.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter James highlighted the cause of quarrels and fights among brothers and sisters in Christ, he spoke of desiring and coveting what others have, of asking wrongly in prayer and stated, friendship with the world is enmity with God. He said, God yearns jealously over the spirit dwelling in us and gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud. He told his readers to resist the devil and warned them of doubled mindedness, judging a brother or sister, boasting of future plans and of knowing-good and not doing it.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Weep and Howl you Rich for Miseries are Coming upon You.

James 5:1-6 ----- ¹Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

The reference to "The last day" (v3) can refer to the following three events: -

1. Mortal death that no-one can escape.
2. The destruction of the Temple of God and with it the total collapse of the entire Levitical priesthood and the Jewish religious system since the armies of Rome would in a few years attack the city of Jerusalem and bring it to ruin.
3. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is supported by the words "Be patient for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (v8).

It really matters little which of the three James had in mind since they all fit the expression the "Last days." Death is certainly the last day for all humanity, the destruction of the Jewish Temple was certainly the last day for the religious rich who had stored up wealth for themselves from their ministry and the return of the Lord will be the last day for all the rich who have oppressed their workers for their own gain and for excessive profit.

James in these verses is speaking as would his brother the Lord Jesus Christ, it is as though James is on a high mountain and seeing in brilliant light the oppression of the poor, the unjust treatment of the less fortunate by the rich and wealthy and is crying on behalf of all those suffering under the injustice of the world's banking and trading system of commerce and profit to gratify the selfishness of greed, pride and ego, and the vast amounts of money spent of obscene self-indulgence.

The god of the people James has in focus is profit and worldly goods to gratify their own selfishness, pride, ego and greed. Employers who oppress others and cheat those working for them out of their rightful wages so that they can live in excess and self-indulgence will be judged accordingly

Being rich is not a sin, but oppressing others for one's own financial gain and being greedy and selfish with it is, should any brother or sister in Christ be blessed with the wealth of this world they should know that just as spiritual gifts are to be used for the benefit of others so too is the wealth of this world. No-one has ever yet taken a trailer of worldly goods to a deceased man's gravesite. Worldly riches if used to benefit others or for the extension of God's Kingdom is storing up treasures in heaven this is how we turn worldly riches into heavenly treasure, i.e., use it to help others and spread the Good News of the Gospel.

Treasures laid up in heaven are all those things that are
done for the benefit of others.

The hearts of the rich that James has in focus are so possessed by their money that they will be mentally and emotionally crushed when they lose it, the god sitting on the throne of their hearts is profit. The words, "The corrosion of their money will be evidence against them" (v3) means it will evidence against them because they have selfishly hoarded excessive amounts of profit for themselves and lived on the earth in luxurious self-indulgence (v5) instead of sharing their wealth around with those who are desperately lacking and deserving of help.

NOTICE: "The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts." As one reads the Bible from Genesis to Revelation it becomes very clear that one of the greatest offenses and sins before God is the oppression of others for one's own selfish gain it would not be wrong to say, "This is an abomination before the Lord."

This gross crime before God does not go unnoticed, the cries of those being oppressed are heard in the corridors of heaven and God will respond with harsh judgment upon their oppressors when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to repay everyone for what they have done (Rev. 22:12).

Be Patient until the Coming of the Lord.

James 5:7-8 ----- ⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The coming of the Lord in this verse refers to Jesus returning as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Here is the beauty and glory of the Christian hope just like God has hidden the day of our death from us, in his eternal wisdom He has also hidden the glorious day of the Lord's return, but has inspired the prophets to speak in such a manner that each generation is able to live with the hope of the Lord's return in their hearts and in their generation this is the wonder of God and of the Christian faith.

Thousands of years ago: -

- Abraham in faith went out to live in the land of promise with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise all looking forward to the city whose designer and builder is God. From Abraham and Sarah were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, because they were seeking a homeland a better country, a heavenly city that God has prepared for them (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Thus patiently waiting for the Lord is not a new thing God's people have been establishing their hearts in love and devotion while patiently waiting for that breath-taking world changing day when their Messiah the Christ returns to gather up all those who have look toward his coming from Genesis to Revelation.

The Farmer waits patiently for the Precious Fruit of the Earth.

