PC SERMON OUTLINE

James 5:13–18

1. The Lie: "I've Got This."

James 5:13

- In suffering: "I can fix this."
- In success: "I did this."
- Prayer is dependence, not inactivity.
- Praise redirects the credit to God.

My circumstances change. My dependence on God does not.

Application: Make prayer your first response, not your last resort.

2. The Lie: "I Can Handle This Alone."

James 5:14–16

- Asking for help is an act of faith, not a lack of it.
- Ask boldly. Trust honestly.
- Don't equate every illness with personal sin.
- Confess honestly and pray for one another.

Everybody doesn't need to know everything. But somebody trustworthy needs to know the truth.

Application: Stop hiding. Invite others into your struggles.

3. The Lie: "God Wouldn't Work Through Someone Like Me."

James 5:16–18

- Righteous does not mean flawless.
- Elijah was human, just like us.
- The power of prayer is not in the person praying, but in the God who hears.

God's promise does not eliminate prayer. It gives us a reason to pray.

Application: Keep coming to God, trusting His character and surrendering to His will.

REMEMBER:

Your weakness is not a reason to stay outside the door. It is a reason to come.

Through Jesus, you are welcomed into the family of God.

Galatians 4:4–7

PC SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question 1

- **Scripture Reference:** James 5:13 (NIV)
- **Full Scripture:** "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."
- **Discussion Question:** Think about the two extremes mentioned in this verse—trouble and happiness. Which season tends to tempt you more into believing the lie "I've got this" (trying to fix trouble on your own vs. taking credit for your own success), and what does that look like in your daily routine?

Question 2

- **Scripture Reference:** James 5:13 (NIV)
- **Full Scripture:** "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."
- **Discussion Question:** Our culture often views prayer as passive or a "last resort" after we have exhausted all our own efforts. How does viewing prayer as an active declaration of dependence on God change the way you handle a stressful or unexpected situation right when it happens?

Question 3

- **Scripture Reference:** James 5:14–15 (NIV)
- **Full Scripture:** "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."
- **Discussion Question:** What usually holds you back from asking others—or church leaders—to pray over you when you are hurting or struggling? How can we shift our mindset to see asking for help as a bold act of faith rather than a sign of weakness?

Question 4

- **Scripture Reference:** James 5:16 (NIV)
- **Full Scripture:** "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
- **Discussion Question:** While not everyone needs to know every detail of our lives, we all need *someone* trustworthy who knows the truth. What makes a relationship or a small group feel safe enough for you to stop hiding and share what you are really wrestling with?

Question 5

- **Scripture Reference:** James 5:16–18 (NIV)

- **Full Scripture:** "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."
- **Discussion Question:** We often disqualify ourselves from bold prayer because we focus on our own flaws and inconsistencies. How does remembering that Elijah was an ordinary, imperfect human being—and that the power of prayer rests in God's character rather than ours—encourage you in your prayer life this week?

Question 6

- **Scripture Reference:** Galatians 4:4–7 (NIV)
- **Full Scripture:** "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *'Abba*, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."
- **Discussion Question:** When you feel weak, inadequate, or spiritually distant, do you tend to stay "outside the door" in shame, or run to God as a beloved child? What is one practical step you can take this week to approach God with the confidence of someone who is fully welcomed into His family?

NP SERMON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

We are continuing in our series through the book of James today.

Today James wants us to see that a life of genuine faith is marked by prayerful dependence on God and a willingness to pursue the support of his people.

SCRIPTURE

James takes the kinds of things every one of us experiences and he shows us how a person of faith should respond.

1) Pray in every circumstance.

James 5:13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

James recognizes that the circumstances of life will change, but your dependence on God shouldn't.

So, pray in all circumstances!

Philippians 4:6 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Then James says, "Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."

Singing to God is not just music, it's a prayerful offering of our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

When we thank God, it reminds us he is the source of our blessings, and it trains our hearts to depend on him.

2) Invite God's People into your struggles.

