

God Hears our Prayers and Praises

International Bible Lesson

James 5:13-20

Sunday, January 25, 2015

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:13, 14—KJV).

“Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:13, 14—NRSV).

No matter what happens to us or others, we can go to God in prayer. When believers suffer, prayer comes spontaneously to their minds and often to their lips. When believers experience reasons to rejoice and feel cheerful, they may need to remind themselves to “praise God from whom all blessings flow.” Those who follow Jesus Christ may suffer in a variety of ways for their loyalty to their Lord and their confession of faith in Him. In some places, Christians literally die daily at the hands of their persecutors. But believers do not, or need not, suffer alone. When they are sick, they can ask the church to pray for them. They can call their pastor, their elders, and other church leaders to come to their sick bed, anoint them with oil, pray for them, and give them counsel. In the early church, elders sometimes served as doctors and gave medical treatment as they prayed. With mass communication today, believers can pray for the oppressed and persecuted around the world the moment they hear of their plight. In this life, we may never learn how many the Lord has healed, delivered, and sustained in faraway lands because believers have prayed the moment they have heard about devastating diseases or disasters. Whatever terrors or tragedies beset us or others, we can still sing with confidence these words of Joseph Scriven: “Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer.”— L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. Compare James 5:13, Philippians 4:4, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
2. Read James 5:14-15. In what other ways do Christians do this today?
3. When we pray for those who have committed sins, what can we pray for them?
4. Is sickness always the result of sin? Can some sickness be the result of sin? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Is there a relationship between the way we live daily and the way God hears and answers our prayers?