

## **“...That You May Be Healed” – James 5:13-18**

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*[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, [www.welovethegospel.com](http://www.welovethegospel.com).]*

Take a Bible and invite you to meet me in James 5...

As you make your way to the text, let me remind you that we really need you to be in prayer for this upcoming week of VBS. It's fitting that our text for the sermons this week and next are texts that deal with prayer. It is so important and it is not overstating things to say that God often waits for His people to pray before He does mighty things among them. This week is an incredible opportunity for us to bless our community with the life-changing message of the Gospel. The eternal trajectories of lives could be altered as a result. But nothing of everlasting significance will happen unless God shows up and makes it happen. So let's pray that He would. Make it a point to be praying this week of VBS. We will raise the sails, as Augustine said, but pray that God would send the wind. Deal? And whatever He does among this upcoming week, let's commit to praise Him for it. Whether we can see the fruit or not, let's trust that His Word will not return void. Amen?

By now you have probably found chapter 5 of James, so let's jump in. I'll begin reading in verse 13, where we left off. Follow along as I read. And remember that what I am about to read is God's inerrant and living Word. Listen accordingly.

*“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? 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. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. <sup>18</sup> Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.” (James 5:13-18)*

As I mentioned last week, these verses have occasioned quite a flurry of debate and the interpretations that have resulted are more vast than we will be able to account for in this sermon. This is not an easy passage to sort out, but, if you've been with us for any length of time, you've likely noticed that we don't skip the hard stuff. So we come at this text with the conviction that God means to speak to us by it and there is important content for God's people to grasp. We are not so bold to assume that we will be able to solve every mystery that it unfolds. But I'm not sure that we have to for these verses to be a benefit to us. So, as one author put it, we should come at the text “with both humility (since our confusion shows that we have a lot to learn) and determination (since we know God has inspired this text for our benefit and learning).”<sup>1</sup>

Let's start from the top. Clearly this passage is about prayer. And inasmuch as prayer is directing our praises and petitions to God, then the opening verses give us the impression that the time to pray is always now.

Obviously the most controversial verses are those that relate to the sick.<sup>2</sup> James tells us that the person who is sick may call upon the elders of the church (which, as we saw last week, are those serving in the office that we tend to refer to as pastor) and these elders can gather with the sick person to pray. We get the sense that the sick person in question is very sick indeed since he must call the elders to come to him as if he is unable to go to them or gather with the church. This doesn't seem like some minor ailment. It's evidently quite serious and

perhaps even life-threatening. When the elders arrive, there is talk of anointing that person with oil and the assurance that “*the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.*”

So what is happening here?

Historically a lot of the discussion has revolved around the significance of the oil that is mentioned (cf. Mark 6:13). Should it be understood as sacramental, medicinal, or symbol?<sup>3</sup> Let’s consider.

The sacramental view is one that I think we can rule out confidently. This is the view that is most commonly associated with the Roman Catholic practice of extreme unction or last rites. In Catholic theology, this sacrament “would remove remnants of sin and strengthen the soul in preparation for death.”<sup>4</sup> In practice a priest will arrive at the death bed, anoint the person with oil, and receive their final confession. The thinking goes that this will ensure that person is saved spiritually when they meet their death.

While it’s easy to imagine how such a practice would emerge given these verses in James, they do seem to miss the point that James is making. First, we can note that the confession that is mentioned is confession that is made not to the elders or a priest but “*to one another*” (5:16) and, second (and more significantly), “the expectation the passage gives us is that the sick individual will not die, but actually recover” (5:15, 16).<sup>5</sup> The emphasis, it seems to me, is actually on healing, so the Catholic understanding seems to miss the mark.

Alternatively, some have understood this oil as having medicinal properties.<sup>6</sup> The thinking goes that in the first century oils were sometimes used as medicine and topical agents to provide some sort of soothing. We see some evidence of this in the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> One example would be the parable of the good Samaritan, where the Samaritan, upon finding the beaten man on the road, “*went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine*” (Luke 10:34). The apostles were not against medicine and they did not see medicine as something incompatible with faith. When Timothy was having stomach problems, Paul tells him to take some wine. He doesn’t tell him to have more faith or find a local healer.

