

January 12, 2020

KIBC Sunday Worship Service

Message by Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "The Prayer of a Righteous Person Is Powerful." (2)  
—The Blessing of Praying for Each Other—

Text: James 5:13~18

**5:13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise.**

**5:14 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.**

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

**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.**

**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.**

**5:18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.**

### Introduction

We studied that we, Christians, should lead a life of **Amen** and **Hallelujah** last time. When we are in trouble, we pray to God and conclude it with Amen. It means, "Yes, it is. It is true." On the other hand, when we are happy, we praise God by **saying** Hallelujah, "I praise the Lord." We offer these two things in our daily lives.

By the way, when we come to know that other people are sick or have trouble, we sometimes tell them easily, "I will pray for you."

However, offering prayers sometimes becomes some kind of **a cliché**, doesn't it?

I remember an experience when I began to speak German in Germany. A German phrase "Gott sei Dank" means "God is thanks" and it is usually used to express thankfulness. Therefore, I said, "Gott sei Dank" in a daily conversation but a certain church elder advised me not to use it.

He said that I seemed not to really say, "Gott sei Dank" with a sincere heart. People in German

society who didn't understand the true God easily called His name and used it to express **how lucky they were**. Therefore, the elder told me that I should say, "Gott sei Dank" sincerely.

We also easily say, "I'll pray for you" and later forget it quickly. It is not a sincere word, and more like the cliché, is it?

James didn't teach us to offering the prayer like **a cliché**. On the contrary, he taught that prayer had power and on top of that the prayer of the righteous person was more powerful.

Let's consider what is to pray with power according the following two points.

### Main Points

## 1 . The Powerful Prayer

### 1) Three Types of Prayer

James teaches in today' text that there are three types of the prayer as below.

- ① To pray for oneself

#### 5:13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray.

It is the prayer that we ourselves pray for ourselves when we are in trouble. It is important for us to ask other people for prayer, but we should pray for the first time even if it is a poor and small prayer. We need to begin by offering prayer for ourselves.

- ② To ask the other people for prayer

#### 5:14 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 are faced with a problem, it is important for us to pray and it is also important to ask brothers and sisters to pray for us. It is an incredibly happy thing when people offer prayers closely together for one thing.

- ③ To pray for each other

#### 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.

The third one is the prayer for each other. When we pray for each other, our prayer becomes effective and meaningful.

Then, what are **the conditions of the prayer that God responds to?**

## 2) The Conditions of the Prayer that God Responds

### ① Prayer in the name of Jesus

Jesus taught His disciples as below—

**John 14:14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

A name implies existence. Jesus intercedes for our prayers to God the Father for us. We are allowed to pray in the powerful name of Jesus. How happy we are!

### ② Prayer offered in faith

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

We should not pray with doubt if God responds to it. When we pray, we must believe that God is the mighty one and will listen to our prayer and responds even though we are very tiny in existence. It is the prayer in faith.

### ③ Prayer that is offered by a righteous person

**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.**

I mentioned in the previous message that God doesn't listen to our prayer if we have sins at that time. What is the outcome of a prayer that meets the conditions of prayer?

## 3) The Outcome of Prayer

The prayer in faith ① makes the sick recover, ② makes us receive forgiveness of sin ③ and gives great power.

**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.**

Prayer sometimes brings out the powerful work that is beyond of human power. It is God's work. The existence of church itself is an amazing work of the Holy Spirit's that God responded the prayer. Therefore, James encouraged them to pray for each other.

### 2. Pray for Each Other.

**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.**

James mentions a problem of sins; however, and we should be careful about it. Every illness

does not always come from sin; however, it sometimes really comes from sin, therefore, let's study only Verse 16 today without arguing the relation between a problem of illness and sin.

Let's study the words, "**each other**" from two meanings.

### 1) "**Each other**" with a Negative Meaning

**4:11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.**

**5:9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!**

"Each other" that appears in these two verses above refers to the negative meaning. They grumble and slander one another, not one side but both sides of people slander. James was very cautious not to become in such situation under hardship of persecution.

