

A Reminder that Prayer Avails Much
(James 5:16-18)

Introduction:

1. In the verses we studied this morning (Romans 11:1-5), Paul referred to Elijah as he illustrated how God has not cast His people away.
2. In these verses, James referred to Elijah as he illustrated how prayer avails much.
3. Prayer is a special blessing and responsibility for God's people.
 - a. Acts 2:42
 - b. Colossians 4:2
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - d. James 5:13a
 - e. 1 Peter 5:7
4. The purpose for our lesson is to present "a reminder that prayer avails much."
5. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. PRAYER IS INVOLVED IN SPIRITUAL HEALING (vs.16a)
 - A. Spiritual healing for Christians involves:
 1. confessing faults to one another
 2. praying for one another.
 - B. 1 John 1:9 is a parallel passage.
 - C. An illustration of these principles is found in Acts 8.
 1. In Samaria a man named Simon became a Christian (vs.13).
 2. After becoming a Christian, Simon sinned (vs.18-19).
 3. As Peter rebuked Simon he showed Simon how to receive forgiveness (vs.20-23).
 4. Simon responded by requesting prayer (vs.24).
 - D. James continued by showing how . . .
- II. PRAYER AVAILS MUCH (vs.16b-18)
 - A. (vs.16b) Prayer "avails" [accomplishes] much when it is:
 1. "effectual" [effective]
 2. "fervent" [from the heart]
 3. offered by a "righteous" person (Proverbs 28:9; 1 Peter 3:10-12).
 - B. (vs.17-18) Elijah's prayers illustrate how prayer avails much.
 1. Elijah was *"a man subject to like passions as we are."*
 2. However, God responded to Elijah's prayers by sending rain (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1, 41-45).
 - C. In His great Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that prayer avails much (Matthew 7:7-11).

Conclusion:

1. Praying to God is a great privilege and blessing for His children.
2. Let us call upon Him through effectual and fervent prayer, when we are afflicted as well as when we need spiritual healing.