Warren Wiersbe writes,

“This may be an indication that James suggests using available means for healing along with asking the Lord for His divine touch. God can heal with or without means; in each case, it is God who does the healing.”<sup>8</sup>

As a general principle that is correct. It is misguided for people to refuse medical treatments because they feel as though that would suggest a lack of faith. God can heal us through a variety of means and one of those means could be the hands of a physician. When He uses such men and women, it is no less a testament of His activity. And physicians worth their salt know that they do not truly heal anyone. Christian medical professionals have often confessed, “I dress the wound, but God heals it.” Amen. And if God puts medical means at our disposal, our utilization of them need not be evidence of a lack of faith. Faith and medicine are not mutually exclusive.

I will qualify that, however, by saying that sometimes we are focused too much on medical means and not enough on God and His purposes in our sickness. Some of us spend far more time seeking medical means than we do seeking the Lord in our affliction. That would be a problem. That could be a symptom of a misplaced faith.

There’s a short little booklet that John Piper wrote called *Don’t Waste Your Cancer* that may be of interest to some of you. He wrote it on the eve of surgery for prostate cancer. One of the points he makes is that “We waste our cancer if we seek comfort from our odds rather than from God.” Under that heading he writes the following:

“The design of God in our cancer is not to train us in the rationalistic, human calculation of odds. The world gets comfort from their odds. Not Christians. Some count their chariots (percentages of survival) and some count their horses (side effects of treatment), but we will trust in the name of the Lord our God (Psalm 20:7). God’s design is clear from 2 Corinthians 1:9: ‘We felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.’ The aim of God in our cancer (among a thousand other good things) is to knock props out from under our hearts so that we rely utterly on him.”<sup>9</sup>

That’s a good word.

One challenge to this medicinal interpretation, however, is that one might wonder why it is the elders who are called to administer this treatment. It certainly wouldn’t require elders to offer such care and it’s doubtful that it would have taken this long to provide it to the infirmed. So while this interpretation is at least possible, it doesn’t seem to me the best one available.

I sometimes wonder if the medicinal view has enjoyed some popularity because certain people are reacting to the evils of the so-called prosperity or health/wealth gospel that has been so popular in America and exported by us to the rest of the world. This is the thinking that God wants you healthy and wealthy. In the case of these verses, these prosperity preachers love to latch on to phrases like “*the prayer of faith*” and argue that will can be healed of their sickness and disease if they have “enough faith.” This is a wicked teaching. And it’s not what James is describing here.

For one thing, the sense seems to be that the elders are invited to come to this person because they are in such a state that they cannot travel. This is not the sort of healing rally that we might associate with a Bennie Hinn or the like. Additionally, the initiative in the text comes from the sick person, not from self-promoting healer. And furthermore, those called to come and pray are just “run-of-the-mill elders” not some celebrity “healer.”<sup>10</sup>

My first job in ministry was under one of these preachers. It was late 2002 when I accepted a position to serve as youth minister at a small church about 40 miles from the college I was attending. I didn’t know that when I signed up, but it became pretty obvious a few Sundays in that the lead pastor was a prosperity gospel fan. There were times he would even boast about how long it had been since he had been sick and he credited it to his faith and encouraged others to enjoy that same victory over their ailments through faith. Once I realized this about him, I made it clear that I did not agree with what he was teaching and wouldn’t be teaching that to the youth. I expected him to let me go, especially since he had kids in the youth group. To my surprise, he encouraged me to stay and for some time I wrestled with whether I should. Eventually, I decided to hang in there, having reasoned that maybe my presence might afford some opportunities to share the truth on these matters with the youth under my care for as long as this man would let me.

That first summer thereafter I was teaching at a camp and I got word that this pastor had a heart attack. He survived. But you can imagine how this can damage the credibility of what you have been teaching and it wasn’t long after his recovery that he left the church. The church asked if I would preach a bit after his departure and in time they offered me the job. I accepted and served that church for another three years, while I was finishing college. But I can tell you that to this day there are people from that church who fell away from Christianity because of the false teaching of this man and people who still identify with Christianity but have not shaken all the lies of the prosperity Gospel. Much of my time there was dealing with the aftermath of that false teaching and its serious consequences. I’ve seen firsthand how dangerous the health and wealth gospel is and I assure you it is not the true Gospel. It’s a lie and lure from the pit of hell. And this teaching will find no sanctuary at this church, even in the softer and subtler versions that have, on occasion, crept into churches of our denomination.