If they slander and judge each other among them, they hardly win the battle in such a situation when the persecutors threaten from outside. It is so-called disunion and it severely damages them.

If one side people grumble and slander, it doesn't damage so much, for example, if A speaks evil of B, but B is mindless of slander and feels peace, it dissolves any problem. If he has love and forgiveness for who slanders him, there is no problem. They would not be tossed into the confusion.

**Each other** refers to the attitude of their relationship. It is natural that a problem occurs if they grumble and slander each other when the persecution threatens. We should not take the attitude in the negative meaning. The important thing is that **each other** has a relationship in the positive meaning too.

### 2) "**Each Other**" with a Positive Meaning.

Then, what does it each other in the positive meaning mean?

**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.**

"Each other" takes the attitude in the positive meaning is to confess sins and pray for one another. It is the relationship in the positive meaning.

In a sense, it is difficult as a matter of practice. It is not a simple thing. We easily find the faults

in other people and point out them because of our uncleaned nature. As is usual with humans, we try to make an excuse and justify ourselves. I am also one of them.

We are reluctant to confess our sins. It seems easy to say, "I am sorry!", however, we think as if we will become humiliated. On the top of that, even though we are commanded to pray for each other, we have difficulty to pray for some people when we haven't forgiven him/her 100 %. How about you?

We all want to our church to be revived. We want the church to revive and want our faith to become lively. We raise a question why the church is not able to walk in God's grace.

To tell the truth, the secret of problem is hidden in our attitudes towards each other. What do you think about it? Jesus said,

**Matthew 5:46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?**

It is not difficult to pray for people whom we get along well with and treat them with kindness. We are able to easily pray for people who are unrelated, for example, we easily pray, "May all souls of 2,740,000 people in Osaka be saved."

The problem is people who are around us and have a certain relationship with us.

The object of envy is usually a close person. If a person of a certain company is promoted, it is not a problem, however, if a certain person of his company, who entered the company in the same year, is promoted, one's heart is not peaceful. Why does he feel restless?

We should love each other truly, who are our brothers and sisters, and share our joys and sorrows, but we sometimes do not get along well. It is our problem.

When we face a problem like this, we can't win a victory unless we solve the problem. **To confess our sins and to pray for each other** are crucial. God gives us the command to **confess our sins and pray for other people**. If we think it impossible, we shouldn't blame others.

God tests our faith through His Word like this.

Verse 16 records, **"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."** The righteous person refers to the person who solved the problem I just mentioned. If we grumble and slander each other, we are not the righteous person according to the verse 16.

Jesus so loved us that He was crucified. We were not righteous beings because of our selfish nature and separated from God. However, we met Jesus, who was crucified, and confessed sins and pursue a faithful heart.

The Holy Spirit as the Helper works on us and makes us a righteous person before God. Verse 16 teaches us something very important so that our prayer really reaches God. When we think what blessing the church is, God doesn't quickly give the answer. We should remember the answer is hidden in our heart.

When we think the work of the Holy Spirit on us, we come to understand that the Lord begins to work on our hearts. We usually keep up our appearance and pride, or sometimes we are reluctant to do the righteous thing. However, the Holy Spirit works in our inside.

When the Holy Spirit works in us, we are able to place our honor and pride aside. And we come to confess, "I made a mistake. Please forgive me." The revival and activation of a church begins from these points.

How about today's message? James said, "**The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**" We are not righteous people; however, we are given forgiveness of sins through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. As a result, we were changed into the righteous and we willingly pray for each other.

#### Conclusion

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—The Blessing of Praying for Each Other—

James said, "**The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**" We want our prayer to become powerful. Then, what should we do?

**5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.**

**The secret of the powerful prayer is the following three points.**

1. Pray in the name of Jesus
2. Pray in faith
3. Pray confess sins each other and pray for each other

\* God bless you!