

PARTNERS IN PRAYER- “God We Exalt You!”

March 20th, 2022 The Divine Spirit and His Healing

Dear Prayer Team,

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

James 5:14-16 (NIV)



“Do you think this passage means nothing? It says, ‘The Spirit that lives in us wants us to be His own.’” James 4:5 (NOG)

How often have you prayed for healing of someone we love or know and that prayer seemed to go unanswered? Perhaps the person we prayed for died. Perhaps that person we prayed for went through long years of suffering. If the Holy Spirit gives gifts, and one of the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 is “the gift of healings” (vs. 9), then what are we doing wrong? In this day of the resurgence of so-called divine healers, what is God doing? What are we the church to do?

I find it very discouraging that people take their cues from televangelists and other religious public figures rather than the Bible when it comes to seeking divine healing. I find it even more curious in light of the sideshow tactics of these performers. I remember, seeing on one rare occasion when I’ve flipped through the TV channels, one rather popular individual slinging his suit coat against the sick and the crippled and blowing his breath on them. While his audience screamed and applauded, I flinched and grieved, thinking, “What kind of show is this?” As I watched one person after another suddenly keel over, I wondered, “Who originated the strange idea that that’s what it means to be ‘slain in the Spirit?’” So, do we have a healing ceremony? Does pastor put on a little white suit and hit people on the head yelling one word with five syllables: “Be hee-aa-ll-d!?” Do we wave and sell hankies which have been dipped and blessed in holy water in order to “name it-and-claim the healing?” If people really had the gift of healing, why don’t they do it like Jesus, and just go through the hospitals for free and keep raising people up out of their hospital beds in an unseen way? Why is “healing” in church turned into a show? Is that what Jesus or the Bible intended? Never!

But what I really want us to understand today is that the Scriptures have given us the guidelines of what to do. I’m referring to the instructions set forth in James 5:13-15. If you have never given serious thought to these words, and if

you sincerely wish to pursue the Spirit's healing work in your life, set aside all the other stuff you have heard and witnessed on television... and focus your full attention to God's inspired Word which is like a mirror: "Is anyone among you sick? He should send for the church leaders and they should pray for him. They should pour oil on him in the name of the Lord. The prayer given in faith will heal the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up." (NLT) We will look closer into this passage during our message, but I want only to point out one thing: "the passage is to the community of the church working together in prayer; it is not to one individual who focuses the attention of the gift of Divine healing onto a "show-off." So let me just ask four questions which will prepare us for worshiping the Lord today: one on things learned, one about prayer, one on healing, and one about the Holy Spirit.

1. How are we responding to these messages on the Holy Spirit? Recently I was reading a story about the life of Oswald Chambers and I was delighted to learn of his earnest desire to pray for the Holy Spirit to work through his life. Many of us know him to be a very inspirational prayer instructor, Bible teacher, and author who wrote: "*My Utmost for His Highest.*" But, did you know that the theme verse of his life was written on his tomb stone? It was Luke 11:35: "*How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*" Should we not learn of his example and make it our dying desire that we pray the same? I love this idea that the last and final summary of our lives is asking for more and more of the Holy Spirit's using of our lives. Oh, to have more of Himself, more power, more Spiritual gifts, and more of a closer walk which always leads us closer and nearer to our precious Jesus! God our Father is willing to give the gift of the Spirit to us!

A story of Spiritual gifts was sent by one from our congregation as a lesson learned through our series about "Spiritual gift envy." And you will be very able to apply it to those we see today as so-called "faith-healers". Here is a part of this individual's email and story:

*"Pastor, I'm so very glad you have spent three Sundays on Spiritual gifts! Once a person understands what his primary gifts are, the next logical step is to put them to use!

During your sermon, yesterday, I was reminded of one of Aesop's Fables – The Stag at the Pool- and it seemed so fitting to the theme of not esteeming one gift at the expense of another: (I adapted the story to modern-day Bucks County.)

The Buck at the Pond*

One day, a buck paused at pool of water. He became enamored with his reflection, for he had a monster set of antlers; easily scoring 150 on the Boone and Crockett scale.

