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Prayer Meeting Address by Mr.J.Delves at "Ebenezer", Clapham  
on Saturday evening 11.8.51  
Reading: James 5; Matthew 21

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This epistle of James is a very practical one, dealing largely with the necessity not so much of a profession of faith as the fruits of faith which evidence the reality of that profession. Hence there are a number of practical exhortations, all very timely and useful as we may have grace to observe them and to walk in them; things to be avoided and things to be followed, depending always not upon anything in ourselves as to the merit thereof in our salvation, but to give evidence of the reality of what we profess by corresponding fruits, some of which are recorded in this chapter.

We read of rich men, in their greed and wickedness oppressing others, against which the people of God are warned; and we also read of the need of patience to which we are particularly exhorted. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain", though for a time there may not seem to be any sign of it, so the people of God, spiritually are exhorted to wait with grace and patience upon God and for the coming of the Lord in whatever way that may be. It can be the Lord's coming in answering prayer or in some spiritual deliverance or blessing. It is to prayer particularly that the apostle refers here. He speaks of prayer in several different aspects. First in relation to personal prayer. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray"; speaking to us in a way of counsel as though whatever the nature of that affliction may be, whether it be in the body or in some circumstance or whatever the nature of it may be, "let him pray". Nothing need be left outside of this, so that whatever burdens press, whatever trial may lie heavy or whatever affliction be pressing upon us, "let him pray". That is that individual person in this trial, in this affliction, let him pray. But he refers also to united prayer. Is there a sick person connected with the church, then let him send for the elders to come and pray with him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. It is not a practice in the churches; at the same time where one may feel really led to do this it should not be condemned necessarily

but the great thing is to pray, "Let them pray"; and so when we assemble together even in this way let there be united prayer and let them pray, those who speak audibly and carry, as it were, the desires, exercises and needs of those who remain silent. There is a very confirming word about this: "If two of you are agreed" with regard to a certain thing it shall be done, that is according to the will of God. United prayer can be a very great thing and a most profitable employment when the Spirit of the Lord is in it, "Let them pray". He refers also to believing prayer, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up"; not reading a ritual, though one would not say that there could not be real prayer even in the reading of a prayer; but effectual, extempore prayer was practised in the early days, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick". This appears to be a great and important point, affirmed by the Lord Himself where He said, whatever ye shall ask believing ye shall receive. There is something very wonderful about this prayer of faith. You can feel it in your soul when you pray and when that is felt then you pray in the Holy Ghost and do not demand something from God. To pray according to His will, as it is in John, if we pray according to His will He heareth us and we have the petition that we desire of Him.

There is one more point and that is fervent prayer, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". This may not necessarily be outward fervency which is expected by some and which may be real, but it is an inward heart fervency like to that which Jacob had when he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me". It is wonderful really to pray, it is an amazing consideration to think that there can be contact between a sinner and Jehovah, and such contact as shall be a means of untold blessing to the one engaged in it. O then may the Lord help us to follow the counsel in afflictions, in need, in trouble, in soul trouble, whatever it may be - "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." Amen

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