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James 5:13-16

Please bear in mind these are my rough preaching notes – ignore all spelling mistakes and remember these are bullet points to remind me what to say – it is not written with the intention that it will be read by others

Remember where we left things last week - God is God and he is sovereign – he is before all things – made all things – sustains all things - Above all things - Knows all things - Can do all things - Owns all things - Rules over all - God is in control of all things

- All we do is in the hands of God – we cannot understand all the mysteries of God nor can we plan for where each day will take us, we do not know the future, but we can be confident that God does

Come to James 5 - the end of our series

Another tricky passage of scripture if you don't hold it together with who God is and the whole of scripture

In all things pray: James 5v13-14

- tell God about it
- like any skill you want to be good at – you practice – develop a muscle memory so that it becomes second nature need to practice it to develop that discipline, but when you do it becomes so much more natural and easy - means that you do it automatically –
 - me with guitar –
 - driving a car – difficult at first – to do the feet and the hands – changing gear etc – hill starts – but becomes easier, to the point of being automatic and without angst of getting it wrong
 - prayer is part of developing a natural relationship with God – (my picture of prayer – sitting on Grandad's knee telling him about the inane things of my week – just because he wants to spend time with me and hear what I've been up to) prayer as simple as a conversation with your grandad - but it's also then reverent coming to God on our knees
- part of the problem is we don't always know what to pray – (in the same way as in a conversation, don't always know what to say) Jesus knew this, he taught us the Lord's prayer - matthew 6: 9-13 – said pray like this – doesn't have to be these words – but sometimes it is good just to pray this – when there are no other words – or we don't know what else to pray – or simply because this prayer is full of truth
 - Our father, who is in heaven, holy is your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, gives us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory now and forever, Amen
 - Powerful reminders of God's holiness, that we pray for his will, not our to be done
 - Need to have this perspective – God is sovereign
 - Thank you for giving me what I need
 - Forgive me – help me to forgive others and live a life of holiness for you
 - God is the powerful one and the whole earth is in hands

- Powerful prayer to pray
- When we read this passage in James we see that in all of life's circumstances - In trouble - with joy - sick - pray!!
 - God wants to hear from us – wants that conversation with us – yes he knows what's been going on in our day – doesn't mean he doesn't want us to tell him about it
- Consider for a moment - What stops prayers from being answered?
 - That we don't pray - don't even start the conversation or bring it before God - don't want to bother him? Don't think he's really interested? Our prayers are Too small or too big? Will our prayers even make a difference? – Yes God hears, yes he is interested, nothing is too small or too big, yes prayer is significantly powerful – not because of our eloquent prayers but because of the one we pray to – he is powerful and our prayers invite him to bring his power into our situations
 - We don't ask - ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you (action is needed! ask seek knock) Matthew 7:7 – if you remain in me and my words remain in you ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you John 15:7 (again action needed – ask!
 - We don't have God's perspective - so we might think that God hasn't answered / maybe the answer is no and we're just not happy with that - but we don't know what God knows - might seem like injustice or unfair but - God's will be done
 - So let me simply say we need to pray in all circumstances, to tell him what's going on with us, to ask God for what we need, and remember that Gods will will be done

Pray for healing: James 5v14-15

- one of those situations where we need to remember to read this single passage in the context of the whole of scripture - whole truth not a small part
 - Not your normal healing - God does heal – we see this in the bible - Jesus (man born blind, paralysed man, women bleeding for 12 years many other examples) but also we know - have stories to share of God's healing in our lives and experience
 - Not a case to say that God always heals – (1 Timothy 5:23 – Paul counsels Timothy to take some wine to relieve his stomach problems – God has not healed in this case)
- But this is a particular situation of sin causing sickness – which is why the elders have been called to anoint the person with oil
 - Not all sickness caused by sin – John 9:1-3 Jesus warns the disciples against looking for the sin in someone's sickness
 - Remember once being told by someone who thought they were being helpful depression caused by unconfessed sin - I know I'm not the holiest person but I felt so deeply that they were wrong - knew it was God confirming this but - easy to believe (sadly we so easily buy into the lies that we're told at our weakest times)
 - But in some cases there is a connection between sickness and sin - we see this in the bible (for example – 1 Corinthians 11:28-30 – Where God allows the sickness of the wayward Corinthians as a discipline for their sin in order to provoke their repentance) - here in James we hear of prayer for healing that results in forgiveness - a particular issue that is occurring in James church.
 - Doesn't mean that all sickness we experience today is caused by personal sin - but it would be prudent to examine self and see if there is any sin - if there is confess and ask

