

GOD HEARS FOLKS LIKE US

Text: James 5:17-18

INTRO: It is almost as if James could know that the time would come when folks would lose confidence in prayer. In our text, James tells us that God does indeed hear the prayers of righteous individuals, even tho they be of like passions as we are.

I. ELIJAH HAD A NATURE LIKE OURS, vs 17.

A. He reached the mountain peaks of life when he felt that with God's help he could take on the whole world.

1. This is evident in his dealing with Ahab.
READ I KINGS 16:33; 17:1; 18:4-5, 7-12, 15

2. Also evident in his dealings with prophets of Baal.
READ I KINGS 18:19-29, 36-40

B. But Elijah also reached the depths of despair & self pity.
READ I KINGS 19:1-4.

NOTE: In this state God confronts him, vs 9-10.

1. What are YOU doing here? Not a matter of what Ahab is doing, or what Jezebel is doing, or what Israel is doing. What are YOU doing?

2. What are you doing HERE? Here, instead of Mt. Carmel encouraging the people to stand by their convictions that Jehovah is God?

3. What are you DOING here? Feeling sorry for self. Keeping books for the Lord.

II. GOD HEARD & ANSWERED ELIJAH'S PRAYERS. James cites 2 prayers in particular that exemplify the kind of prayers God hears & answers.

A. A prayer for righteous judgment, James 5:17.

B. A prayer of intercession, James 5:18.

- C. I think it would be well for us to also take note of a prayer not mentioned by James that shows God's grace in NOT granting a foolish & hurtful prayer, 1 Kings 19:4.

NOTE: Elijah didn't mean it. All he would have had to do was stay where he was & Jezebel would have taken care of the matter for him.

III. THE LESSONS JAMES IS TEACHING US ABOUT PRAYER

- A. God hears & answers the prayers of the righteous.
James 5:14-18

- B. God is not limited to the miraculous. Of the 2 prayers James chose to use in teaching Christians regarding prayer, he chose those which God answered by His providence in nature rather than those answered by miraculous means. READ I KINGS 18:41-45.

- C. James suggests the sort of things Christians should pray for.
READ JAMES 5:13-18.

1. Healing from sickness, (physical blessings) vs 13-14
2. Forgiveness of sins, (spiritual blessings) vs 15
3. Righteous judgment of God.
4. Tho there might be some rare exception, basically, if it is right for me to have a thing, it is right for me to ask God to help me get it.

CONCLUSION: I'm glad God heard the prayers of Elijah, because that fact assures us that God hears folks like us.

FAITH (by Betty Jo Mings)

Sometimes God's presence seems so real...
Beyond my comprehension;
And evidence of daily help
Demands my full attention.

'Tis then I feel I understand
The way He loves and guides me,
Because I know He holds my hand,

And travels close beside me.

But other times in fear I cry,
"My God, I feel forsaken.
The storm is wild, and I'm so weak,
My faith is sorely shaken!"

But at those times, by will I choose,
No matter what my feeling,
To trust in God, believe His Word,
And go to Him for healing.

I find the less I understand
His ways, far past my knowing,
The more I learn to simply trust,
And so, my faith is growing.

La Porte, TX, October 10, 1976
Cedar Park, TX, February 20, 1977
Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, February 20, 1977
Exton, PA, September 14, 1986
Exton, PA, September 23, 1990
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, January 10, 1993
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 2, 1997
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, November 3, 2002
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 26, 2006