



April 8: James 5:13-20

1. Without getting hung up on some of the more difficult details in this passage, what do you think is the main point James is trying to make to his readers? How is he trying to encourage them?
2. Verses 14-16 have been the occasion for much debate and disagreement among Christians. There are several things at issue. First of all, do you think James is talking about a physically sick person, or a person who is spiritually sick or weak? (Hint: remember that James draws heavily on Jesus, and in Jesus' teaching, the words used here for 'sick' are always used of physical sickness!)
3. What do you think the oil signifies?

4. In verse 16, James connects sickness and sin. Can each and every sickness be traced back to a particular sin? (Hint: Read John 9:2-3) Can sickness sometimes be traced back to a particular sin? (Hint: Read John 5:14 and 1 Cor. 11:29-30.) Given that, what do you think James is saying in verse 16?

5. Once we understand all the details, James's point comes through loud and clear: prayer is powerful, and God wants to answer prayer! Do you pray with the understanding that God desires to answer our prayers, or do you pray with the expectation that he won't answer them?

6. Verses 19-20 form a conclusion to the whole book of James. What does James exhort us to as Christians to do for each other? What is the benefit of our caring for one another in that way?