"How regal I am!" he thought, "My antlers are like a king's crown! If only these tiny feet were not so common. They are not worthy of bearing my royal antlers."

Just then, alert nostrils caught a scent. Radar ears - the rustling of a leaf. He bounded away; sharp hooves and slender legs easily piercing through the dense underbrush. He sprang into a thicket of *Rosa multiflora*, whose insane thorns repel even the most determined hunter.

The buck hunkered there, invisible, as the hunter walked by, grumbling at his own bad luck.

When the danger seemed past, the buck rose up, only to become entangled by his great antlers in the very thorns that had concealed him. Try as he might, his thrashing only made his problem more desperate!

Oh, if only his swift feet could carry him off again!!

The hunter returned to the scene and silently rejoiced at his good fortune, for those antlers would make a proud trophy in his den. He raised his Matthews Vertix bow with a carbon fiber arrow fitted with a Muzzy Trocar broadhead and took aim.

Moral: "Do not esteem one gift over another!" *(email sent by Brent Briggs, 3/14/ 22).

God gives us spiritual gifts to benefit others, and draw us closer to the Lord. There is a divine purpose at work in our lives and that divine purpose begins with God. And the Holy Spirit equips us to minister to others when we empty ourselves of all self-reliance and work the gifts in effectual fervent prayer!

2. When should we pray? Of course we know to say: "At all times." But do we? As our prayer conference is approaching April 1st and 2nd, I want to challenge you to step up in your prayer life. Someone said to me last week, "After we see that advertisement video we've been showing on Sunday morning during announcements, we should see that prayer isn't just for people who have a 'higher caliber' in the Lord, but it is for all of us! We come to prayer messy, we should long to better our prayer life. How can we not want to come to this conference?!" In fact, I'm asking our entire congregation to consider the prayer conference as a challenge to make prayer as more of our church DNA. We want to get a reputation for praying. We want God to work through every instance to increase our prayers.

Jesus said this: "*Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*" (Matthew 20:28-30). You know what hits me most about what Jesus is telling us? If you know that you, like Jesus, can't do life on your own, then prayer makes complete sense to find rest. When Jesus interacts with people, He narrows His focus down to one person. When Jesus is with someone, that person is the only person in the room. Jesus slows down and

concentrates on the one person at a time. The way Jesus loves people is identical to the way He prays to His Father. This one-person focus is how His love works through us too. Love incarnates by slowing down and focusing on just the beloved. We don't love in general; we love one person at a time. I think of that almost every morning, when I step out the door, and I pray: "Jesus, I just feel like I could love everyone, so use me today." But that feeling of love in general never really does anyone any good, until I meet eyeball-to-eyeball. And so here is the lesson, "When we do call upon Jesus in prayer, He stops to help."

Sometimes we are struggling, overburdened, burned out, stressed out, ready to give up – and then we say to ourselves, "Maybe I should pray?" When we try to handle life on our own, especially when life is out-of-control, we need prayer. No wonder we are overwhelmed, fearful, and stressed out. There is no substitute for spending time then pray with God. Any relationship, if it is going to grow, needs private space, time together without an agenda, where you can get to know each other. This creates an environment where closeness can happen, where we can begin to understand each other's hearts. You don't create intimacy; you make room for it. In short, you can't get to know God on the fly. But what would happen if our first choice were to pray when we are weary and burdened? We never discover the depth of God's compassion until we get in a place where we need God's compassion desperately!

"When I am overwhelmed? PRAY!

When I am anxious? PRAY!

When I am afraid? PRAY!

When a situation in life is out of control? PRAY!

When the enemy is throwing temptation at me on every level? PRAY!

When I am churning inside and need to forgive? PRAY!

When my back is up against the wall, and I feel cornered? PRAY!"

(Adapted from Bill Welte America's Keswick, When should we pray-online devotional 3/14/2022)

One of the verses that James gives us is chapter 5:16: "...The prayer of a righteous person is fervent and effective" (NKJV). Stop and look at those words. What James is proclaiming is: "Our prayers are powerful!" To borrow a phrase from an older version, they "avail much" with God. The Greek word for "fervent" means "boiling!" Do you know what a "boiling" prayer is? Trust me; you'll discover what that means when the doctor says, "We're taking your daughter away for surgery." When they wheel her away, you'll pray a "boiling prayer!" Nothing can distract you then. Praying like this speaks of total concentration. Better a short prayer from the heart than a long prayer that puts you to sleep.

