

“Ol’ Camel Knees!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. Dr. Les Cochrane: share on Burma. (Kristen/nurse)
- B. How is your prayer life presently? Too often our petitions fit the description of prayer given by *Thomas Brooks* who said, **Cold prayers** are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings; they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. **Cold prayers** always freeze before they reach heaven.”
 - 1. **Let’s pray...** Warm our prayers, warm our hearts. May You Lord warm you hands upon our hearts.
- C. Sometimes, Christians are embarrassing! (more noticeable when you have a non-bel w/you)
 - 1. How should a Christian act? - James says *just act perfectly natural* [read 13,14]
 - a) i.e. The **suffering** should pray, the **glad** sing, the **sick** confess his sins & call for believing prayer.
- D. Many kinds of prayer are named here: *prayer for the sick, prayer for forgiveness, prayer for the nation, even prayer for the weather.*
 - 1. There is **no need** that prayer cannot meet & **no problem** that prayer cannot solve.
 - 2. But not everybody that’s prayed for gets healed. **So what then?** (they didn’t have enough faith? Unconfessed sin in their life? Wrong healing technique? Have to travel around the world to special healers? What about medicine? What method does God honor?)
- E. Title: **Ol’ Camel Knees** - Just like a **laborer’s hands** testify to his occupation, or a **runners feet** to his training, **James callused knees** testified to a life of serious prayer.¹
 - 1. So, we should listen up to what James has to say regarding Prayer!
 - a) He walked his talk...*on his knees!*

II. **OL’ CAMEL KNEES!**

- A. **THE EXHORTATION TO PRAYER!** (13-16a)
- B. **Seasons of prayer!** (13): When should we pray?
 - 1. In times of **Trouble** (13a) [& In times of **Triumph**]

¹ Kent Hughes; James pg.254

- a) **Suffering** (*in distress*; broad term = mental illness, anxiety, or some affliction from which there is no immediate relief)
- (1) **They are told to pray!** - doesn't promise a healing, **rather** an exhortation to pray for endurance. **As we learned from Epaphroditus, Trophimus, Paul & Timothy, God sometimes chooses not to remove certain afflictions. But uses them as tools to strengthen & build us up.**
- b) **Sick** (sick = w/o strength. Physical illness)
- (1) **First**, take initiative & let the elders know. There's no way anyone knows you're sick unless you tell them. **So, make others aware.**
 - (2) **Second**, the elders should carry out 2 functions: anoint & pray.
 - (a) **Anoint** - could be speaking to a religious ceremony where oil is applied to the head(*chrion*). Can also be speaking to how oil was used in that day...as *one of the best medical means of the day*(*aleipho/used here; to rub or apply*)
 - i) So use **the best medicine of the day & pray.**
 - ii) **"Medical means & prayer used together, neither to the exclusion of the other!"**
 - (b) Fortunately today our medical expertise has improved from oil **to** antibiotics, X rays & laser surgery.
 - (c) **Note also: James never mentions Faith Healers!** - Instead, leaders in your local church.
 - (3) **Third**, Leave the results in God's hands. As elders we are to anoint & pray **"in the name of the Lord"**, invoking God's will for the situation.

2. In times of Triumph (13b) - cheerful

- a) **What an opposite extreme.** Don't feel guilty because your'e not experiencing the hardships of others! - **There is a time to weep & a time to laugh; a time to mourn & a time to dance.**
- b) **If you're joyful, James says, Let it out!** - Sing praises & thank God for the blessings He's given you.

C. Reasons for prayer! (14-16a) - 3 results of praying in faith:

1. It will **save/restore** the sick.
2. It will **raise up** the sick from the bed of sickness.
3. They will be **forgiven**.
 - a) This Gk construction indicates the possibility of *sin being related to the sickness*.²

² Linguistic Key to the Greek NT: James 5:15 "The perf. part. is used in a periphrastic perf. act. subj. in a condition of 3rd class which indicates the possibility of sin being related to the sickness."

(1) Explain not all sin is...**but** some sins bring about sickness & disease.

(a) **i.e.** Excessive drinking/liver problems; sexual immorality/STD's; etc.