James words of comfort and encouragement, "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains" (v7) carries the idea that we should wait for things to develop themselves in their proper season, and should not be impatient before that season arrives, but wait with patience as the farmer has to wait for the precious fruit of the earth.

The farmer cannot hasten the harvest since it requires time for the grain to grow and the crop to mature, nor can he control the rain, the sun, the season and therefore patiently waits until in the regular course of events bring the harvest at the proper time. Likewise we cannot control and hasten the events which are in God's own keeping and therefore like the farmer we should patiently wait for the developments of God's plan to come to its glorious climax.

The Early and the Later Rains.

In the climate of Palestine there are two rainy seasons, on which the harvest essentially depends - the autumnal and the spring rains - called here and elsewhere in the Scriptures the early and the latter rains (Deut. 11:14) (Job 29:23) (Jeremiah 5:24).

The early and the latter rains, for which the farmer waited with longing, seem to have implied the first showers of autumn which revived the parched and thirsty earth and prepared it for the seed; and the latter showers of spring which continued to refresh and forward the ripening crops and products of the fields. In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers in spring until their commencement in October or November rain never falls and the sky is usually serene.

The Symbolism of the Early Rain and the Latter Rain.

Perhaps it could be said that the early rain of the Christian faith began with Jesus being baptised by John and God calling the Lord into his ministry. The seed was sown, the grain is growing and the crop is maturing as the harvest approaches. The latter rain could be seen as the return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

The Judge is standing at the Door.

James 5:9 ----- ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

Here is a stunning statement and one that every group of Christian believers should shine a most brilliant spotlight on, since it calls us all to show each other tolerance and grace and should we speak against each other through gossip and backbiting the ones who will suffer eternal loss is not those who are spoken against, but those who are speaking complaining, griping and muttering against them. Everytime we are tempted to gossip, backbite, demean or degrade another person (especially a brother or sister in Christ) these words of James should resound in our ears as a blasting trumpet, "The judge is standing at the door." When we speak with malice in our hearts toward another brother or sister in Christ we are doing far more damage to ourselves than we are to those we are speaking with malice against.

Consider those Blessed who Remained Steadfast.

James 5:10-11 ----- ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

The words, "Consider those blessed who remained steadfast" (v11) immediately brings to mind of the ardent Bible student the great men and woman of faith recorded in Hebrews chapter eleven commonly called the Hall of Fame since it list men and women of great faith of who it says: -

- Men and woman of faith through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword and were made strong out of weakness. Others suffered mocking, flogging and even imprisonment. Many were stoned and killed with the sword. They went about in skins destitute, afflicted, mistreated of whom the world was not worthy wandering about in deserts and mountains and all these God commended for their faith (Hebrews 11:32-40).

The Steadfastness of Job.

God Himself said of Job: -

- "There is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?"

And even after Job had been tested and suffered greatly the LORD said: -

- Job even continues to hold fast his integrity even though I the LORD have almost destroyed him without reason (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

Job is the perfect example of a man who had integrity of faith and understood the sovereignty of God. The secular world knows that anyone who is blessed and whose life is charmed will praise God; real faith is when a believer continues to praise God under suffering. This is something the natural mind and those who do not know the love of God cannot understand. Job is evidence that God's love overcomes even the worst of trials, sorrow and suffering.

He is testimony to all the world that faith in God is not dependent on a prosperous or charmed life, and that the love of God in those with genuine faith is so deeply rooted in the heart that nothing will turn them against God or to curse Him. This kind of faith and love confounds the world; it causes those who have not tasted God's love in Christ to wonder what it is in the faith of a believer who like Job continues to praise God even in the face of sorrow, troubles and hardship.

Consider those Blessed.

NOTICE: the word blessed in this context does not mean being free of sorrow, hardship and suffering, but rather refers to those who will inherit eternal life and eternal glory. This is why they are spoken of as being blessed and not because their life was charmed. The life of Job and God's testimony of his great faith and of all those who were persecuted and suffered through extreme struggles of life and of those who were so destitute they could only clothes themselves in the cheapest of clothing was that the world was not worthy of them.