I don't know about you, but when I am in those kinds of situations when my stomach is in knots, my head is pounding, and I can't seem to even sleep – it's

time to pray. And what I am finding is that when prayer is my first response, He does what He promises – He gives me rest for my soul. The opposite of stress is rest. Many times we view prayer as the last resort when it ought to be the first response. Prayer sometimes seems futile because we think we need to “do something, because nothing else is working.” Praying for many believers is fine, but they often don’t expect an answer. That is why James 5:15 says: “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” Don’t fall into the trap of separating life into the “spiritual” and the “practical.” They go together, like healing. Prayer must be in faith with those who take their medicine. You pray in faith and at the same time get the best medical help we can. And keep believing, even though the “good things” that are ahead may come in heaven, not on earth. And if we truly love people, we will pray in close relationship focusing our attention in love, just as Jesus does the same with us. Let’s learn to pray like Jesus prayed, and pray when Jesus prayed, Amen?!

3. Does God heal in answer to our prayers?

The obvious answer to that is “Yes!” In Scriptural times, healing was the ability to convey health to others, apart from therapeutic means. This gift did not replace ordinary medical treatment (1 Timothy 5:23), nor was it exercised in every case. There are records of healings that didn’t take place (2 Timothy 4:20).

Mainly, I want to focus on a verse Paul gives us in 2 Corinthians 1:10-11: “On Him [The God of all comfort] we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” In the context of this passage Paul is trying to remind believers that through troubles and sicknesses, they should be students of prayer, not victims.

A victim says: “Why did this happen to me?”

A student of prayer asks: “What can I learn from this?”

A victim looks at everyone else and cries out, “Life isn’t fair.”

A student of prayer looks at life and says, “What happened to me could have happened to anyone.”

A victim would rather complain than find a solution.

A student of prayer has no time to complain because he is busy making the best of the situation by calling on His Father.

A victim believes his hard times and sickness has come because God is trying to punish him.

A student of prayer understands that God allows hard times and sickness to help him grow, no matter the result.

A victim believes God has abandoned him, and prayer is a last resort.

A student of prayer sees God's hand in everything, including the worst moments of life, and prayer is the first response! (Adapted from Ray Prichard, Why Life Is Hard? Pg. 2)

Loved ones, if we believe so much in the sovereignty of God that when hard times come, we believe- no, we know!- that God is at work somehow, in some way for our good and His glory! (Romans 8:28-29). Times of sickness reveal the true power of prayer.

Again, in Paul's reference to prayer to the believers in Corinth, I love the phrase he used: "You help us by your prayers." Paul used a Greek word that occurs only here in the New Testament. It is a compound word that comes from three other words meaning this: "with," "under," and "work." It is what the Amish do when they have a barn raising. They all together get under the frame and lift it up together so that it is put in the right place. In the same way, we join together and lift the burdens of life as we pray for the sick and each other.

Why are some prayers for healing answered and some not? No one answer can fully explain God's purposes, but I am content with the words of Psalm 115:3 "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him." I can state my own theology of prayer for healing in one sentence: "We do the praying, and God does the healing- in His own time, in His own way, according to His own will." We are earnestly, fervently, unitedly, repeatedly, obediently and will use all the faith God gives us to do our part and that is pray! Our prayers matter! Through prayer we unleash the power of heaven for the problems we face on earth. We ought to pray more, not less in times of sickness and trouble. Knowing that others are praying for us gives us strength to keep going. When all is said and done, we will learn that God used the prayers of others to enable us to make the journey from earth to heaven, and we will discover that without those God-inspired prayers, we wouldn't have made it.

