

James 5 13-20 – Healing and Forgiveness

Story of the Paralysed man

- Jesus is teaching in Capernaum
- The room was full to bursting
- No way in or out
- Four friends want to bring their friend to Jesus
- They cannot get through the crowd
- So they break a hole in the roof
- And lower him down
- Jesus sees the need of the man
- And says – “my child your sins are forgiven”
- When challenged about his authority to forgive sins
- Jesus challenges their motivation – their heart
- But then says what is easier to forgive the man’s sins
- Or tell him just to get up and walk
- So, he says, I will show you my authority to forgive sins, but doing both
- And he tells the man to get up and walk
- And he does
- To the amazement of the crowd!

Forgiveness and healing

- Jesus make a link between sin and healing
- We need to start with a warning
- Jesus does teach to be careful how we make the link in John 9
- Sin is not always the cause
- But it is certainly the case that sin leads to the need for healing

- The way we treat our bodies, what we put into them
- The way we treat them
- The way we treat the environment the abuse of the world leads to people getting ill
- Violence, selfishness and greed in the world leads to people being injured
- Freind story
 - Met him in the chaplaincy
 - Hit by drunk driver aged three
 - Permanent physical and brain damage
 - When I chat with him – see the surge of pain
 - Often talks about suicide
 - Very few friends
 - Bullied at school
 - But preferred school to home
 - Because of his home life
- “Sin is its own punishment” the shack
- The wages of sin is death
- So many people are damaged by the sin of others
- So many are damaged by their own sin
- Sin has a direct impact on our bodies
- Sin has consequences – one of them is sickness
- Sometimes physical, defiantly mental and emotional sickness
- The way our world – and by that I mean Cosmos as used by Paul
- Which are the values of the world
- Is constructed leads to people becoming unwell
- Jesus makes the link in the story form Mark 2
- James links the two here

- Healing and confession are linked
- It is controversial
- This passage has been used and misused
- God is sovereign
- God heals some and does not heal others
- When people do not get healed – accusations of unrepentant sin
- Or a lack of faith
- Can be used to make a sick person feel even worse
- The signs and wonders movement – which was part of the ministry of John Wimber
- Some in the movement argued that a lack of healing was a sign of being
- Out of the will of God
- But we have to accept that sometimes a lack of healing is part of God's plan
- My mate Glen, is a Baptist Minister
- He preached here when he was in Plymouth
- Glen is blind – he has written much on how his identity is linked to his blindness
- How he prayed for healing and it just never happened
- Was he out of the will of God?
- No – God's plan for him was different
- Indeed I have known a number of people – who suffering from Terminal illness
- Have seen their faith grow
- And their ministry to others expand
- While it may not be there plan
- They open themselves up to God

Lack of faith

- It is precisely the lack of faith by the individual that is being addressed by James
- When our faith is low – we need to prayers of someone outside of our situation
- So James says – if you are sick
- Call their elders
- What does he mean by elders
- Elders means overseers – leaders of the Church
- The word is where we get Bishop from
- We don't believe in Bishops
- Elders are those who given authority by the church tp lead
- To have oversight
- To set the vision
- At present we have just me as an elder
- But I would say that any leader do
- John Wimber would add that any Christian would do
- The key is not position but faith
- I have seen two weird healings in my life
- Paul story – vague prayer of healing
- Kevin Christie Daughter
- University Back Story
- 《Testimonies of healing》
- It does not need a lot of faith
- Mustard seed of faith can move a mountain
- But even Jesus needed faith
- Mark 6 – he left Nazareth as a lack of faith meant he could not heal!

