



Sunday, September 6, 2020
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to James 5:16-18

If we were all honest with ourselves, we would recognize that we probably don't pray as we ought to pray. It's amazing how many exhortations there are in Scripture to pray, to pray with right motives, to persevere in prayer, and many more. Even more significantly, Scripture is filled with examples of God answering prayers in the most profound ways.

One could easily think of Moses' interactions with the Lord where he spoke to Him as though speaking to a friend (Ex. 33:11). Or David, who prayed to the Lord constantly before battle or before ascending the throne of Judah and witnessed how the Lord answered those prayers in mighty ways (2 Sam. 2:1-4). Or Solomon, whose prayer at the dedication of the Temple, which proved prophetic in so many ways as the Lord brought about what was prayed (1 Kings 8:22-53). One of the most striking is the example of Elijah, who prayed that the rain would be stopped according to the promise of God (Deut. 11:13-17; 1 Kings 8:35-36). However, Scripture holds up Elijah as a man with a nature like ours. Thus, as we draw near to God and purify ourselves, we can be confident that He will answer according to His will.

Context

As Pastor Don pointed out, much of James' letter is concerned with prayer. He is writing to a people who are suffering, and the most important concern of the suffering person must be to pray. In fact, because we are always in need, it should actually be our main concern all of the time (1 Thess. 5:17). But James is speaking specifically to encourage suffering people that God not only hears our prayers, but He works powerfully through them to accomplish great and good things for His people. He is almighty and He is trustworthy. He will act on our behalf, if we approach Him according to His word.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read James 5:16-18

“The Power of Prayer”

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective

Incredible statement – prayer

Astonishing story – Elijah

1. Personal Purity

- Positional righteousness – in Christ

- Practical righteousness – in our life

2. Human Passion

- Fervency: compelled by our need

- Fervency: convinced of His power

3. Scriptural Purpose

- Deuteronomy 11:13-17

- Pray the promises of God!

Discuss

- 1) How would you describe your prayer life right now?
- 2) What do you think has most contributed to where you're at in your prayer life?
- 3) Pastor Don said, "God is almighty and trustworthy, but we often don't believe one or the other of those things." Which do you think is harder for you to believe on a daily basis?
- 4) Do you find that its easier to engage your mind or your heart in prayer?
- 5) Read 1 John 5:14-15. How does this encourage you to be even more disciplined in prayer?