

Bringing Back

Read James 5.19-20

14. Cain famously asked “am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen 4.9). How do these final words show that you can’t be a go-it-alone Christian?

15. We do see people in churches who after coming for a while, or even a long time, wander. James is talking about those who wander because of sin. What should we do as individuals to try to bring back those who have wandered and whose souls are in peril?

Pray

Pray for those who are suffering, for those who are sick, and for those labouring with unrepented sin.

Pray for those those you know who have wandered and for opportunities to bring them back.

Give thanks for our young people at St. James and pray for the prizegiving and that the books they choose from the bookstall would be read and be helpful.

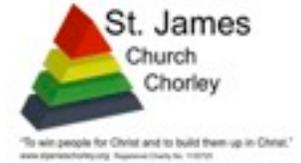
Pray for those going to the Keswick Convention this summer and for all those going on or leading Christian summer camps whether in this country or others.

Give thanks to God for His goodness, and, if you are cheerful, sing praise (v13).

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James

Week 9 : Pray for one another



Oaths

Read James 5.12 & Matthew 5.34

1. In what ways do you hear people swearing (in the sense of oaths/promises rather than bad language) in ordinary conversation? Why do people do it?

2. What does verse 12 mean for our ordinary conversation? How important is it to be known for integrity in what we say?

3. Have you ever been asked to make a formal oath (as a witness or juror)? Did you use the form “I swear by Almighty God...” or “I solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that...”? Does using the first form contravene James 5.12 and Matthew 5.34?

4. What different things have we seen in this letter about what we say?

Prayer

Read James 5.13-18

5. What particular things are we told to pray for in verse 13-18?

6. What did we see in chapter 1 about what our attitude to suffering should be? Do you think James is telling us in verse 13 to pray for relief from suffering, or more than that?

7. Some seem to like telling others about their ailments whilst others give nothing away, even when about to die! Which extreme are you more likely to tend to? When we are sick what are we told to do in these verses and would you do it?

8. Verses 14 and 15 seem fairly straightforward but there are very different ideas about what they mean in practice. What promise do they give to the sick person?

9. What are the elders (presbyters) told to do? (Notice it means more than one elder.)

10. Oil was commonly used to refresh on a hot day and to soothe injuries (Lk 10.34) whilst in the OT kings and others were anointed with oil. In later church use rituals and superstitions grew up (such as blessing the oil, anointing with oil at baptism, ordination and near death) resulting in some today being reluctant to use it. What do you think is the point of anointing as James describes it?

11. Verse 16 no longer seems to have just elders in view but is directed at all Christians. How does this show that you can't be a go-it-alone Christian? What are we told to do and how might we do that in practice?

12. The Old Testament shows Elijah as a man of prayer but does not mention him praying for rain and only implies he prayed for it to stop. Whether from other accounts or by the Holy Spirit James tell us that he did pray. Was this great prophet Elijah different to us and why does this matter for what James says?

13. What do you think verse 15 means by "the prayer of faith"? Is it about the strength of faith in asking, is it our conviction that God is able to answer, our humility in asking, or something else?

14. If "the prayers of a righteous person have great power" (translations differ a bit) does this mean that if we are good enough then we can get anything we, or others, want out of God? If not, what does it mean?