

PP Together!

Part 7-James 5:13-20 (page 1012 in the pew Bible)

2/23-24/2019

Life is hard, and Rascal Flatts wants us to know that we don't have to face life's storms alone

PP Video of *'I Won't Let Go'*

God declared in **Genesis 2** that we are not meant to be alone, we need each other

And James is about to show us what that looks like in the real life of a Christian church

He's writing to Jewish believers whose faith is being leached away by difficulties

He wrote in verse 7, *'Be patient, therefore brothers, until the coming of the Lord.'* **5:7**

We should know that this word **PP** *'Patient'* means to suffer long under difficulty

5:8 reads, *'You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.'*

Then James reminds them of the prophets and Job who suffered long under severe trials, who are
'...an example of suffering and patience, brothers...' **5:10**

Life is hard here under the sun, and suffering is the normal experience, and if we are to endure
until the coming of the Lord, we must learn to help each other in the church

We are about to get certified in the **PP** **The CPR's for Christian Community**

PP 1-Confess... 'confess your sins to one another'

People in the church were *'suffering'*, and James said now is the time more than ever to pray

Yet some were *'cheerful'* which should move us to praise, for by His grace they were able to

PP *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."* **James 1:2-3**

But for some, their suffering had made them **PP** *'sick'*, a word meaning weak, and James

said now is the time to *'call for the elders of the church'* **5:14**

You should know that **PP** *'call'* carried a tone of urgency, that the sick couldn't get to the elders,
so the elders needed to come to the sick person...it was serious

The elders of the church are the men appointed and gifted to lead and care for the local church

PP *"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you [elders], to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood."*

Acts 20:28

You might wonder, *Why didn't James say to get the sick to a doctor?*

It was normal in Judaism for a sick Jew to go to the Rabbi before the doctor, where he would be
anointed with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His power to refresh the weary heart

The Rabbi would then pray over that sick person

This is what we do as Elders when called, and when we anoint with oil, it is not in a sacramental
sense like the Catholic sacrament of holy unction, a word meaning to anoint with oil

James isn't giving last rites instruction, this isn't holy hospice, this is the elders praying for
healing of a very sick person...who is possibly sick because of unconfessed sin

But James will not let confession of sin be something we do only with elders, for he went on to
say to the whole church, *'Therefore, confess your sins to one another'* **5:16**

What does this word *'confess'* actually mean?

Confession is all the rage online with popular sites like *SimplyConfess.com*, or *oosay.net*

For many it conjures up the image of sitting in a curtained booth pouring out sins to a Priest

But there are actually two halves to the biblical word *'confess'*

PP First, *'confess'* means to acknowledge or agree with God

If you have ever filled the radiator of your car, you begin by opening the radiator cap, and pour coolant into the radiator, but when it makes it to the top, you'll begin to see bubbles coming up as air is forced up and out of the system

Hold that image as I tell you of an illustration the Chicago evangelist D.L. Moody once gave. He held up a glass and asked, *'How can I get the air out of this glass?'* One man shouted, *'Siphon it out with a pump!'* Moody replied, *'That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass.'* Then Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. *'There,'* he said, *'all the air is now removed.'*

Combine this with the radiator bubbling out its air as you pour in the coolant, and it provides an understanding of what happens when we are filled with the Spirit as we walk with Him

The Spirit fills us and sin bubbles to the surface in confession, not because we are miserably looking for sin everywhere in ourselves, but because the Spirit is displacing it

To confess sin is to admit our guilt, and at the same time to joyfully breathe a sigh of relief that Jesus Christ paid for those sins in his death on the cross

We don't need to give a reason for why we sinned, true repentance owns up that I sinned because I just absolutely desired to...no excuse, no defense...just true confession

And those 'bubbles' of admission lead to the **PP** second meaning of confess, to cast or throw

You can't atone for the sin, you can't take your own sin away, but God can, and He did in Christ. Christian, do you truly understand that every sin you have ever committed, or will commit, was laid on Christ when He died on the cross?

We are told that **PP** *"Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."* **Genesis 15:6**

When you use a credit card, you are buying today what you'll pay for later, and it is guaranteed by the credit card company

Abraham believed God, and the later payment Christ would make on the cross in His death, guaranteed Abraham's forgiveness and made His right with God

We are on this side of the cross, and now the spiritual payment for our sins was put in the bank and Christian, you have an account with limitless funds for forgiveness

PP *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* **1 John 1:9**

Yet James tells us to confess our sins *'to one another'*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor prior to WWII tells us an important reason why

PP *"Confession in the presence of a brother is the profoundest kind of humiliation. It hurts, it cuts a man down, it is a dreadful blow to pride. To stand there before a brother as a sinner is a [deep disgrace] that is almost unbearable. In the confession of concrete sins the old man does a painful, shameful death before the eyes of a brother."*

We are to confess *'to one another'* not because any Christian can forgive sin, but because every Christian has access to take that confessing brother or sister to Christ for washing

