

Praying with true impact

Opening text: James 5:13-18

In the 5 verses of our text today, there are 7 references to prayer!

A while ago I felt in my heart to study every passage in the New Testament about prayer. Looking at all those passages, I saw how they all point to 3 central ideas. They all lead to 3 conclusions:

1. That prayer is absolutely vital in the life of the believer
2. That prayer is absolutely sure
3. That God absolutely answers prayers

I saw how praying with impact revolved around these 3 absolutes.

Let us look at the absolutes of prayer in detail:

1. **Prayer is absolutely vital**

Prayer is absolutely vital in the life of the believer

a) V. 13 - *Is anyone among you suffering?*

The Greek word used here for *suffering* can also be translated as “*ill-treated, afflicted, distressed, troubled, enduring hardship*”.

According to one Greek scholar, “*this word describes a person who is intensely suffering – perhaps physically but definitely mentally due to evil events that have occurred in his or her life*”

Life on planet earth can be hazardous without the power of prayer. We face 3 enemies (the world, the flesh and the devil) that can only be conquered with prayer.

b) V.14 – “*is anyone among you sick?*”

The word in the Greek for ‘sick’ is ‘*asthenei*’ which refers here to physical sickness but was also used in the NT with different meanings:

- It was used in Romans 14:1-2 to describe someone **weak in faith**,
- In 2 Corinthians 11:29 to describe someone **fearful**,
- In Acts 20:35 to describe someone with **financial needs**
- In Romans 5:6 to describe someone **without Christ**

Is there anyone sick, fearful, weak in faith, in financial need or still without Christ?
– let him pray! Prayer is the key that addresses every dimension of human suffering!

2. **Prayer is absolutely sure**

Looking at every passage about prayer in the Bible we see how prayer is referred to with certainty, as an act that carries great impact. Prayer is never described in any passage as some empty religious exercise, or some pious deed without any real impact, or something unsure not to be relied upon.

Let us look at **V.15** in the **Amplified (AMPC)** - *And the prayer [that is] of faith will save him who is sick, and the Lord will restore him; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*

There is no uncertainty in this statement about prayer. Every Scripture on prayer carries a sense of certainty. Let's hear it from the very lips of Jesus:

John 16:24 - *Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

Matthew 7:7-8 - *7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

3. God absolutely answers prayers

(If you have doubts about this, you will never pray with impact - James 1:6-8)

The second part of **verse 15** says, ... "*and the Lord will raise him up*"

John 14:13-14 - *And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*

These are the 3 absolutes of prayer, the 3 central ideas that every passage in the NT about prayer emphasizes. However, James still wants us to know one more thing: that prayer makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working!

4. Prayer makes tremendous power available, dynamic in its working!

Look at **Verses 16b and 17** in the Amplified Bible (AMPC):

The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

17 Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have [with feelings, affections, and a constitution like ours]; and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and no rain fell on the earth for three years and six months.

Last week I spoke about "the power we need right now". My 3rd point was that this power works! Prayer is what makes this power work.

The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

One last thought

Probably everyone watching today agrees with these 4 absolutes of prayer:

- Prayer is vital,
- Prayer is sure
- God answers prayer
- Prayer makes tremendous power available

However, there may be someone watching today and finding it hard to believe that *their own prayers* can be impacting.

Someone may say, *well, that was good old Elijah, a righteous man*. That is precisely why the Holy Spirit included **verse 17**:

The Passion translation says, “*Elijah was a man with human frailties, just like all of us, but he prayed and received supernatural answers. He actually shut the heavens over the land so there would be no rain for three and a half years!*”

The enemy may attack you with a sense of unworthiness or that you don't quite measure up. However, the Bible says that Elijah also had weaknesses, moments of despair and the discouragement that we all sometimes face. However, look at how he prayed! God encourages us to pray like that! The prayers of the righteous avail much!

(Romans 5:21 says that Jesus made us righteous).