This great testimony clearly fly's in the face of the modern day prosperity Gospel that some religious teachers are proclaiming to entice people into their churches, but this Gospel appeals to self, ego and pride and eventually leaves many of its followers in confusion and bewilderment when struggles and crisis strike their lives and even worse often results in them falling away from their faith since what they have been taught does not relate to their real life experience.

Let your "Yes" be Yes and Your "No" be No.

James 5:12 -----¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

God greatly values honesty especially to what we say lies like pride are the absolute enemy to the Spirit of God. If I was writing this in the era of Christ it would be proper and right to say that lying and breaking a promise or our word is an abomination to God.

I remember as a small child my Dad taking me on my birthday to the movies I was so excited, most were westerns (in black and white), but the thing I that stood out to me (even as a child) and still does was that when the sheriff caught the bad guy and they had to ride miles to the next town, the gangster would give his word he would not flee if the sheriff un-cuffed him and they never did. They robbed banks, yet when they promised something they meant it (of course there were exceptions there always is), but mostly people of previous generations valued their word, it meant something to them and was tremendously hard for them to break it.

Today a person's word or promise means very little, companies lie to sell their products, politicians lie to get votes and Prime Ministers, Presidents and leaders of countries deceive the people of the nations they rule over to remain in power, but just because society today does not place value on promises and what they say God still does. This is because honesty and truth are pillars of the throne of heaven.

This is why James is saying, no brother or sister in Christ should make a promises rather their lifestyle should be such that they truly intend to do everything they say they will do and not do what they say they won't do. The integrity of our life should be such that we do not need to make promises because we value our word and what we say so much that we would not say something unless we truly intended to follow it through. This is why wisdom states, "Never make an impulsive decision" (i.e., without thinking through the long term ramifications since we may regret it later).

Let the Sick Pray and the Cheerful Sing Praises.

James 5:13 ----- ¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

The previous verses have been focused on affliction in general and encouragement to endure under trial. Our condition in this world is various and our wisdom is to accept and submit to its being so. We are to respond to each condition in a godly manner both in wealth and success and under affliction and hardship since life is such that sometimes we will be in sadness and sorrow and sometimes in laughter and joyfulness.

Thus: the reason James is saying if any brother or sister is suffering afflictions or hardships or suffering in some other manner let them pray i.e., let them go to the Lord in prayer seeking his comfort and his strength and his help, while those who are joyful are to sing with cheerfulness and praise the Lord.

The idea here seems to be, though it is right and proper for those who belong to the family of Christ feel compassion and empathy for those amongst their midst who are suffering they are not to let their sorrow (as sad as it maybe) rob them of the blessings and happiness they have in the Lord or from praising God in joyfulness and thanksgiving.

Of course we are to do all that is in our power that we can to help those suffering this is not about ignoring those who are struggling, but about not allowing our emotional joy in the Lord being replaced by anxiety, overwhelming grief, worry and stress etc., because of another brother or sisters circumstances.

NOTICE: James encourages the sick brother or sister to pray showing that while it is comforting and Scriptural to have others praying for us, we are not dependent on the prayers of others. Here is encouragement should we find ourselves on our own in sickness we should know that our prayers will enter into the very throne room of God and be heard by Him.

Call for the Elders and let them Anoint with Oil and Pray.

James 5:14 ----- ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? 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.

Anointing: in this context refers to smearing oil on a person for the purpose of it healing a sickness of some kind.

Sick: can refer to being feeble or weak (in any sense) i.e., diseased, impotent or without strength physically, morally, spiritually or in knowledge and power.

It cannot be supposed that this refers to the apostles, because they would be not always be accessible, rather instructions like this are designed to be applicable to the church at all times and in all places the reference therefore, is to teachers of the Scriptures who the congregation respected and trusted.

It is a privilege and honour to have another brother or sister to lead our thoughts through prayer and in devotion and there is no place where it is more comforting than by the bed-side of sickness.

Anointing with Oil: oils, ointments, salves, balms lotions and creams of various kinds, were commonly used among the ancients, both in health and in sickness, the oil which was most used was olive oil (Isaiah 1:6) (Luke 10:34). The custom of anointing the sick with oil still prevails in the East, since even today many believe that natural plants have medicinal or healing properties (the entire western world's multi-billion dollar natural Health Food industry is based on this principal).

