

PRAYERS THAT GOD ANSWERS

BIBLE TEXT : James 5:10-20.

LESSON 360 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Blessed the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2, 3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

James 5:10-20

¹⁰ Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

¹¹ Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

¹² But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

¹³ Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

¹⁴ 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:

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

¹⁶ Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

¹⁷ Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Good Examples

James, the writer of this Epistle, knew something of the lives of the prophets of God who lived many years before. They were examples to James, and to us, too, of patience, prayer, and faith. Perhaps as James heard of the affliction of Job and the sufferings of Jeremiah who was cast into a dungeon, he little realised that there was great suffering ahead for him, too. Christians are made stronger when they see the courage of others. All this helped to prepare James for the martyrdom, which, tradition tells us, he suffered not long after writing this Epistle.

Suffering for Christ

A crown of life awaited these holy men of the Old and New Testaments who gave their lives for the Lord. Even today, Christians are sometimes called upon to "lose" their life for Christ. In fact, Jesus said: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:25). What does this mean? It simply means that those who follow Jesus and suffer for Him and give their life for Him, shall have eternal life hereafter. Sometimes Jesus calls one to leave his home and become a missionary. Boys and girls of the junior age can consecrate their lives and, if Jesus tarries and the Spirit calls to their heart when they are old enough to go, they may go even to a foreign land and tell the people the way of salvation. We shall learn in Lesson 365 of the call coming from all parts of the world for missionaries.

Faithful Service

A number of years ago God called a young Portland boy to serve Him. He was always watching for an opportunity to do some small service in the house of God. He saw the ushers reaching for songbooks as people came into church. He thought he could be helpful by handing the books to the ushers, and he filled that little place of service. Then he became errand boy and assistant to the janitor in the church. As he grew older he played in the orchestra and later became a personal worker and minister, then a missionary to Africa, and travelled around the world. He endured many hardships, but he was happy in the service of his Master. "We count them happy which endure" (James 5:11). After he had told the story of Jesus to many, many souls in darkness, the Lord, who does all things well, called him Home to Heaven to be with Jesus and to worship around the Throne with those men of God who have gone before. Today he is enjoying the rewards of the faithful — he is with Jesus forever, and with those men whose writings inspired him to press on. He is with James who wrote, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). That is the reason he made the goal: he read his Bible often and prayed much. When a person reads his Bible, God is talking to him through His Holy Word; and when one prays, he is talking to God.

Elijah's Prayers

James gives Elias, or Elijah, as an example of one whose prayers were answered. He was just an ordinary man so far as

heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

¹⁹ Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

²⁰ Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

his feelings and desires were concerned, but how he did pray! God heard the earnest prayers of this man and stopped the rain for three and a half years. A great famine came upon Israel as punishment for the sins of the people. It was at the top of Mount Carmel that Elijah prayed again to have the rain restored. God desired to put the faith of Elijah to the test, or it may be that God wanted to teach us to hold on in prayer until the answer comes. Elijah had to pray seven times, but the answer came -- and how it rained!

Sickness

There comes a time in the life of almost every person when sickness attacks the body. The 13th and 14th verses of the 5th chapter of James are so plain that even a little child can understand them. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." That is what the Christian does; but the one who is not saved often takes an aspirin tablet or a tonic instead. "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." That is just exactly what the Christian does. In fact, he sings even if he is not merry, and the "clouds are hanging low." His heart is praising God even when things go wrong.

"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: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." The elders anoint the sick one with oil in the name of the Lord, and the Lord raises him up. The oil has no power to heal the sick, and the elder or minister who does the anointing does not have the power within himself or in his hands to restore the sick to health. It is the faith in the heart of the sick person, the faith in the heart of the ministers who pray, combined with the faith in the church, that brings healing to the sick.

Sad to say, some people, instead of calling for their elders to pray for them, resort to physicians for an examination, who often recommend their going to a hospital for surgery. Some modern churches do not preach, teach, or believe in divine healing, so of course their members do not call on the elders for prayer, but call for a doctor instead. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm" (Jeremiah 17:5).

**"Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD"
(Psalm 144:15).**

**"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help"
(Psalm 146:5).**

**"Whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he"
(Proverbs 16:20).**

How much better to put one's trust in the Lord and be happy than to be under the curse of the Lord! Perhaps one reason many people are unhappy is that they have trusted the healing of their body in the hands of man and not in the hands of God.

We read, "O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:8). "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" (Romans 9:21). How absolutely absurd to think that He who created our body is not able to repair it! Jesus has the power to heal all who come to Him today in faith believing, just as He did when He was here upon the earth.

Unanswered Prayers

"Why, then, are not all the sick healed today?" some will ask. There may be a lack of faith or there may be other reasons. God told the Children of Israel: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his

statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). There we find a possible reason for sickness: one may not have done "that which is right." But David said: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: . . . who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103;1-3). So, if one has sinned, there is forgiveness for sin, and there is healing for the body through the prayer of faith. However, not all sickness is the result of an individual's sin.

Confession is another thing the Lord requires – not to a priest, but "one to another." If one's conscience troubles him about something, it is very important that he go to the one he has injured and admit the wrong. Pray one for another, and soon all will be clear between.

Earnest Prayer

Are you a Christian who desires something from God – a clean sanctified heart? The baptism of the Holy Ghost? healing for your body? Are there other things you want – an opportunity to work for the Lord? a chance to develop your talents for Him? Do you desire the salvation of a friend or loved one? You may have all this if you pray! Pray! Pray!

But, you say, my prayers are unanswered. Do you pray fervently? Are your prayers earnest, sincere, zealous? Are your prayers hot? Or are they cold? Elijah's God still answers the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, woman, boy, or girl.

**"'Twas Elijah that prayed on Mount Carmel,
And the heavens gave ear to his cry;
And I' m sure it was not very formal,
For fire came down from the sky."
"Would God That More People Would Pray!"**

QUESTIONS

1. Give the names of at least five men of the Old Testament whose prayers were answered.
2. What should one do when afflicted?
3. What should the sick one do?
4. What results follow the prayer of faith?
5. Give the definitions of "fervent" and "effectual."
6. What three prayers of Elijah were answered by God?
7. Why is it so important that one trust God for healing?
8. What does the Bible say regarding those who turn to physicians to seek healing?