But having said all of this, it would be a mistake to react against this error to the point of dismissing the possibility of miraculous healings. “While we want to avoid an unbiblical emphasis on miraculous healing, it is

stretching the text somewhat to suggest there is no mention of it at all here.”<sup>11</sup> Sometimes I wonder if we don’t have enough faith in God to provide such gifts because we have (rightly) recoiled from the prosperity gospel, just in the wrong way. God can heal. God does heal. And what James describes here is a real thing. For some, though certainly not all, the medicinal view of this passage has an appeal because it has the feel of science to it. But we shouldn’t adopt that view (or any other) simply because we are uncomfortable with the notion of miraculous healings and the peddlers that make a name for faking them as they fleece the vulnerable and extort the poor. If the medicinal view is the best understanding, it’s not because God cannot and does not heal at times and in response to the prayer of faith.

My own view is that the oil mentioned is not sacramental<sup>12</sup> or (primarily) medicinal (though the second of these is at least possible), but is instead meant as a symbol. A symbol of what? This is how David Platt answers that question:

“My humble opinion is that the oil is symbolic. It is common in Scripture to see anointing that symbolizes setting apart someone or something for a particular purpose. In most of the Old Testament uses of the word *anoint*, the word refers to the consecration of something. A variety of different interpretations are clearly possible here, but ultimately the power for healing is not found in any oil but in the God who answers prayer. While the elders pray over someone, the oil symbolizes setting them apart for special attention and care from God.”<sup>13</sup>

It’s a picture of the Holy Spirit’s care upon the person.<sup>14</sup> This interpretation is most compelling to me. I’m not going to die on the hill of this interpretation. There are other views that could be viable. And certainly we see healings in the New Testament that don’t involve any of what is described here. Also we should note that the emphasis is really on prayer. And not even just the prayer of the elders, as verse 16 says that we should confess sin and pray with one another for the sake of this healing. As, again, Platt observes,

“Yes, the elders play a special role in the case of someone who is bedridden and cannot gather together with the church, but the emphasis in verse 16 is on praying with one another and for one another. No special power is reserved for the elders: the power is in God, and it is available to the praying church. Care and prayer for one another are not just intended to happen within the context of leadership in the church but in the context of the church as a whole. When we are sick, we call on one another to pray, not just this or that leader.”<sup>15</sup>

Don’t underestimate the significance of your prayers. And don’t assume that your leaders have some special in with God. All believers, in Christ, have been given glorious access to God in prayer and this is based on Christ’s work on our behalf.

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Hebrews 4:16)

What access we have through Jesus, our High Priest! You and I together can come before the throne! Perhaps if we would discover that there are times when *“the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.”*

Does this mean that every sick person will be healed if we pray in this fashion? No. Such a conclusion would not be consistent with the broader teaching of the Bible. If you read through the Bible you will discover examples of godly people who became sick and were not healed.

Timothy, as I mentioned earlier, is one example. He was an associate of Paul, who God used to work many miracles. But it wasn’t God’s will for Paul to heal Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23) or Trophimus (2 Tim. 4:20) or Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) or even himself. One of Paul’s companions, Luke, was a physician. He wrote the two longest books in the New Testament, so clearly his vocation was not incompatible with faith. And it’s hard not

to imagine that he ministered medically to Paul as needed during their travels, especially when Paul suffered bodily affliction from persecution. And who could forget Paul's fervent prayers on multiple occasions for God to heal his "thorn in the flesh," which God refused to heal (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Was it because Paul lacked faith? No. In fact, eventually God revealed to Paul why He would not deliver him in this instance. It was to keep him humble. It was because God wanted Paul to remember "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:7, 9).

