WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP

JAMES 5:13-20
11-18-2020

*** WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO CALL WHEN WE NEED HELP!**

I. CALL OUT TO <u>THE LORD!</u> (V. 13) ***(private prayer)***

A. In times of pressure, we are to pray (v. 13a)

B. In times of pleasure we are to praise (v. 13b)

II. CALL FOR YOUR <u>PASTOR</u> (V. 14-15) ***(pastoral prayer)***

A. The pastor's prayer (v. 14)

B. The lord's promise (v. 15)

III. CALL ON <u>EACH OTHER</u> (V. 16-20) ***(personal prayer)***

In order for us to go to each other and to encourage others to come to us:

A. We need <u>humility</u> (to confess our sins) (v. 16a)
(Be one who can keep confidences)

B. We need <u>righteousness</u> (to have power in prayer) (v. 16b - 18)
(Be one who has godly character)

C. We need <u>concern</u> (to restore an erring brother) (v. 19-20)
(Be one who is really concerned)

1. Such concern <u>saves lives</u> (v. 20a)

2. Such concern <u>stops sin</u> (v. 20b)

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INTRO: When you need help finding a business location, you go to the Nynex Yellow Pages.

When you need help finding a phone number, you dial 555-1212.

When you need help in an emergency, you dial 911.

When you need spiritual help, God (in verses 13-20) tells you where to call. The major theme in verses 13-20 is prayer!

*** WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO CALL WHEN WE NEED HELP!**

Tradition says that James spent so much time on his knees praying for the people that his knees "became as hard as a camel's" (cited by Hiebert, p. 316).

I. CALL OUT TO THE LORD! (V. 13) (private prayer)

Our God is a God for all seasons. He's there when you are on the mountain tops and when you are in the valley.

There are storms and there are times of peaceful calmness.

You can call on God anytime.

Psalm 18:3, 6 - "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears."

He is anxious to deliver, guide, strengthen, comfort, bless.

A. IN TIMES OF PRESSURE WE ARE TO PRAY (V. 13A)

"Afflicted" = to undergo trouble, evil, bad, affliction; to suffer ill treatment by others.

Every time this verb is used in N.T., it refers to someone being treated badly by others. (cp. II Tim. 2:3, 9; 4:5). Cp. its use in verse 10 - the mistreatment of God's prophets.

God's answer to handling people who treat you badly is not: retaliation (revenge), nor ignoring the situation -- but private prayer!

Present tense = Continual praying. Don't let anything keep you from praying!

Instead of having self-pity or complaining about the terrible situation ---- turn to God!

Pray for wisdom.
Pray for patience.
Pray for God's will to be done.

B. IN TIMES OF PLEASURE WE ARE TO PRAISE (V. 13B)

"Merry" = - good, warm feelings inside; to be cheerful.

"Sing psalms" - present tense: to keep this positive attitude, keep on singing psalms (praises) to God.

--We need to memorize more psalms.
--We need more psalms put to music.

Among my favorite songs are:

Psalm 19:7-10 (v. 10 = chorus)	SING
Psalm 25:1-3	THEM

Both contrasting verbs - "afflicted" and "merry" cover a wide range of varied emotional experiences in life.

The point is: whatever your situation - call out to God! Either by prayer or praise.

In doing so, you will strengthen your own walk with God.

NOTE: You are not to limit your praying to bad times, nor your praise to good times (Paul and Silas praised God with song with bleeding backs and chains [Acts 16:25])

"When the world is on top of you, pray; when you are on top of the world, praise." (Blanchard, p. 363).

II. CALL FOR YOUR PASTOR (V. 14-15) (pastoral prayer)

A. THE PASTOR'S PRAYER (V. 14)

"Sick" = lit. without strength, weak. The present tense points to a long term illness.

Sometimes when church members become ill, they fail to notify their pastor, and then they feel neglected because he does not come to visit them!

Plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; I Thes. 5:12) (churches large enough to have more than one pastor - ex., youth pastor, Spanish pastor, etc.)

The scene is a sick man confined to his bed at home.

NOTE: The elders go to him; he does not go to a healer at a public healing service somewhere.

NOTE: God does not say: Call a praise; go to the Temple; call up a TV evangelist or faith healer.

God established the local church with a pastor(s) as the overseer to be at your side when you need him.

"Anointing him" = aorist participle. This activity occurred before the praying. After anointing him. . . pray . . . having already anointed him.

"Oil" - the common form for olive oil.

"Oil" - a Jewish custom showing courtesy for another person. Cp. Ps. 23:5 - "Thou anointest my head with oil." A good host would perform this for visitors.

The Jews had 3 things they would do for visitors:
1) wash feet 2) greet with kiss 3) anoint head with oil

READ Luke 7:44-46
(other Scriptures regarding anointing with oil - See Ps. 23:5, Ec. 9:8, II Sam. 12:20, Dan. 10:3, Mk. 6:13)

It was refreshing! Especially in hot, dry climate. Oil had medicinal purposes also (Wisdom of Ben Sira 38:9-15).