When you think of it, all healing in life is partial and temporary. Ultimate healing will not come until the dead in Christ are raised when Jesus comes again, (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Sometimes we speak of believers who died after a long illness as having been healed in heaven. But the Bible doesn't say it that way. Those who die in Christ are with Him in heaven from the moment of their earthly death (2 Cor. 5:6-8). It is also true their sufferings are over forever. But we won't be completely healed until our mortal bodies put on immortality in the resurrection when Christ returns. (1 Cor. 15:52-54.) If I think of healing that way, then the question of physical healing comes into proper focus. Can God heal the sick? Yes. Does He? All the time. Does God sometimes move from heaven to deliver someone from a desperate illness? Yes, and happens more often than we know. We should rejoice in every healing, no matter how large or small it seems to us. But let's remember that everyone healed in this life will die eventually. Death still reigns on planet earth. It's almost as if God is saying, "So you're impressed with what I can do about cancer? Just wait till

you see what I can do with a dead person!” All physical healing is like a tiny down payment, a deposit, a tantalizing foretaste, a guarantee of greater miracles to come. When I think of my friends and loved ones who have already gone to heaven, I want to say, “Lord Jesus, come back today. Empty the graveyards, and let the celebration begin!”

Here is my last question:

4. What is something new we’ve learned through this study about the Holy Spirit that we’ve never known before? I can delightedly share that I learned something about the Holy Spirit that I hadn’t a clue about. While I was preparing for our message this week on God’s healing the sick in James 5:13-16, I learned a new idea that describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit on our behalf. As I searched through the book of James for a reference of the Holy Spirit developing context to our message, I came across the most perplexing verse of James 4:5. In the very old King James it reads like this: “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, ‘The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?’” What strikes our modern ears first are two words that we equal with sin: “lust” and “envy.” So why does it say the Spirit would do what God surely could never do? What I discovered is that some translators, not using those English words, found better explanation by translating it differently:

- The Amplified Bible Commentary: “Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, ‘The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love?’”
- The Holman Common Study Bible Translation: “Or do you think it’s without reason the Scripture says that the Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously?”
- The Message Paraphrase: “And do you suppose God’s Spirit doesn’t care? The proverb has it that ‘He’s a fiercely jealous lover.’” And what He gives in love is far better than anything else you’ll find.”
- The New Living Translation: “Do you think the Holy Writings mean nothing when they said, ‘The Holy Spirit Whom God has given to live in us has a strong desire for us to be faithful to Him?’”

So what is being pointed out is that in prayer, the Holy Spirit that dwells in us, is always yearning for us with a “protective jealousy” for us to love Jesus faithfully in our lives. He acts as a guardian of purity and protection until we meet our Heavenly Groom, at which time the Church is married to Jesus in that future moment called “The Marriage Supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7-9).

Theologian A. B. Simpson, in his theology teaching of the Holy Spirit, devotes a chapter describing the Holy Spirit’s pure and utterly sinless jealous-like love over us. In ancient times when the bridegroom would propose to the intended bride, many times during the engagement a friend of the groom would help the bride get ready and stay pure until that wonderful wedding night. Almost all Oriental marriages had a go-between, a friend of the bridegroom and the bride,

who arranges the preliminaries, and brings the parties together, just as in the Old Testament story of Eliezer who brought Rebekah to Isaac (Genesis 24). This is the high mission of the Holy Spirit to be a “go-between”. He is so true to Christ that the least spot upon our holy character, the least compromise in our allegiance, and devotion awakens in His heart a holy righteous jealousy over us. The Holy Spirit devotes Himself to bringing about our union with Jesus, and to fit us for the highest possible measure of becoming our high calling as the Bride of the Lamb. So the Holy Ghost has been sent by the Father to call us as Christ’s future bride for His beloved Son, and educates us, robes us, and gradually prepares us for our glorious meeting with our Lord at the heavenly marriage feast. So in summary, this verse that James uses reminds us that the Holy Spirit is loving over us jealously, and holding us to sacredly be ready to meet our blessed Bridegroom and Lord Jesus when He returns at the rapture. In the passage, James warns us that compromise with the world is unfaithfulness to Christ as adultery would be in marriage. It is in this connection that He says the Holy Spirit dwells in us and is actively loving us with a jealous love. He is constantly guarding our loyalty of heart and our single and unqualified devotion to Christ alone. Now, the Spirit which is given to each of us is holding us true to Christ. He first wins and woos us at our conversion (John 3:7); He regenerates us (Titus 3:5); He is our Helper and Comforter (John 14:16); He is our promise and seal (Eph. 1:14); He fills us (Eph. 5:18); He sanctifies us (1Thes. 5:21); He helps us walk with Him (Gal. 5:16); He gifts us (1 Cor. 12:12); and He prays for us (Romans 8:27). And here, stated in the book of James, He is our jealous-like loving protector Who leads us on until we shall be prepared to meet Jesus at His glorious coming.