You were never intended to walk through your Christian life alone. God gave us the church, and he has entrusted us to the care of spiritual leaders.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

When life gets difficult, don't isolate yourself. Invite God's people into it.

If you are sick, humble yourself, admit you need help, and call the elders.

James is showing us how to care for someone who is suffering. We shouldn't just offer them our thoughts; we should bring them before the Lord and ask him to intervene.

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Our relationship with God and our relationship with other people are more connected than we realize. We cannot claim to be walking closely with God if we are deliberately holding on to sin, bitterness and broken relationships.

So, James says confess your sins to each other… pray for each other… so you may be healed.

If you've sinned against someone, go to that person and make it right.

If you're struggling with a secret sin, find a mature believer you trust, confess it, ask them to pray for you, and invite them to hold you accountable.

Do you have people in your life who know what you are struggling with?

Do you have people who can pray for you, encourage you, and help you follow Jesus?

3) Trust God with the outcome.

16b The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Prayer is not some meaningless religious exercise.

When James talks about the prayer of a righteous person, he's talking about someone whose life is being shaped by a relationship with God, pursuing him, walking in obedience, and seeking his will.

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

It's tempting to put him on a pedestal.

But James says, "Elijah was a human being, even as we are."

Elijah had struggles like us, but his prayers were powerful because he depended on God. His confidence was in the God who had showed up for him time and time again. That dependence allowed him to trust God no matter the outcome.

The same God who heard Elijah, hears you, and you can trust him with the outcome.

CONCLUSION

Because sometimes God changes the circumstances…

Sometimes he changes us in the middle of the circumstances…

And sometimes he carries us through circumstances we never would have chosen.

Dependence on God doesn't mean we always get the answer we are asking for. It's about learning to trust him even when we don't.

Because our confidence isn't in our ability to control the outcome… our confidence is in the God who holds it.

So, are you living like you depend on God, or are you depending on yourself?

Stop trying to navigate life on your own.

Turn to God and pray in every circumstance. Invite his people into your struggles. Trust him with the outcome.

Stop trying to carry life on your own and start living today with complete dependence on Jesus.

NP SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question 1

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:13 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."**
- **Discussion Question: How do your natural instincts react when life suddenly shifts from a season of celebration to a season of trouble? What helps you keep your dependence on God steady even when your circumstances are constantly changing?**

Question 2

- **Scripture Reference: Philippians 4:6 & 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6) / "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)**
- **Discussion Question: Gratitude and praise aren't just polite habits; they actively train our hearts to recognize God as the source of every blessing. What is one specific area of your life right now where intentionally practicing thanksgiving could help replace anxiety with trust?**

Question 3

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:14–15 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."**
- **Discussion Question: God never intended for us to navigate the Christian life in isolation. When a friend or fellow believer shares a heavy burden with you, how can you move beyond**

simply offering "thoughts and well-wishes" to actively bringing them before the Lord in prayer?

Question 4

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:16 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."**
- **Discussion Question: Unconfessed sin, bitterness, and broken relationships quietly create distance between us and God. Without necessarily sharing private details if you aren't ready, what does it look like in practice to invite a mature, trustworthy believer into your struggles for prayer and accountability?**

Question 5

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:16b–18 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."**
- **Discussion Question: It is easy to put biblical heroes like Elijah on a spiritual pedestal. Looking at your own daily walk with God, what helps you stay grounded in pursuing obedience and seeking His will so that prayer becomes a vital relationship rather than a religious routine?**

Question 6

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:17–18 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."**
- **Discussion Question: Sometimes God changes our circumstances, sometimes He changes us in the middle of them, and sometimes He simply carries us through. Can you share a time when God didn't answer a prayer the way you hoped, yet you still experienced His faithfulness in the outcome?**

SARASOTA SERMON OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION:

We come to the point in our service when we open up and study God's word together. We are going to learn about the power of prayer, and we'll see that every time, and every occasion, is the right time to pray.

Let's read our passage for today, James 5:13-18, and see what James has to say about when and how we should pray.

