"Taking Care of Each Other"
James 5:13-20
Hae-Rin Kwon



Background

This week, we hear James' final instructions to his fellow believers, and it's all about caring for one another. How do we persevere under difficult circumstances? By carrying each other's burdens, especially through our prayers for one another. Why is prayer the means for healing and restoration? And how does the Lord respond to His people's prayers? Join us for our last installment in James: Living Our Faith!

Sermon Text *James 5:13-20*

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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.
[17] Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. [18] Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.
[19] My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, [20] remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

2. Sunday Questions:

1. Navigating the Tension Between Faith and Unanswered Prayer

In verses 14–15, James writes that "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well," yet Pastor Hae-Rin openly contrasts her sudden, unasked-for healing from chronic gastritis with the agonizing loss of her father to cancer despite fervent family prayers. How do you personally wrestle with the tension between bold faith and unanswered cries for healing? What helps you maintain trust in God's goodness when prayer does not yield the immediate restoration you pleaded for?

2. The Vulnerability of Taking the First Step

James instructs that when someone is sick or weary, *they* should call for the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them (v. 14). This requires the person in pain to initiate, name their weakness, and invite others into their mess. What internal barriers—such as pride, self-reliance, fear of being a burden, or spiritual shame—most often prevent you from reaching out to spiritual leaders or friends when you are depleted, and what might it take to lower those defenses?

3. Confession as a Pathway to Holistic Healing

James directly connects physical and communal vitality to spiritual transparency: *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"* (v. 16). While confessing privately to God feels safe, confessing to another human being feels risky. Why do you think James insists that mutual confession is essential for healing, and what kind of relational safety is required for a small group to move past superficial updates into that level of redemptive honesty?

4. Redefining "Powerful Prayer" Through Elijah's Quiet Agony

When illustrating effective prayer, James does not highlight Elijah calling down theatrical fire from heaven before the prophets of Baal; instead, he points to Elijah curled on the ground with his face between his knees, checking the horizon seven times for a cloud the size of a fist (vv. 17–18; 1 Kings 18). How does Elijah's ordinary humanity, fatigue, and quiet, repetitive persistence challenge common assumptions about what "strong faith" looks like? How does this picture speak to your own seasons of dry, waiting prayer?

5. Restoring the Wanderer in an Age of Cancellation

The manuscript closes on verses 19–20, emphasizing that "wandering from the truth" in James's context is less about theoretical heresy and more about drifting into worldly survival strategies—bitterness, selfish ambition, and harsh speech. What are the subtle early warning signs that a brother or sister is beginning to wander into self-reliance or cynicism? How can a community pursue and "bring back" someone drifting down a destructive path with genuine humility and grace rather than moral superiority?