

Series: Just Do It; Sermon: **The Prayer of Faith**
delivered by **Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on October 11, 2020

Bible text explored: James 5:13–20

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 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. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶Therefore, 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. 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. [ESV]

Review and application:

*James concludes by focusing on the dispersed early believers as individuals. Note his repetition of the word **anyone**.*

1. **Focus 1 (verse 13): those who are struggling.** Why does the way James turns to Elijah as his illustration (in *verses 17-18*) suggest that he has emotional suffering in mind? (See *1 Kings 19:1-18*.)
Where should the hurting believer turn first for relief?
2. **Focus 2: those who feel upbeat.** How should those who are managing well in a time of adversity respond?
Why is a sense of smugness totally inappropriate? (*1 Corinthians 10:12*)
3. **Focus 3 (verse 14): those who are sick.** Who in the fellowship should take the first step?
How are the church leaders to respond?
What is the significance of anointing with olive oil? Was this primarily a medical ointment (such as in *Luke 10:34*) or a symbolic setting apart (see *Mark 6:13*)?
4. Do we really believe (*verses 15-16a*) that the Lord will make sick people well in response to prayer offered in faith?
Is sickness sometimes tied to individual sin?
(See *John 5:14; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2; 11:30; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8*.)
5. How should we understand the way spiritual salvation and physical healing are intermingled here?
(See the precedent Jesus set, for instance, in *Luke 5:18-25*.)
What guarantees that the Lord will raise every believer up, either now or when he returns?
6. Are we convinced (*verses 16b-18*) that if we are submitted to God our praying can be powerfully effective?
But what does how Elijah prayed tell us about the effort required?

“A doctrinal mistake is at the bottom of every practical miscarriage.”

—*Matthew Henry*

7. Focus 4 (verses 19-20) those who've wandered away from the truth. In today's epidemic, what makes restoring them—whether locally or abroad—a soul-saving accomplishment open to any disciple?