

The Prayers of the Righteous Work Pt. 2 (James 5:13-18)

- I. Confession (Transparency) with prayer is essential for forgiveness and healing (v. 16a)
 - a. “Confession” is the act of admitting or telling the truth about one’s sins. It requires (first) humility and (second) a desire to change. You have to be humble enough to admit you have wronged or *could* have wronged someone else. You also have to admit when you have acknowledged the wrong that you want to be different. You and I cannot be healed from sicknesses caused by sin (both spiritually and physically) if we continue to lie about our own status before God.
 - b. Prayer is the necessary response to one’s confession of sins. As a community, when people share their wrongs, those they have committed against us, and those committed against others, the proper response is prayer. We have to be careful as many take information shared as an opportunity to gossip. The charge of the church is to strengthen those who are weak. We should be able to be safe enough in church to confess our struggles and pray that we can be healed.
 - c. On these grounds, the prayer of the “righteous” are effective or work. Righteousness, here, assumes that we have rejected our sinful nature, confessed our sins, and repented to God and one another. When we live within this particular righteous status, the Lord is more willing to listen to our requests.
- II. Prayer is essential for seeing the hand of God move (vv. 16b-18)
 - a. My translation of 16b: “The functioning prayer of the righteous is works successfully.” In essence, when we pray living, functioning prayers, those we hope to get beyond the rooves of our houses, out of a righteous lifestyle, our prayers will yield success.
 - b. Elijah was a human being with sins just like us. He had problems and insecurities (see 1 Kings 19). But he listened to the voice of God and prayed for the will of God. Anyone who prays the will of God has prayed the power of God. In 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:41-46, Elijah was used to declare God’s judgment that there would be no rain for three and a half years in Israel. His prayer was respected by God because Elijah longed to be in and be used by the will of God.
 - c. Elijah prayed with “fervor.” James incorporates what we would call a “Hebraism” in this passage. The text literally reads “by prayer he prayed.” That is, Elijah surely prayed with all of himself, believing, trusting, and holding on the faithfulness of God. This is how we must pray.