But here the thought is that of showing care and concern for the person.

B. THE LORD'S PROMISE (V. 15)

"Prayer of faith" - cp. Ja. 1:6 - "nothing doubting"

What is "the prayer of faith"? The answer is in I Jn. 5:14-15. When you know what you are asking is God's <u>will</u>, you can be confident that you will receive.

"Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven. It is getting God's will done on earth." (Robert Law)

NOTE: It is the <u>Lord</u> who raises him up and not the prayer or some magical oil. God works in response to prayer.

"Shall save the <u>sick</u>" - Sick = to be weary, fatigued (points to the physical exhaustion that being laid up in bed produces).

Sick bodies are very often the result of sick spirits.

Unconfessed sin can lead to lingering illness:

I Jn. 5:16 - "Sin unto death"
I Cor. 11:30 - Lord's supper mis-used; result:
"Many are weak & sickly . . . many sleep"

READ Ps. 32:1-5 - David's sin and resultant physical affliction

Doctors say that 80 % of all illnesses are due to "emotional problems"; when Biblically diagnosed, they are revealed to be <u>sin</u>.

Guilt for sin breaks down the <u>immunity</u> processes in our body. Our <u>resistance</u> is weakened.

III. CALL ON EACH OTHER (V. 16-20) (personal prayer)

In order for us to go to each other and to encourage others to come to us:

A. WE NEED HUMILITY (to confess our sins) (v. 16a)
(Be one who can keep confidences)

"Confess" = be open. Admit specific areas of sin (ex. thought life, tongue, attitude, sinful habits)

It does not only mean to confess to one you have sinned against; but admit to those you can share confidences with. Share the areas you stumble in so that you can be prayed for!

This does not mean confession in a public worship service. He says it is to be to "one another" privately.

We don't do this because we are proud.
IF we would do this, we would have:
1) specific prayer support
2) encouragement and accountability
3) a powerful deterrent to sin

NOTE: James does not say: "Confess your sins to a priest in a confessional booth" but to one another (we are all priests!)

B. WE NEED RIGHTEOUSNESS (to have power in prayer) (v. 16b-18)
(Be one who has godly character)

V. 16 lit. - "The effective (energized) prayer (request) of a righteous one is strong to do much" (it is very powerful!)

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer" (I Pet. 3:12)

Elijah was:
1) a "Man" - we tend to view Bible heroes as superhuman.
2) "of like passions" = same nature (feelings, experiences) as others.

Elijah had the same struggles and weaknesses as other men have.

"He prayed fervently" = lit. He prayed with prayer. The Hebrew would repeat the word to stress intensity.

Elijah prayed that it wouldn't rain as a form of judgment on the idolatrous kingdom of Ahab and Jezebel (I KI. 17ff).

Too many people don't pray in their prayers. They just lazily say religious words, and their hearts are not in their prayers (Wiersbe, p. 172).

C. WE NEED <u>CONCERN</u> (to restore an erring brother) (v. 19-20)
(Be one who is really concerned)

"Of you" = Lit. "in you" (in your midst; in your church, among you)

"Err" = to wander away from living the truth.

In context, an <u>ethical</u>, rather than doctrinal, wandering is primarily in view.

Gal. 6:1 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

If he listens, we have gained (won) our brother (Mt. 18:15).

Churches around the world would easily double or triple in size (without winning one new soul) if we practiced this.

1. Such concern <u>saves lives</u> (v. 20a)

"Converteth" = to <u>turn</u> a person <u>around</u>. Same word used of Peter (Lk. 22:32).

"Sinner" = one who misses the mark. He is not living up to what God commands.

"Save a soul from death" = deliver a life from physical death.

Christian, if there is sin in your life, it will kill you! (ex. Ananias and Sapphira)

Sin always leads to death! "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (See Ja. 1:15-16: L.S.D. ----Lust ---- Sin ---- Death)

"Chastening" - Heb. 12
"One sinner destroyeth much good" (Eccles. 9:18)

2. Such concern <u>stops sin</u> (v. 20b)

"Hide" = cover

"Hate stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12).

This does not mean that love "sweeps the dirt under the carpet." Where there is love, there must be truth and righteousness!

Love will seek to get the sin covered under the blood!

By turning the sinner around, you are making sure that:

1) he sinful lifestyle stops
2) the sin is no longer publicized to the hurt of the church body (sin in a sense is contagious-it spreads)
3) the sin is covered by the blood (I Jn. 1:9)

True love seeks to cover sin (God's way). ILLUS: Noah's two sons walked in backwards to cover their father's nakedness.

We are disgusted when we hear of a rape or murder in which everyone just stood around and did not get involved. Are we any better?

When you know of a brother in sin, and you do nothing about it -- you then have sinned! We must also not be content with just admonishing him one time and think: "My work is done." What if, before you were saved, God said, "He heard the gospel once--that is enough."?

Conclusion:

I. CALL OUT TO THE LORD!

II. CALL FOR YOUR PASTOR

III. CALL ON EACH OTHER

HYMN: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"