



Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their hands clasped in front of them, set against a dramatic sunset sky with orange and red clouds. The person is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the slide, and the background is a dark, gradient sky.

- We often ask the question: “Where is God when sickness besets our lives?”
- Some insist that Divine intervention and healing should always be expected: “It's never God's will for Christians to suffer.”
- My question for such persons is: “How can you possibly know what God’s will may be for individuals, and how dare you add to someone’s pain by telling them such things?”
- The victim is sometimes blamed for his infirmity and accused of sin or a lack of faith.

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun, creating a dramatic and contemplative atmosphere.

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- We often pray: “Why is this happening to me?” when “What” would be the more appropriate question; as in, “What can I learn or what part of me will be better as a result of this experience?”
- Sickness is sometimes permitted by the Lord for our growth or for His glory
 - Psalms 119:71 - “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.”

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- Prayer is less about getting what we want and more about declaring our confidence in and compliance with what God wants.
 - Matt. 26:39 - “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”
- Genuine prayer is always a declaration of commitment to the will of God, and it is best expressed with patience as we wait for His answer.

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted



- Imprecatory Psalms are in the optative mode (“I hope; I would like”) vs the indicative mode (“I will, I am”)
 - David says to God: Psalm 35:26 - “...Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor Who exalt themselves against me.”
 - God says about David: Psalm 132:18 - “His enemies I will clothe with shame...”
- The prayer of faith will plead God’s promises and exalt His will.

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark blue and purple sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- The Bible makes prayer promises without qualifications
 - Matt. 18:19 - “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.”
 - John 14:13 - “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”
- These promises are given to increase our confidence in the promise inherent in prayer; that is, God will hear and answer.

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is positioned in the center-left of the frame, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a warm, orange glow from the setting sun. The foreground shows the dark silhouette of grass.

- In Bible times, people were occasionally healed by miracle; not many, but enough to confirm the word.
- Miracles had a purpose
- To reveal the word
 - John 16:13 - “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.”

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- To confirm the word
 - Heb. 2:3-4 - “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”
 - Mark 16:20 - “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.”
 - Acts 2:22 - “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know”

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- These purposes were completely accomplished. Paul said that the miraculous gifts would end
 - 1Cor. 13:9-12 - “For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known”

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- James 5:13-16 raises the question of praying for the sick and expecting a healing in response
 - James 5:13-16 - “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is 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. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- Why call on the elders? Why should we pray for the sick?

What Constitutes A True Miracle?

- There is a difference between a miracle and God's providence, or natural law, or answer to prayers
- Miracles were instantaneous phenomenon that contravened the law of nature that humans could not perform without Divine help

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left of the frame, with their hands clasped in front of them. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

What Constitutes A True Miracle?

- There was no recovery period involved.
 - Acts 3:1-11
- There was no question a miracle occurred, even non-believers attested to it
 - Acts 4:16 - “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.”

What Constitutes A True Miracle?

- We cannot restore life
 - Acts 9:36-42, 20:9-12
- We cannot alter nature by voice alone
 - Acts 13:8-12



Divine Response To Prayer Differs From Miracles

- James 5:13-16 does not imply that miracles are involved
- “Some elders had miraculous gifts during the first century.”
- Some elders had some gifts. But all elders and Christians did not have all gifts - 1Cor. 12:4-11
- Only a few Christians had the gift of healing - 1Cor. 12:28-30
- Performing gifts of healing is not a scriptural qualification for elders - 1Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9



Divine Response To Prayer Differs From Miracles

- Miracles are not necessary in the context of James 5
- Does it take a miracle for prayer to ease suffering?
- Does it take a miracle for song to spread cheerfulness?
- Does it take a miracle to be forgiven of your sins?

What Is James Teaching?

- The context is the effective power of prayer. Prayer can accomplish much when it is offered by a strong, devout believer; someone who truly believes that God listens to and answers prayer
 - James 5:16 - “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

What Is James Teaching?

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark blue and purple sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

- The evidence
 - James 5:17-18 - “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 land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”
- “Well, that is because God wanted it to happen.”
- Certainly. All prayer is answered in accordance to God’s will.

What Is James Teaching?

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left, with their hands clasped in front of them. The sky is a mix of orange, red, and dark blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The foreground is dark, possibly grass or a field.

- If we ask according to His will, He will hear
 - 1John 5:14-15 - “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

What Is James Teaching?

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left of the frame, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a warm, orange glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

- God listens to the prayers of the righteous
 - 1Peter 3:12 - “For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.”
- The time of miraculous gifts has ended, but God has not ceased to work in this world and in our lives. Too many no longer believe God’s promise. They no longer trust in the power of prayers.

What Is James Teaching?

- In times of physical sickness, call on the elders of the church. We want the prayers of the devout on our behalf
- This is not to suggest that only elders are righteous, but if they are qualified, they will be righteous. Other righteous persons may be called upon to pray as well.
- Note that you are to call for them, not wait for them to call on you

What Is James Teaching?

- Elders should not only pray, but see that appropriate medical treatment is supplied
 - Luke 10:33-34 - “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”

What Is James Teaching?

- The sick should also confess their sins if they have any. Verse 15 makes it clear that sickness is not always the consequence of sin.
- But verse 16 and others (1Cor. 11:29-32) suggest that illnesses may be God's loving chastisement for sin, in an effort to direct us back to Him.
- In any case, sins need to be confessed and forgiveness sought if we hope to have God hear our prayers

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left of the frame, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark blue and purple sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

- Forgiveness
 - 1John 1:7-10
 - Acts 8:22 - “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.”

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left of the frame, with their hands clasped in front of them. The background is a dark blue and purple sky with a bright orange and yellow glow from the setting or rising sun. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

- Peace from God
 - Phil. 4:6-7 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the foreground, and the background shows a horizon with a bright sun setting, creating a warm, orange and yellow glow. The sky is dark blue and black, suggesting a twilight or night scene.

- Strength from God

- Eph. 3:14-16, 20 - “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us”

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

- Opportunity

- 1Cor. 3:5 - “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?”
- 1Cor. 16:9 - “For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”
- 2Cor. 2:12 - “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord”
- Col 4:3 - “meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains”

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the foreground, and the background shows a horizon with a warm, orange and yellow glow from the setting sun, transitioning into a dark blue sky. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

- Boldness

- Acts 4:31 - “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”
- Eph. 6:19-20 - “And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer against a sunset sky. The person is in the center-left of the frame, with their head bowed and hands clasped. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a warm, orange glow from the setting sun. The overall mood is solemn and contemplative.

- Wisdom from God

- James 1:5-8 - “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Examples Of The Power Of Prayer

- If all of these things come by means of prayer, can we not believe that prayers for the sick will bring healing from God?

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- God loves and cares for the sick and afflicted
 - Psalm 82:3 - “Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy.”
 - Psalm 140:12 - “I know that the LORD will maintain The cause of the afflicted, And justice for the poor.”
 - Job 34:28 - “So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him; For He hears the cry of the afflicted.”

Praying for the Sick and Afflicted

- Our prayers for the sick and afflicted become our testimony that we also love and care for the sick and afflicted.

