**Your Praying: A Powerful Force To Be Reckoned With** John E Brown

James 5:7-20 February 17, 2019

* “Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.” **James 5:7-12 NASB**
* “Be patient, brethren, as you wait till the coming of the Lord…” verse 7 AMPC.
  + We are to be patient (not passive) as long as we are on our mission on the earth. Wow!
  + We are to look and wait like the farmer waits over his crops.
  + God uses the natural realm to incubate His supernatural dealings much like the soil ‘hides’ and prepares the seed that has been planted.
  + You too… be patient (he is speaking to Jewish believers that had been dispersed in every direction) And he is speaking to us too!
  + Be patient: strengthen your heart, for ‘the coming of the Lord is near.’ (verse 8)
  + What does it mean to ‘strengthen your heart?’
  + The word means, establish, stabilize, support, set, fix, steady, confirm, strengthen.
  + How do we strengthen our heart??
* *“I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord  
  In the land of the living.Wait for the Lord;  
  Be strong and let your heart take courage;  
  Yes, wait for the Lord.” **Psalm 27:13-14 NASB**
  + Our trust in God and letting, directing and permitting out hearts take the courage God offers.
* “Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you; so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.” **1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 NASB**
  + We seek the Lord to increase and abound in love which deepens and fortifies us to live blamelessly before God.
* **“**So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded.” **Ecclesiastes 9:16 NASB**
  + We pursue God for a heart of wisdom…
* “For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;” **Romans 1:11 NASB**
  + Paul tells us here that receiving an impartation helps establish our heart in Him.
* “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.” **Hebrews 13:9 NASB**
  + We open our heart to be strengthened by God’s amazing grace… We need ‘urgent endurance.’
* “And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God.” **1 Samuel 23:16 NASB**
  + Friends and family can be used by God to strength our heart.
* “Now David’s two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.” **1 Samuel 30:5-6 NASB**
  + There are times when we abide in God and find ways to take strength from His powerful presence.
* “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.” **1 Peter 5:10 NASB**
* “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,” **Romans 16:25 NASB**
  + God steps in and strengthens us Himself.
  + We are to be patient (like the farmer) and strengthen ourselves.
  + The farmer knows that when the ‘rains’ come things can get messy for a while but it is a part of the process.
* We cannot afford to misjudge or fail to discern what messy, smelly, unchanging circumstances really are; they could just be fertile soil that is playing its part.
  + It takes a heart that is being strengthened and established to see that the rains are a ‘visitation’ that precede His coming.
  + James says in James 5:9, Don’t complain… Really?
  + What is complaining?? I think it is an immature response to the ‘weight’ of the wait.
  + He recommends us to the story of Job and the Prophets… Their eyes were on the ‘out come’ and not the ‘how come.’ They were ‘tuned’ to breaking through, not just getting out.
* “Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” **James 5:13-20 NASB**
  + We are in this together… If you are hurting we want to pray for you… if you are glad of heart we want to rejoice with you.
  + We want to pray for you if you are sick and see you get well and we want you to live forgiving others and being forgiven.
  + The person needing prayer does their part by asking for prayer. The prayer of faith is to come from those doing the praying.
  + Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another… do this wisely… Love ‘covers’… immaturity may ‘un-cover’ unwittingly.
* “Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed *and* restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].” **James 5:16 AMPC**
  + Compare Philippians 4:13 and James 5:16.
  + The prayer of the righteous man… “Exerts a mighty influence…” James 5:16 Weymouth N.T.
  + The prayers of the righteous man “have a powerful effect.” Moffatt
  + …”Brings forth powerful results”- Norlie
  + …”The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” James 5:16 NLT
  + …”The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.” James 5:16 The Message
  + James gives us Elijah as the example of the ‘real human’ praying an effective prayer. (1 Kings 17:1 and 1 Kings 18:41-46) He prayed and it didn’t rain for 3 years and then he prayed again and rain came forth.
  + Elijah heard from God, prayed what he heard from God and it came to pass.
  + God tells us that our God empowered prayers are a ‘force to be reckoned with…’
  + Our praying is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to praying for people who do not know Jesus or who have stumbled and lost their walk with God.
* We have several ways we can pray from these verses.
  + Pray for patient endurance.
  + Pray for people struggling with guilt, shame and unforgiveness.
  + Pray for people to be saved.
  + Pray for people to be forgiven.