D. **Confess to one another** - probably to those who you have wronged; *maybe also* for accountability(get in the light). **Must be no blushing of sins if prayer to prevail.**

E. Let's remember **5 Foundational Facts:**

1. There are 2 classifications of sin, **original & personal.**

a) **Original** - refers to **our sin nature** we inherited from Adam.

b) **Personal** - **daily disobedience** that is spawned by our Adamic nature.

(1) **Original sin is the root; personal sin the fruit.**

2. Original sin introduced **sickness & death** to the human race.

a) Adam & Eve disobeyed God, thus sickness & death spread to every living thing.

b) Thus all sickness & death are the result of original sin.

3. **Sometimes** there is a direct relationship between personal **sin & sickness.**

a) **Story of David & Bathsheba**(adultery, murder, refusal to repent) - Ps.32 is David's journals of this period.

(1) Ps.32:3,4 **When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.**

4. Sometimes there is **no** direct relationship between personal **sin & sickness.**

a) Jn.9:2b,3 **Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"** Jesus answered, "**Neither** this man **nor** his parents sinned, **but that the works of God should be revealed in him.**

5. It is **not** God's will that **everyone** be healed.

a) **Ex:** Paul had the gift of healing but left **Trophimus** sick in Miletus; **Epaphroditus** almost died while ministering to Paul; Timothy had a stomach problem & frequent ailments; **Paul** asked God 3 x's to remove his thorn in the flesh, that God said no to, but that His grace was sufficient for him.

F. **THE EXAMPLE OF PRAYER!** (16b-18)

G. **The power!** (16b) A righteous person's prayer is both **powerful** and **effective.**

1. Not **human telepathy**, but **divine healing**, which is God's gift to faith.

H. **The person!** (17-18) James selects Elijah as his role model here.

1. **A nature like ours** - the power of his prayers was in **a powerful God**, not in his own supernatural greatness, rather in his **humanity.**

- I. To become more effective in our praying, we should heed these words of **Bishop Hall**:
 “It is not the **arithmetic** of our prayers, how many they are; nor the **rhetoric** of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the **geometry** of our prayers, how long they be; nor the **music** of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the **method** of our prayers, how orderly they may be; nor even the **theology** of our prayers, how good the doctrine may be - which God cares for. *Fervency of spirit* is that which availeth much.”
1. James reminds us that Elijah *prayed earnestly*. And what answers he received - the very *forces of nature* were changed!
 - a) **By contrast**, indefinite praying by indifferent people brings little results.
 - b) **Fervent prayer**, if it be for God’s glory and presented in the name of His Son, will accomplish great things for time and eternity.
- J. **SOUL WINNING!** (19-20)
- K. **Have you ever rescued someone from drowning?** Often victims will fight their rescuers in the hysteria of that terrifying moment.
1. This often happens to those floundering *spiritually* also!
 2. **FBR river training** (if they try to fight you, duck under, get out of the way, wait, try again)
- L. **The faithfulness of a soul winner!** (5:19)
- M. **Wander/stray** - Those who wander off the prescribed course they once knew.
- N. **Can you detect when a fellow believer starts to stray? Are you truly concerned? What do you normally do? How do you handle it? Are you too harsh? Do you not say anything so as not to “offend”?**
- O. **Is there anyone you know of right now that you should talk to? Will you try to help? Will you wait too long?**
- P. **Who do you need to swim out & rescue?** Don’t let them go. If they fight you, back off & wait for that right moment & get in there again. Get a life jacket around them. Get them to shore.
- Q. **The fruits of a soul winner!** (5:20)
- R. 2-fold reason why we should seek to convert men/women:
1. **Save their soul from death** (phys death) - or, restoring their fellowship w/God.
 2. **Cover a multitude of sin** - stop the influence of their sin (upon them & others).
- S. **None of us** consistently produces actions that verify our faith in Christ.³
1. We drift in & out of godly living.

³ Charles Swindoll; James; pg.66

2. Yet our hope is not in how well we live but in how well Christ lived & died, on our behalf.
 3. Our salvation is **secure** in Him & in Him alone.
 4. He is always ready to welcome straying sheep back into His fold through **repentance & restoration**.
- T. Told in the story of 1st Samuel...Hannah wanted only a **son**, but God wanted **more**. God wanted a prophet, & a savior, & a ruler for His people.
1. Someone said that “God had to get a **woman** before He could get a **man**.” (Samuel)
 - a) This woman He got in Hannah, precisely by *delaying* the answer to her prayer.