Sam Allberry adds something significant:

"We also need to think about what the Bible teaches more generally about the nature of faith: faith is trusting in Jesus. What makes our faith strong is not its intensity, as though we need to work ourselves up into a state of absolute belief, but its object—the one in whom our faith is placed. If we forget this, we end up trusting in our faith and wondering whether we have enough of it, rather than trusting in Christ. To suggest that only people with a certain amount of faith enjoy particular kinds of miraculous healing appears to go against the grain of what the Bible elsewhere seems to show about both healing and faith."<sup>16</sup>

And, as I've already illustrated from my own story in ministry, people that embrace such teachings about faith and healing do so to devastating effect. Many people live with the crushing burden that their faith must be somehow deficient because healing has not come. This "doubles the misery" because they "suffer their original problem, and they suffer the stigma of insufficient faith."<sup>17</sup> This can lead to a crisis of faith. Often this culminates with a person walking away from the faith because what they believed doesn't pan out and so they conclude that God failed them, that He didn't keep up His end of the bargain, or He lied to them. None of which is accurate. God didn't lie to them. That preacher lied to them. And He will be called to account for that one day, as will the person who falls away from the faith.

We must not forget that God has numbered our days. Sooner or later, we each will die. Last I checked the statistics in the recent generations were that 10 out of 10 people die. True story. So if we live long enough, some sickness will likely get us. And many faithful Christians die because of sickness and disease. We know this from experience. And we know this from the Bible. So there will be people who are sick, nearing death, and we will pray for them and they will not be healed.

So I ask again, what are we to make of the assurance that is given in this text?

Well, I think what James is addressing actually relates to teaching we have encountered throughout this letter. "The great pressing issues behind this letter are spiritual drifting—what James has called double-mindedness and spiritual adultery—and of the need to come back to God in wholehearted faith." It is against that backdrop that James writes the verses in question. Given that fact, I am one of those who thinks that "[James] is not necessarily saying that every time someone from church sneezes, the elders of the church need to come round with grapes and prayer." He seems to have a particular kind of sickness in view because, as many have noted, he does seem to connect the sickness with sin and the healing with repentance.<sup>18</sup> Look again at verses 15 and 16.

*"And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed..."* (James 5:15-16)

This almost seems a little mixed up because in verse 15 it is the "sick" person who is "saved," but in verse 16 it is the confessing sinner who is "healed." Wouldn't we expect it to say that the sinner is saved and the sick person healed? But that is not what James says. And what James actually says seems to make the connection between the person's sin and sickness.

Now we have to be real careful at this point. I am not saying, hear me well, that every sickness or disease that a person experiences is the direct result of some sin they have committed. Yes, the Bible does attribute sickness and death to the effects of the Fall. So sin is never entirely unrelated because we live in a fallen world marred by sin. But the Bible is very clear that a person's afflictions are not always (if even usually) tied to the personal sins that they have committed. The book of Job makes this clear. "Ecclesiastes also undercuts the sin-sickness nexus with meditations on the chaos and injustices of life (Eccl. 3:16-22; 5:12-17; 6:1-9)."<sup>19</sup>

The teaching of Jesus also corrects the false notion that sickness is always God's judgment on us for actions we have committed. There is a story told in John's Gospel that involved a question that the disciples asked Jesus. They had just passed by a man who was born blind and they ask Jesus, "*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?*" They were attributing the man's suffering to his personal sin or at least the sins of his family. But Jesus shuts down that line of reasoning quickly. "*It was not that this man sinned, or his parents,*" answered Jesus, "*but that the works of God might be displayed in him.*" (John 9:1-3). So we too must not make the same mistake as the disciples in assuming that people's tragic circumstances are owing to their personal sin.

That said, it goes too far to claim that a person's sickness never has anything to do with that person's sin and God's judgment or discipline on them. In fact, just a few chapters earlier in John's gospel, after Jesus healed a man who couldn't walk, he said to the man, "*See, you are well. Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you*" (John 5:14). That's quite a threat. And from Jesus, no less. He made it clear to that man that if he would not repent, something worse could befall him.

There are many examples of this in the Old Testament. I'll explain next week why I think the story of Elijah that James himself cites reminds us of how God can use affliction to foster repentance. David's life offers several illustrations, in fact, and in Psalm 32, he helps us see how sin can damage the whole person, body and spirit:

*"For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."* (Psalm 32:3-5)

Doesn't that hit on some of the same things we see in this passage in James? David speaks of his sin. He speaks of the pain it caused him. Confession. Forgiveness. Deliverance. And the next verse is an invitation to pray.