James is not referring to any kind of miracle, is evident since if a miracle was intended, it could have been as well performed without the need for oil, rather what is here recommended was to be done as a natural means of restoring health, which, while they used prayer and supplication to God, they were not to neglect natural cures.

Likewise today it is proper and right that all Christians should always pray for healing, but this does not mean they forsake the gifts and skills of doctors and surgeons and their medications, remedies and treatments.

In Judea oil was celebrated for its healing qualities so much so that they scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them, with which they used to heal their wounds and bruises, etc.

Oil was used: -

- In the East as a means of cure for various diseases.
- Egypt often used it in the cure of the plague.
- Europe has used it for the cure of dropsy (the accumulation of excess fluid in any body tissue).
- Pure olive oil was and still is used for recent wounds and bruises.
- It was common for Jews to use olive oil as a means of healing.
- The Good Samaritan used oil for healing a man's wounds (Luke 10:34).

Clearly oil was recognised by many ancient cultures as a natural means of restoring health especially by the Jews and for this reason James is encouraging them to use natural healing medicines while looking to God for a special blessing.

In the Name of the Lord.

There is no reason to think that the phrase, "In the Name of the Lord" (v14) is used here to denote any peculiar religious rite or ritual or is to be used as a cliché statement or affirmation to be attached to the end of the prayer. Rather praying over a sick person and anointing them with oil was to be done in the name of the Lord as any other good deed is. When we do anything that tends to promote virtue, to alleviate misery, to instruct ignorance, to save life, or to prepare others for eternity it is right to feel and say that we are doing it in the name of the Lord.

The following verses show the expression, "In the name of the Lord" and, "In my name" refers to standing up for Christ in the face of suffering and persecution and actually doing good things for others in the fruits of the spirit.

Jesus said:-

- You will be hated by all *for my name's sake* (Matt 10:22).
- Whoever receives one such child *in my name* receives me (Matt 18:5).
- Where two or three are gathered *in my name* there am I among them (Matt 18:20).
- Everyone who has left houses *for my name's sake* will inherit eternal life (Matt 19:29).
- A who give you a cup of water *in my name* will not lose their reward (Mark 9:41).
- You will be brought before kings and governors *for my name's sake* (Luke 21:12).
- I know you are bearing up *for my name's sake* and have not grown weary (Rev. 2:3).
- Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything *in the name of the Lord Jesus* giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3:17).

These verses show that the phrase, "In the Name of the Lord" (v14) refer to doing things that bring honour to God, a good testimony to Christ and the Christian faith, it means holding fast to our faith despite persecution, helping the less fortunate, praying together and doing good to others when we are doing any of these we are doing them in the name of the Lord because they are motivated by our faith in Christ's name.

The Prayer of Faith will Save; And the Lord will Raise them Up.

James 5:15 ----- 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Save: means safe it carries the idea of preserving, delivering and protecting a person to make them whole physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

Some connect this verse with the previous verse, but it makes far more sense to see verse fourteen as instruction for dealing with natural sickness and verse fifteen as a prayer for salvation especially since the following verses are focused on brothers and sisters who have wandered from their faith being brought back to the Lord and of sinners being forgiven and saved to eternal life (v18-20).

It should be kept in mind during the era of the apostles and James there were no hospitals, very few doctors, and certainly no ambulances. This meant that many of the sickness that we are healed from today they died off; the death rate of illnesses was tremendously high and mostly expected. Added to this it should be carefully observed and noted that the saving of the sick in this verse is not ascribed to the anointing with oil, but to the prayer of faith that will not only save the sick, but result in their sins being forgiven and them being raised up.

Clearly this prayer must proceed from and be accompanied with a lively faith. There must be faith both in the person praying and in the person being prayed for. The great thing we should ask of God in faith in the time of sickness that could lead to death is the pardon of sin, but no-one should mistake this prayer of faith for the mistaken fancy that it applies to a religious priests absolution through a cold prayer of confession or of some type of religious rite or ceremony upon their death-bed as some religious institutions have their priests practice when a person is dying.