- In both cases the healing happened because of the faith of others
- None were elders
- The key element is faith

Anointing

- The next element is anointing
- Putting oil on someone
- head is an odd thing to do
- It is not about the oil
- Does not matter what the quality of the oil is
- The power is not in the oil
- But in the name of the Lord
- In the name of Jesus
- Early in Acts Peter and John are going to the temple
- They meet a crippled man
- He is begging
- Peter says I do not have silver or gold
- But I can give what I have
- “in the name of Jesus get up and walk”
- Jesus’ name is powerful
- There is power in his name
- Power to heal
- So the power is not in the oil
- Or the anointing but in the name
- But the anointing is important
- It is symbolic – it is part of the process
- Do as well as people of faith – we need anointing – in the name of Jesus

We need confession

- James says confess your sins to each other
- Not something we are used to
- Catholic church very formalised
- But it becomes a ritual we disregard
- But that does not mean we should throw the baby out with the bath water
- Yes we need to confess to God, but we may need to vocalise that confession
- accountability groups – three people meet together
- Often single sex
- Confess sin and also follow up
- You give people the right to ask the hard questions
- Have you allowed yourself to be tempted this month?
- It is part of our process towards maturity
- I have been part of one myself – in my late 20's
- It is healthy thing to do
- I commend this to this church
- Could you find two others to pray with on a regular basis
- To confess sins and to be accountable to each other
- Jesus links sin and healing
- James links confession and healing
- We do need to be careful not to burden already ill people
- Why is od not healing you – have you confessed all the sin?
- So we need to be careful
- But confession is good – it is cathartic

- It is helpful
- It is healing in itself
- But it is not always easy
- It means exposing yourself to others in a way we are not always comfortable

Finally – we need to pray Earnestly

- Elijah was just a man like us
- He lived in environment of little faith
- Yet he had faith
- In 1 Kings 17-18 he is faced with people who do not believe in God
- Their lack of faith has brought about a drought
- But when their faith is restored
- And they reject the idols they have worshipped
- the rain falls
- But Elijah stays faithful in prayer
- He is a man of earnest prayer
- Too often we pray for a short time
- But soon get bored
- We need to pray earnestly
- We need to pray daily
- We need to pray as individuals on our own
- Or with other members of the church
- It is not just an activity of the leaders
- But the responsibility of the church
- To intercede
- When Elijah meets a widow, she cannot feed him
- Despite the Lord telling Elijah to get there because she will

- But she has no food – just a bit of flour and some oil
- And she was saving that for a last meal for her and her son
- But Elijah tells her to not be afraid – to have faith
- To make bread and she will have enough
- That is what happens
- They have more than enough
- God answers her prayer for daily bread
- The most basic of all our needs

God wants to do things in your life

- But often we think the problem is too insignificant for him to bother with
- Or too big for him to solve
- We need to offer God our big and small needs
- In all parts of our lives
- In our hardships we should pray
- And our joy we should sing praise
- God sent his son to die for you because he wants to see your life changed

Response

- Get into groups of two and three
- Say what your need for God is
- If you are comfortable to a moment to confess
- If anyone in the group has a need for healing
- Would like oil – then I will come and pray with your group

Vision – prayer email

- Response to our leaders Vision day
- Sue – he gets out Monday emails at EGBC
- Prayed for us
- This is what she felt God saying “Is God telling you to get involved in a health outreach service that does not initially evangelise, but is the first step in meeting the Kingdom”
- This was after the Sunday service that we offered prayer for the sick
- Something she knew nothing about!
- I believe God is saying something to us
- That we need to be in the business of healing our community
- No other Group can do it
 - Council cant or wont
 - New deal for community money tried it but could not sustain it
 - The police can’t do it
 - The trendy guys at RIO who run the Guildhall can’t do it
 - The efforts of a business or charity can’t do it
 - BUT God can!
- Our community needs hope
- Needs to be healed of despair
- Lack of vision, imagination and aspiration
- Only the church can bring true hope
- Starts with each individual
- That is the way that God always works
- Through people
- People like Elijah

- The plan to save the world was done through Jesus
- God becomes man
- Starts with people and
- Then moves out
- We are in a community that needs healing
- So let's start here
- Let's take this seriously
- Start confessing and praying for each other
- So get into groups and start praying
- I will be here with the oil!