James 5:13-18

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Today's message is for you who have ever asked, "If I don't have enough *faith*, will God not answer my prayers?" It's also for you who have been disappointed by unanswered prayer and you've wondered: "Is it because there is sin in my life?" The message today is also for anyone who's really thought very seriously about asking the leaders of the church to pray over you, but you aren't really sure what that's all about.

God wants you to have the prayer life described here by James as: "powerful and effective."

The first thing God wants you to do is . . .

I. Pray at all times.

James 5:13

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.

A person of prayer prays all the time.

Don't just pray for yourself. Ask others to pray for you too.

God wants you to . . .

II. Ask spiritual leaders to pray for you.

James 5:14

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

We do this here at New Day. Our elders often pray over folks and anoint them with oil.

James 5:15

15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

That is a powerful promise!

But <u>what if the person dies?</u>
Many many times the elders of the church have prayed over someone and anointed them with oil and the person got well!
That is such an awesome and joyous experience!
Other times, though, the person has died.
Does that mean that either the elders or the sick person did not have enough "faith"?

No, not at all.

God wants you to pray at all times and ask spiritual leaders to pray for you. And, he wants you to pray in a certain way.

<u>III. Pray in faith.</u>

The verse says, "the prayer offered IN FAITH…"

Praying "in faith" is not faith that God will do what *I want*.
Praying "in faith" is faith that God will dowhat *is good.*

This is not a "name it and claim it" faith.

There is one thing that can hinder prayer though: sin.

That's why God wants you to . . .

<u>IV. Pray with a clear conscience.</u>

This can be easily misunderstood too, so please listen.

James 5:16

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Did you notice the phrases we just read: "confess your sins" and "righteous person."

You don't have to be perfect to get your prayers answered. Elijah is mentioned in this very passage as a model of earnest prayer and he wasn't perfect, but he was righteous.

James 5:17-18

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Like all people, Elijah was a man who experienced anxiety, fear, and depression. He knew all about the troubles of this life. But, he had the courage to ask God not to send rain on the nation of Israel for over 3 years—and God answered his prayer.

Pray with a clear conscience and . . .

V. Pray for others.

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and ….pray for each other so that you may be healed…

This is what we call "intercessory prayer" and it should be the regular habit of the church.

CONCLUSION:

We don't just want to talk about praying today, we want to practice this before we go today.

Pray to God right there in your seat.

Ask the pastor to pray for you.

Ask the Response Team to pray for you.

Let's pray together right now and then you can spend some time praying some more.

SARASOTA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Question 1

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:13 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."**
- **Discussion Question: Every occasion is the right time to pray, yet busyness and distraction often push prayer to the margins of our day. What practical triggers or habits help you turn ordinary moments of frustration or joy into immediate conversations with God?**

Question 2

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:14–15 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will**

make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."

- **Discussion Question: Have you ever had church leaders or elders pray over you and anoint you with oil, or have you ever hesitated to ask for that kind of prayer? What questions, fears, or past experiences shape how you view physical and spiritual healing in the church today?**

Question 3

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:15 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven."**
- **Discussion Question: True faith is trusting that God will do what is good, rather than demanding that He do what we want. When a prayer seems to go unanswered—or when someone isn't healed the way we prayed for—how do you wrestle with disappointment without letting it erode your trust in God's goodness?**

Question 4

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:16 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."**
- **Discussion Question: Harboring unconfessed sin can weigh down our conscience and hinder our prayer life. Why do you think God connects confessing our sins *to each other*—not just to Him—with experiencing spiritual and relational healing?**

Question 5

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:16b–18 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."**
- **Discussion Question: Knowing that Elijah struggled with anxiety, fear, and depression just like we do, how does his example redefine what it means to pray "earnestly" when you are feeling emotionally or spiritually drained?**

Question 6

- **Scripture Reference: James 5:16 (NIV)**
- **Full Scripture: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."**
- **Discussion Question: Intercessory prayer—standing in the gap and praying on behalf of others—is meant to be a regular habit of the church. Who in your life (or in this group) needs**

you to consistently carry them in prayer this week, and how can we start practicing that together right now?