Rather in absolute contrast to this type of cold prayer, the prayer of faith refers to the humble condition of the heart and honest repentance before God. When a person prays this kind of prayer with the right heart attitude God will forgive all their sins and raise them up to eternal life (i.e., at the resurrection).

All who seek God should know that there is not one priest on earth no-matter how religious or how big their church or the religious institution or empire that they belong to is no-one has the ability to perform some type of religious ritual over a dying man or woman that has any power to set the heart of a person right who has disregarded God and ignored His will throughout their lives without honest and

genuine repentance before God and in faith accepting Christ as their Lord and Saviour this is why leading a sinner to eternal life is called, the prayer of faith without faith it is simply empty words of vanity, a vapour in the wind.

SUMMARY.

James is saying that the prayer of faith will save, deliver, protect and make the sick person whole, he is not saying that it will heal the sick person, rather it is a prayer of salvation. The prayer of faith in this context is about hearing the gospel, repenting and asking or praying for God's forgiveness. James is teaching us all that it matters not whether we are considered an elder or a lay person we are all able to pray for whoever asks us to pray for their salvation regardless of what position we hold in a church and regardless of how grossly the sick person has sinned or how much their mind convicts and condemns them.

No brother or sister should ever feel that they are too lowly to pray for a sinner to be saved, because it is the prayer of faith and the response of the sinners' hearts that saves them and not us. If their heart is right before God and this prayer of faith is prayed God will forgive no-matter what gross sin their mind might condemn them of. When there is honest repentance and faith God will deliver whoever comes to Him through Christ from the domain of darkness and transfer them to the Kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1:13).

James is basically saying, when a person is so sick that they think they may die and while facing death want to seek God then call for brothers and sisters who know the Good News of the Gospel so that they can share it with the sick or dying person and if they accept the salvation message, pray with them to accept the Lord and the prayer of faith will save them, their sins will be forgiven and God will resurrect them when Christ returns. It is in this sense they will be made totally whole.

Confess your Sins and Pray for One Another, that You May be Healed.

James 5: 16 ----- 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

It should be noted that confession here is of Christians confessing to one another and not, as the papists (or any other religion) would have it confessing to a priest and that James is not telling us to confess everything that we are conscious is amiss in ourselves or in one another; but so far as confession is necessary to our reconciliation with such as are at variance with us.

The confession here is where a brother or sister in Christ has injured another in some way. James is telling us that all acts of injustice must be confessed to those against whom they have been committed.

Following are some examples of where confession is needed: -

- Where Christians have tempted one another to sin or have consented in the same sinful actions, here they should mutually accept blame upon themselves and confess to each other their wrongful actions with the goal of encouraging each other to repentance and overcoming what they know to be wrong.
- Where a Christians wrongdoing is of a public nature and injured many their confession of wrongdoing should be more publicly confessed so that it may best reach to all who have been afflicted and hurt by their sin.
- On certain occasions it may be proper and right to confess our faults to a minister we trust, respect and who we know has our best interest at heart or to confess to a friend so that they may know the best way to help us and what they should best pray for when they go to God in prayer on our behalf.
- At other times it may be good for Christians to disclose their peculiar weaknesses and infirmities to one another, where there are great intimacies and friendships and where they may help each other in life and by their prayers to gain power to overcome them.

- In situations where a brother or sister feel they have fallen out of fellowship with the Lord or away from Christ they should confess their sorrowful state to one who is strong in the faith and through love and encouragement be again reunited in fellowship with the Lord.

Three different kinds of prayer: -

- Verse 13 directs Christians to pray for themselves.
- Verse 14 directs Christians to seek for the prayers of ministers.
- Verse 16 directs Christians to private pray one for another.

So we have all sorts of prayer (ministerial, social, and secret) that James recommended. Confessing and acknowledge our offences toward others will greatly increase peace, unity and brotherly love within our midst.

The Prayer of a Righteous Person has Great Power.

The prayer of any righteous person (those who belong to Christ) has great power as it is working through their faith and not through their own self-righteousness and for this reason all who belong to the family of the Lord should know the following two truths: -

- That their prayers are heard and greatly valued by God (regardless of whether they are answered in the manner they wish).
- No-one today needs a religious teacher or priest to pray for a sinner's salvation. All who belong to Christ's family can pray the prayer of faith that leads to eternal life with any sinner who is repentant and desires to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Elijah was a Man with a Nature like Ours and He Prayed Fervently.