Here's another example. The Corinthians, evidently, were not taking seriously the observance of the Lord's Supper. So Paul writes to them these sobering words:

*"Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup> For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. <sup>30</sup> That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. <sup>31</sup> But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup> But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world."* (1 Corinthians 11:28-32).

So sickness may (*not* must) be part of God's discipline on us for unrepentant sin. There are plenty of other examples of this in the Bible.<sup>20</sup> And I believe that is the scenario that James has in mind.<sup>21</sup> That would make sense out of why he connects the conversation to sin and confession. It makes sense out of why the elders are involved, for they will often have a role in church discipline. It makes sense out of the promise for the person's forgiveness and the assurance "*that you may be healed.*" If the sickness is indeed the Lord's discipline, then it can be lifted and the person saved—both physically and spiritually.

If this is correct, then James' instructions, in context, may be dealing primarily with situations in which our sickness amounts to God's discipline. Again we should not be like Job's friends and be quick to make those assumptions of others. We should not come to the conclusion that every affliction in our own life is because we have done something wrong either. But when affliction comes, it does afford us the opportunity to do some soul-searching, to ask, like Paul modeled for us, "Is there something you are trying to teach me Lord? Is there some sin in my life that you are trying to expose?" Here's what Piper wrote about this the night before his cancer surgery.

"We waste our cancer if we treat sin as casually as before. Are our besetting sins as attractive to us now as they were before we had cancer? If so we are wasting our cancer. Cancer is designed to destroy the appetite for sin. Pride, greed, lust, hatred, unforgiveness, impatience, laziness, procrastination—all these are the adversaries that cancer is meant to attack. Don't just think of battling *against* cancer. Also think of battling *with* cancer. All these things are worse enemies than cancer. Don't waste the power of cancer to crush those foes. Let the presence of eternity make the sins of time look as futile as they really are. 'What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits his soul?' (Luke 9:25)." <sup>22</sup>

It seems to me this is a healthy train of thought. Whether sickness is owing to God's discipline or not, it does tend to heighten our awareness of what really matters and allows us to focus on living holy lives. And it would be a mistake to neglect those sobering moments and not inquire if there is some sin that should lead us to repentance. In this context, where the sin that James goes after is so often double-mindedness—what Calvin called, "duplicity of thought" <sup>23</sup>—that seems like a sin we should take pretty seriously.

I recently read a book by Jen Oshman called, *Enough About Me: Find Lasting Joy in the Age of Self*, in which she confesses her struggle with this double-mindedness. This is how she worded her confession.

"I wanted some of what Jesus has to offer—some nutrients and good stuff to get me through—but not so much that I wanted God to purify the soil and enable me to prioritize his will over worldly pleasures. I was the benign American Christian. As Tim Keller points, most Americans tend to think 'the best kind of Christian would be someone in the middle, someone who doesn't go all the way with it, who believes it, but is not devoted to it. We want just enough faith to make us good, moral people, *on the right side of history*, as we love to say. But we don't want to be fanatics—people assigned to the fringe—those who actually believe the Bible and live according to it. Popular opinion tells us those people are weird and extreme, and their options for lifestyle and wealth and status are limited by the prohibitions of God.

But Jesus tells us that a house divided against itself will surely fall (Mark 3:25). Our feet won't walk both in the world and with Christ. The paths are divergent. We are forced to pick one path over the other. And this fork in the road—this moment when we realize we cannot live a divided life any longer—is a gift of mercy. It is a tool in the tender hands of our loving God to woo us to himself." <sup>24</sup>

Whatever God uses to bring us to that moment can be a good thing. A gift. Because there are far more important things for you to possess than momentary comfort. Chief among those things is the salvation that God offers. He offers it freely to all who believe in the Jesus—His Son, sent to lay down His life in the place of sinners on the cross. The forgiveness and future that He offers those who rest their faith on Him and trust in His death-defeating work is a possession that is far more valuable than all the riches of this world. They get God. Everlasting life with a God who counts them as beloved children in Christ. That is worth more than any comfort we can have in this world. It is an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. Amen?