for healing - speak with someone you trust - confess and ask them to pray for you - healing and forgiveness

- So we balance this with knowledge that this isn't always the case and it really is the exception rather than the general rule
 - But of course, sickness is as a result of humanities fallen state - not God's plan - so part of Jesus' ministry was to heal – Jesus through his life and ministry on earth started to bring in God's kingdom rule – Kingdom where there is justice for all, everyone has enough to eat, everyone is equal - in God's kingdom there is no sickness, no pain no death, Jesus showed this as he healed people and raised some from the dead - this is the reality to come and the reality that Jesus started to bring to the world
 - And today, I know that God does heal – it is a reality - sometimes God heals pain, sometimes he heals sickness and sometimes he puts back into the right order the functions of our bodies –
 - I have seen and prayed for this though not experienced for myself God's miraculous healing-
 - I have known God's healing as he has used medical doctors and medicines to restore my body –
 - so I know that God heals, but I also know although we ask for a miracle we don't always receive healing - again God's perspective - God's will be done - God is God and we aren't - God is in control
- My belief is that the ultimate healing we receive is forgiveness for our sins and restoration of our relationship with God so that here and now we can live to know him and one day we will live for eternity with him where we will be resurrected to be with him, where there will be no more sickness, or pain or death

Prayer of faith: James 5v15

- not about how much faith we have
- We can have faith the size of a mustard seed and with it move mountains
- Not about how earnestly we desire for something to happen - how much we fast - or the hours we spend in intense prayer
- Truth is it's not about us at all
- It is about Who we have faith in
- We have faith in the one who sees all and knows all, the one who has power to heal and power to defeat death
- Prayer of faith is not about us - it's about God
- It's about placing our faith and trust in God
- About being able to say your kingdom come and your will be done - even when that might not be what we would desire
- About saying that God is God and we are not and that he is in control

Therefore, confess your sins pray for each other: James 5:16

- Prayer and praise and healing in the context of community
- not only prayer with the elders
- Prayer with one another – we don't need any special qualifications or experience to pray for each other
 - Might be circumstances where someone more experienced is called on to pray
 - But for the most part anyone can do it
 - V16 – prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective
 - NIV bible – man for all people – as in mankind – ladies you are not excluded

- All people can pray for one another – not excluded by any means of gender, age, experience – whether you’ve been coming to church your whole life or you only started coming 2 weeks ago – you can pray – because prayer is a conversation with our heavenly father
- So James gives us a great picture of what it means for us to be church
 - To be family that does life together
- Place where we will Share our stories of God at work in our lives
- We will Share Our hurts and joys with one another – knowing that we will be supported and lifted up each in our turn
- We Will Confess to one another – knowing that this family is a safe space where not one of us is perfect, but where we’re willing to love and accept each other just as we are
 - But also willing to help each other live the best lives we can of serving God with our whole lives
- We will Pray for forgiveness and healing together – having confidence in our God who loves and forgives us and who has power to do miracles in our lives
- We will Sing songs of praise together – keeping ever before us our God who is God and he is sovereign – reminding ourselves over and again that he is before all things – made all things – sustains all things - Above all things - Knows all things - Can do all things - Owns all things - Rules over all - God is in control of all things
- This what it means to be church – so this is what we’re going to do
 - Share our stories
 - Sing praise to God for our joys
 - Pray for each other – confess sins, pray for each other for God's help in troubles, pray for healing