A. B. Simpson says it this way: *“The Holy Spirit is our guardian on love and protection who is getting us ready to see Jesus! And so through hardship, through the disciplines of trials, through new circumstances into which the Spirit brings us, Oh, how He delights in us when we yield to Him! The Holy Ghost is yearning for our higher usefulness, and training us for service. The life of God is an unselfish life; the employment of the ages to come will be wholly benevolent and self-forgetful. The Holy Ghost is pressing us forward to make the most of our present opportunities. Beloved, let us trust His love, and yield to His high and holy purpose of love and blessing as He gets us ready to see Jesus tomorrow!”* (A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit vol. 2; Power From On High In James*, pg. 224).

Do you know what that does for us? Personally, it makes me check my love for Jesus. It also convicts me and makes me check my love for my wife, Lori. Since Christ reminds us to love our wives as He loves the church in Ephesians 5, I must be praying and guarding my wife in the same way. When was the last time you prayed with your wife, asking “Jesus to keep her pure and loving Jesus?” Men, when was the last time you selflessly expressed love and prayed for the protection over your wife? We must take our cue from the Holy Spirit. He wants us to turn away from every earthly idol, and give Him our whole heart, that Jesus may give us His in return, and make us the partakers and

the heirs of all His riches and His glory! That is what consecration means. This is what the jealously guarding ministry of the Holy Ghost is. In giving us His jealous-fervent love He is calling some of us to give love and protect our earthly love also. Are you willing to recommit your earthly marriage to such a standard of love?

So let's pray:

“You are the infinitely wonderful, powerful, and great Father God Whom we get to worship for all Eternity! Oh, Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus, that as our Bridegroom, You loved us so, at the cross to die for us, and purchase our salvation. We want more of You Jesus, not just a miracle or healing. Holy Spirit, we believe in Your healing power! We want more of Your anointing here for faith and prayer and less and less of the things of this world. Let Your oil flow over us and around us so people can sense the presence of the Lord here. Thank You for the Holy Spirit’s jealously protective service of guarding us and preparing us to see Jesus as the Bridegroom for that wedding day in eternity. Do make us a church of ‘boiling’ prayer. Plant in us the DNA of being a praying people, and come soon! We ask in the Name of our Bridegroom who is anticipating our meeting as we He, In Jesus. Amen.”

**Earnstly praying today,
Pastor Corvin ◀◀**

Quote: “Are any of you seeking more grace? If He has given you grace to seek, He will surely give you more grace—grace to find. Are any of you grieving for sin? That is of His grace—He will give you more grace to rejoice in the pardon of all your sins through Christ. Have you begun to pray? That is according to His grace bestowed on you—but He will give you more grace to continue in prayer until you receive such answers as are the ripe fruit of your supplications. Thank God for little grace—mind that you do. If you have only starlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you moonlight. Or if you have only moonlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you sunlight. Then, if you have sunlight, thank Him fervently and He will give you shortly as the light of seven days. Be thankful, since a little grace is more than you deserve, be thankful for the least grain that the Lord adds to it. Oh! that you might be all led to believe in Christ. It pleased the Father to give Christ Jesus to us and in Him all fullness dwells. He cannot give you more, because in this one gift every other gift is concentrated. You cannot want more than Jesus. With Him you shall find that you receive more and more grace adequate to your needs and according to His exceeding riches of glory. So shall you praise Him more and more forever and ever. Amen.” ... Charles Spurgeon, Message #3459 More and More Grace, pg. 8)