We often need a brother or sister to bring us to God's throne, so friends, confess to others

So James leads us to the second part of the CPR exercise

PP 2-Pray...*'and pray for each other so that you may be healed.'*

As you look at **verses 13-18**, there is a repeating theme in every verse...prayer
 If there is anyone in our church going through difficult trials...we are to pray for him/her
 Look again at **verse 14** to the elders praying and anointing the sick person with oil
 The physical health of fellow believers is in James' mind, yet the elders are to discern if the illness has been brought about by unconfessed sin

Verse 15 is an incredible claim: ***"And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."*** **5:15**

If sin is the cause, and the person confesses, then the elders should pray and when that sin is removed, the sick person will be saved and God will raise that person up

Does this surprise you, to hear that sin can cause physical illness?

Jesus said to the paralytic, **PP** ***'Man, your sins are forgiven you.'*** **Lk 5:20**, and then healed him
 Another time He healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years, and then said to him, **PP** ***"Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you"*** **John 5:14**

The Apostle Paul wrote of anyone who wrongfully observes the Lord's Supper, **PP** ***"For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died."*** **1 Cor.11:29-30**

But the bible is equally clear that not all sickness and suffering comes from personal sin
 The book of Job made this clear, as well as the time the disciples asked Jesus about a man born blind, **PP** ***"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"***
Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." **John 9:2-3**

You need to know that not all physical sickness is because of personal sin, but sometimes, it is
 And for some to be healed, the underlying sin must be dealt with first

David acknowledged this in **PP Psalm 32**, ***"For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer...I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."*** **3-5**

I've seen people healed when we elders have prayed for the sick, and I've seen no healing
 I've seen people who I believe were sick because of unrepentant, deep roots of bitterness, even later died still bitter at the ones who hurt them

The Elders are to discern this, and James wrote, ***'And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven'*** **5:15**

James gave an example of this that occurred in the Old Testament with Elijah who served God when Israel had turned away from Him, and God brought about a drought
 All the land and the people were sickened, but after the confrontation on Mt Carmel, and Israel's repentance, God brought rain again

The underlying problem of sin was dealt with, and God brought healing and restoration

So we are to ***'pray for one another'***, for the elders are called in urgent cases

When an ailing brother or sister confesses sin to you Christian, you do not need to call the elders
 You pray, you bring that repentant Christian to the Lord, and you rejoice at God's answer
 You ask loving questions to see if there is any unrepentant sin, not on a witch hunt of accusation, but rather a gentle, probing, deep search with the person

'The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.' **5:16**

And if there is definite sin, then lead them to confess it to the God Who forgive and restores

PP 3-Rescue

“My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” 5:19-20

Life is hard, and that difficulty can weaken faith to the point where some will walk away
The church needs to be a community that takes care of one another and keeps us from wandering

PP *‘Wander’* (Gr. *planaō*) gives us our word planet, and means to *roam or go astray* and James uses it for a Christian who goes from the path of truth onto one of error

PP Errors in truth lead to moral errors of life because truth is not just something we believe, it is something we do

PP ***“Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” 1 Timothy 4:16***

How do we save our hearers...but to go and ***‘bring him back’*** from roaming from truth

PP Literally to ***‘bring him back’*** means turn someone back from error to the truth

We must hold firmly to our faith because we are prone to loosening our grip

This is why the world’s interests must not be allowed to separate us from gathering together

Worship, preaching, fellowship all grab hold of our hands and hold them fast to our faith

PP ***“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” Hebrews 12:15***

Contrary to Cain’s sinful defiance to God, we are each our brother’s and sister’s keeper

We are all responsible, in some part, for each others’ endurance in faith

This is why we are to confess to each other, and pray for each other

Because unconfessed sin leaches joy from our faith and joyless faith is one step removed from dead, powerless faith

But the one who demands privacy will say *who has the right?*

The one who lacks joy will say *why bother?*

The one who has no love will say *who cares?*

And the one who is worldly will say *I’m too busy!*

But the one who loves Christ, will leave the 99 and pursue the one

“let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” 5:20

The word ***‘sinner’*** is consistently used as an identification for a nonbeliever

James has in mind someone among us who was never of us, and sooner or later wanders away before the gospel can root in his or her heart and bring about salvation

I believe we have several people exactly like this in our congregation, and we must

Have you ever experienced someone literally saving your life?

Imagine, if you have, your gratitude to the one whose love moved them to pursue you, and you were saved for eternity?!

The theme of the entire book has been a faith that is mature, which is a faith that lives and expresses itself in love for God and love for others

How do we develop that faith?

Well it is perseverance through trials for sure, but that isn't meant to be done alone

It is through redemptive community

Redemptive community is when we help each other keep our grip on faith

This is the thought with which James closes his incredible letter

PP (Include all three CPR points) C**onfess our sins to one another**

Pray for one another continually

Rescue the one who wanders from truth

Amen?

Pray!