So above all we must cherish Christ in all circumstances—sweet or bitter. That's what James would have us do. If we are suffering, go to the Lord. If we are cheerful, sing his praises (1:13). Pray. Confess to one another. Call on the elders when appropriate. But above all cherish Christ. Whether God delivers us *from* adversity, like sickness, in this life, or *through* adversity, in the next, cherish Christ. He is better than life itself. He will not disappoint us in the end. Turn from sin. Turn to Him. Trust in Him. That is the path to true and lasting life.

I'll close with this reminder, once again from John Piper's reflections on his own cancer.

"We waste our cancer if we think that 'beating' cancer means staying alive rather than cherishing Christ. Satan's and God's designs in our cancer are not the same. Satan designs to destroy our love for Christ. God designs to deepen our love for Christ. Cancer does not win if we die. It wins if we fail to cherish Christ. God's design is to wean us off the breast of the world and feast us on the sufficiency of Christ. It is meant to help us say and feel, 'I count everything loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' (Philippians 3:8) and to know that therefore, 'to live is Christ, and to die is gain' (Philippians 1:21)."<sup>25</sup>

To be continued...

Let's pray...

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Allberry, *James for You* (The Good Book Company, 2015), 149. Much of the thought and progression of this sermon has been shaped by this resource, which I first encountered in a small group setting. By the end of the session several of walked away with the impression that his chapters on these verses were worth the price of the book. Allberry did exceptionally well on this passage and his commentary as a whole is one that I recommend for devotional reading and grasping the message of James.

<sup>2</sup> "The word he chooses for "sick" literally means "weak." If the context makes it clear, the term can refer to spiritual or mental weakness (Rom. 5:6; 6:19; cf. 4:19) or even a troubled conscience (Rom. 14:1-2; 1 Cor. 8:7-10). Certainly, chronic physical illness can afflict the spirit. Yet James chiefly refers to the sick who need physical healing (5:16)." Daniel M. Doriani, *James* (REC; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 193.

<sup>3</sup> I've adopted this language from David Platt, *Exalting Jesus in James* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 100-101.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>5</sup> Allberry, 150.

<sup>6</sup> An example of one who takes this view, while still crediting the healing to God's grace, is Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Mature: Growing Up in Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 1978, 2004), 168.

<sup>7</sup> David Platt writes, "there's a problem with this view: while oil may have had common medicinal purposes in that day, this word was never used in the Greek version of the Old Testament to refer to medicine" (101). This is actually an oversight on his part, however, as there are instances of this word in Greek Old Testament for this purpose. One example would be Isaiah 1:6 (LXX), "From feet to head, neither a wound nor a bruise nor a purulent blow is to put emollient or oil [ἐλάτιον] or bandage."

<sup>8</sup> Wiersbe, 168.

<sup>9</sup> John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Cancer* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Allberry, 150.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>12</sup> Although I do not disagree with the sentiment expressed by Doriani: "Anointing is neither magical nor sacramental, but is its quasi-sacramental. Like other solemn ceremonies such as weddings and ordinations, the ceremony makes us pause so that we take the action seriously. The ceremony can arouse faith." Doriani, 194.

<sup>13</sup> Platt, 101.

<sup>14</sup> Doriani, 194.

<sup>15</sup> Platt, 101-102.

<sup>16</sup> Allberry, 150-151.

<sup>17</sup> Doriani, 196.

<sup>18</sup> Allberry, 152-153.

<sup>19</sup> Doriani, 198-199.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., 1 Cor. 11:30; Prov. 3:28-35; 13:13-23; Deut. 28:58-63; Ezek. 18:1-29; Acts 12; et al. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1995), 333.

<sup>21</sup> "James has described a church member who is sick because he is being disciplined by God. This explains why the elders of the assembly are called: the man cannot go to church to confess his sins, so he asks the spiritual leaders to come to him. The leaders would be in charge of the discipline of the congregation." Wiersbe, 168.

<sup>22</sup> Piper, 14.

<sup>23</sup> John Calvin, *A Little Book on the Christian Life*, trans. Aaron Denlinger and Burk Parsons (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Jen Oshman, *Enough About Me: Finding Lasting Joy in the Age of Self* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 64-65.

<sup>25</sup> Piper, 10.