

Devotion: July 14, 2020

James 5:13-20

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

These are the names of our brothers and sisters who need our prayers this week.

Carol Ziegler and family as they grieve

All COVID victims

Chelsea Haag's hip injury (from running)

Nathaniel Haag's job search

Ann Lee and Angela - both with significant health concerns. We pray that the tests and specialists they see in the week ahead will provide answers and treatment to restore them to good health.

Sarah Compertore- Mayo doctors will zoom with her on Thursday to discuss next steps in attempting to reduce her seizures. For guidance and wisdom we pray.

I'm sure there are a lot more that need our prayers.

We all know the old saying God works in mysterious ways. We often cannot know or understand the *hows* or the *whys* of the things that happen in our lives. But there are some things that are sure and lasting . We know that God is the source of wholeness. We also know that, according to today's reading from the letter of James in the New Testament, those who are sick are invited to call for the "elders" of the church for prayer. And the "prayer of faith will save the sick," we're told.

Some of us today are feeling the crushing weight of loneliness. We're confused and bewildered, and searching for God's perfect will. Some of us also feel weak, not in soul, but in body — or perhaps in both. God can touch us in our bodies, too. How does this happen? Who can know? People with little faith have been healed. People with a truckload of faith remain unhealed. God is God. All we can do is be obedient. Are you sick? Then, in obedience to God's word, let the church pray for you, and leave the rest to God.

Some of us may require numerous “prayer and anointing operations” before our situation has some resolution. But we come in faith, believing, and God will honor that. God will give you, according to the prophet Isaiah, a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

“Is any among you sick?”

Let us do our part. Our part to trust God, to believe Jesus, to hope against hope and to never give up. In other words, to do our part and let God do as he chooses to do.

Let us pray:

Merciful God, we stand in need of your healing and transforming presence in our lives. We long for wholeness but too often cannot resist the demands to compartmentalize our lives. We desire true intimacy but are afraid to be transparent, lest others judge and reject us. We want health but don't take care of our bodies and don't give our souls Sabbath rest. We need authentic, loving community but struggle to commit ourselves deeply to others. Forgive us, we pray. Heal us of our shortsightedness, of our self-hatred and denial, of our illusions of control, of the fears and stresses and anxieties that keep us from living fully as children created in your image. Amen.