

Prayer is Powerful
1/27/2019 Sunday AM

Introduction

- There are many people that are going through tremendous trials and tribulations all over the world.
- In fact, there are many people here at United Community Church that are in the middle of trials and tribulations.
- Each time we face something difficult in this life, we usually seek a way to fix the situation or get out of it at least.
- That desire leads us to turn to many different “solutions” to the problems that they face.
- If we are sick we go to the doctor, if we have emotional trouble we seek counseling, and on and on.
- In these types of events and in others, we often spend a lot of time worrying about what the outcome will be and what we need to do to fix the problem.
- After a period of agonizing failure and we are out of options, we use prayer as a last resort.
- This morning, we are going to look at the fact that **Prayer is Powerful**.
- In fact, it is so powerful, it should be our Plan A, not Plan B.

James 5:13-20

¹³Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. ¹⁹My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

- **V. 13** – Right from the start James asks the question, “Is any one of you in trouble?”
- I can ask that same question this morning and I am sure that there are people that would answer “yes.”
- James says in this verse that if your answer is yes, then you “should pray.”
- If your answer is “no” and you are happy, then you should “sing songs of praise.” Either way you should be communicating with God.
- **V. 14** – He goes on to ask “Is any one of you sick?” If the answer is “yes,” he tells us what we should do.
- You should have the elders of the church pray over you and anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord.
- James is clear in this verse about what you need to do if you are sick when it comes to prayer.
- Unfortunately, in our world today this practice has been sensationalized and exploited by false healers.
- However, that does not mean that the practice itself is discounted.
- **V. 15** – James clearly states that the “prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”
- If we are “sick” whether that be spiritually or physically, prayer should be what we turn to first.
- A prayer that is offered “in faith” will bring healing. This healing does not come from the person who prayed, but from the Lord himself.
- That is why physical healing and spiritual healing can be handled with prayer because only God can forgive sins.
- **V. 16** – In this verse James encourages us to confess our sins to each other and pray for each other so that we may be healed.
- That is why we have a prayer list in our bulletin and send out prayer request messages during the week.
- This is not so that everyone can know everybody else’s business, it is so we know how to pray for each other.
- James makes a point of clarity at the end of this verse by saying that the prayer of a righteous person is “powerful and effective.”
- Our prayers are only “powerful and effective” when we are a “righteous” person.
- Sin hinders our walk with God and distances us from him. In turn, that hinders our communication with God.
- When we are living righteous lives and we pray prayers of faith, we can see the power of God move mountains.

- **V.17-18** – To illustrate his point, James uses the prophet Elijah as an example of a righteous man praying a powerful and effective prayer.
- The verse starts out with a reminder that “Elijah was a man just like us.” He was not a god, he was a human being.
- James reminds us of what happened in **1 Kings 17-18**. Elijah prophesied to King Ahab that there would be no rain for 3 years. It stopped raining for 3 years and then Elijah prayed for the rain to return and it did so.
- Even Elijah however did not pray and in an instant rain began to pour from the sky.
- As the story goes, he went up on Mount Carmel and began to pray. He sent his servant 7 times to look out over the sea to see if there were clouds in the sky.
- It was only on the 7th time that the servant finally seen a cloud and then shortly thereafter the rain began.
- No doubt Elijah was a righteous man who prayed a prayer of faith and caused it to stop and start raining.
- However, God was the one that actually made the rain stop and start, he was simply granting Elijah’s request.
- If Elijah himself had the power to control the rain, it would have immediately started raining the first time.
- Even a faithful and righteous person has to persevere.
- **Vv.19-20** – James end this passage with encouraging us reach out to those that are living unrighteous lives and help them either get back on the right path or help them to get on the right path for the first time.
- As Christians, we should be helping people in a wholistic way; that means spiritually and physically.
- What good is a healthy body if you have a unrighteous soul that is leading you to hell?

Romans 5:1-5

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

- I wanted us to end this morning with this passage of Scripture.
- Paul says in **vv. 3-4** that we should “rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”
- There are times that we are going through trials and tribulations in this life and we seem to pray and still not get an answer.
- We are called to persevere.
- If we persevere through the trial, we will know doubt come out of the other side of it stronger and wiser.
- We may not like to admit it, but we grow and mature more through trial and error than we do anything else.
- The more we grow and mature in our faith the greater our “hope” gets.
- This “hope” is Salvation.
- **V. 5** says, “**And hope does not disappoint us**, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”
- If everything about this life was perfect and blissful, we would not hope for eternity.
- That does not mean we cannot enjoy this life, because we can.
- However, we are living in a sinful world and we will only be totally free from trials and tribulations when we are set free from this world and enter eternity with God.
- So, if you want to make the most out of this life, learn the power of prayer.
- We may not be able to experience the full bliss of heaven right now, but God has granted us access to him and his power through prayer.
- Persevere through the battles of this life, you will not be disappointed. That’s a promise.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Romans 8:18-30