James 5:13-20
The Prayer of Faith

Introduction

Question: What is your first response to being sick? What does this tell reveal about your expectations of relief? What does it reveal about where you place your trust?

One of the main points James has been making throughout his letter has been that Christians should not just profess faith in God, but they should live lives that reflect the reality of their profession. In other words, they should live in a way that underscores their declaration that God really exists. One of the main ways we live considering God's reality is to pray to Him. He hears prayer, and He answers it. Prayer is powerful.

James 5:13-15

1. What do the responses and remedies in verses 13-14 tell us about God?

2. Is James prohibiting other responses like going to a doctor, taking medicine, staying home from work, etc.? What would you say to someone if they came to you and said that they were not going to the doctor or use medicine because James commands us to pray?

3. Is this formula in verse 15 a guaranteed prescription for healing? What if you do all this and there is no healing? Did something go wrong?

James 5:16

4. James seems to connect confession and forgiveness with healing. In your view, do confession and forgiveness contribute to physical as well as spiritual healing? Why or why not?   Is sickness sometimes, never, or always due in part to unconfessed sin?

James 5:17-18

5. How does the illustration about Elijah underline James's main point? What is he aiming to tell us about prayers and the God who hears them?

6. In what ways do you resemble Elijah? In what ways do you not resemble Elijah, but should?

James 5:19-20

7. What does James exhort us as Christians to do for each other? What is the benefit of our caring for one another in that way?

Reflection

Think of the last time you or someone in your family were seriously sick. Did you/they call the elders to pray? Why/why not? Will you call them the next time? Why do you think people so often neglect this command?