James 5:17-20 ----- ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. ¹⁹My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The words, "Will save the brother or sisters soul from (eternal) death" (v20) implies that they have lost their salvation and eternal life and the words, "Will cover a multitude of sins" (v20) implies the brother or sister is involved in many sins or some form of serious sin.

Elijah in prayer looked not to his own merit, but to the
grace of God.

Those who pray must be righteous, but this does not mean righteous in an absolute sense (for Elijah our example was made with the same nature as us), but righteous in a Gospel sense, i.e., faithful in Christ and not loving nor approving of any wickedness in the heart.

Righteous: in this context does not mean without sin if it was possible for anyone of us to achieve this glorious state while in this mortal and fallen body then Christ died for no purpose.

Rather the word, righteous means live a lifestyle that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It means, forsake those things that are against God's will and behaviour that could be harmful to another human physically, financially, sexually, emotionally, mentally or spiritually and instead of being led by self, ego, pride, lust and greed be filled with the fruits of the Spirit, i.e., love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, patience, grace and mercy and such like things.

To be righteous also embraces the idea that we trust solely in our faith in Christ and God's grace for our righteousness, contrasted to trusting in self-effort or any religious rite, custom or tradition we may follow, and crowning our biblical knowledge in the royal robes of love contrasted to being harsh, dogmatic and legalistic.

It is doing as much as is in our power to maintain the unity of the faith in contrast to causing divisions, arguments, contentions and strife. It means confessing our sin before the Lord, repenting when we have offended God or hurt another person especially a brother or sister in the Lord and putting things right where possible when a wrong has been done.

Scripture states Noah was Blameless: -

- Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation and he walked with God (Genesis 6:9) (Genesis 7:1).

Being blameless in this context does not mean that Noah was without sin before God it simply means that he was a decent man, who only did good. Today we don't use the word righteous in this context, we would simply say, he was a very good man, meaning he was kind, decent and treated others with fairness, kindness and justice.

NOTICE: it says he was blameless in his generation, meaning no human could accuse him of any wrongdoing. Blamelessness as used in this context is about being blameless before mankind, and not about being without sin before God

God said Job was Blameless: -

- There is none like Job a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? (Job 1:8).

And even after Job had been tested and suffered greatly the LORD said: -

- Job even continues to hold fast his integrity even though I the LORD have almost destroyed him without reason (Job 2:3).

Blameless in this context does not mean that Job was without sin, it simply means he was a decent man who did no harm to another human, he helped the poor doing what was right before God and even under extreme suffering endured in faith and remained with integrity devoted to God.

There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before
God and his name was not Noah, Job or Elijah but,
the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is the greatest encouragement for all who belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ. James is reminding us that even Elijah one of the greatest prophets of the Bible was still born of Adam as we all are and had therefore inherited the same fallen and corrupted body with its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations dwelling within as we all have yet by prayer he stopped the rain.

James is teaching the faithful the following two valuable lessons: -

1. The prayer of faith is not dependent on us being without sin, but on our faith in Christ.
2. In prayer we must not look to the merit of ourselves, but to the grace of God.

These are the keys to prayer and it is in these that we should copy Elijah in earnestly prayer. James is encouraging those in Christ to pray for brothers and sisters who are in doubt or wandering from their faith, he is doing this by shining a spotlight on what Elijah achieved in prayer even though he was made of the same clay as we all are and as child of Adam inherited the same corrupted body that we all dwell in with the same sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that we all have yet his prayer of faith accomplished marvellous things.

James is highlighting Elijah's prayer so that there would be no-doubt in the mind of any faithful brother and sister in Christ that they can lead a sinner to eternal life through the prayer of faith despite their sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that dwell within.

James concludes with an exhortation to do all we can in our particular places of life to promote the conversion and salvation of others. He encourages all brothers and sisters in Christ telling them to pray with full assurance for those who have gone astray because the grace of God toward a repentant sinner that returns to the faith will cover a multitude of sins.

The global body of Christ is a constellation of stars we must be careful we
do not ignore brothers and sisters because their star does
not shine as bright as others.

End