

ICE BREAKER

When was someone generous to you, or you to someone else? What happened?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What did You notice about God in the passage? What did you notice about yourself and other people in it?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

August 20, 2023

“Ask for Prayer”

James 5:12-20

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
mycoastal.org

Following Jesus isn't about asking Jesus into our lives. It's about saying 'yes' to join Jesus in His life. As we studied James 5:11-11 last week, we talked about how Jesus wants us connected with each other and with Him. Isolation is the number one tool the enemy uses to drown our faith. He is always seeking to disrupt our connection with each other and God. So, in his last message to the church, James doubles down on ending isolation by encouraging us to be vulnerable.

5:12 And since you know that He cares, let your language show it. Don't add words like "I swear to God" to your own words. Don't show your impatience by concocting oaths to hurry up God. Just say yes or no. Just say what is true. That way, your language can't be used against you.

Saying 'I promise to...I swear...I'll always...I'll never...' is the grammar of intention. Intentions are meaningless without action. We often over promise with this kind of grammar because we want people to think our intentions will translate to actions. It requires courage to commit to taking action by saying 'yes.' It also takes courage to say 'no' and not try to control another person's reaction.

5:13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

When we're in trouble, pray. When we're overjoyed, worship. Why? Because James wants us to avoid the pitfalls of trying to deal with our problems on our own, thinking our successes are all because of our glorious self-sufficiency. He wants us connected to God in every step.

Verse 14 pushes us even further out of isolation. If you're sick, call the elders and have them pray for you. When you ask for prayer, when you invite others into your need, you're not the only one who gets blessed.

5:15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

Prayer works. In the past three years we've seen more physical healings than ever before in our church, because people are asking for it. But as James says, healing needs to happen on the soul level as well.

When my sin is hidden in the darkness it turns into a monster. As we tell someone we trust what's really happening, that monster shrinks and can be dealt with. Now we have someone shining a light on our issues so we can get back home. In this way, Jesus restores what has been lost in our hearts, helping us take back all the life the enemy has stolen.

5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Righteousness is all about your right standing with God. Jesus has made you righteous by His work on the cross. The only thing righteousness requires of you is to be honest before God, telling Him your need. A righteous person prays with faith, trusting Jesus to do what He wants, so that no matter what happens, our hope remains in Jesus. That's power.

5:17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Elijah isn't closer to God than you are. You have the Holy Spirit living in you in a way he did not. So, ask Jesus how to pray for your family member or friend that's hurting or lost. You'll get the nudge or the image or the words to pray. Jesus is at work in every detail of your life.

5:19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

James writes to Christians about others in the church who wander from the truth. That happens every time we sin. I do it all the time. So, when I'm talking to a friend, I need them to tell me where I'm not thinking right. Lost people in the woods don't get unlost by themselves. They need to be found.

Make the choice to accept your limitations. Allow God and good friends into your pain, needs, failures, and your issues. You'll find healing, connection. You'll discover more of the Kingdom of God right now.

SMALL GROUP GROUND RULES: Tips for great conversation

- Extroverts: Please allow space and time for introverts to speak.
- Introverts: Please speak up when you have something to contribute.
- Everyone: Show respect by listening to one another, knowing that we all can learn from those who have a different perspective.