

# Touching Heaven-Touching Earth – Session 1

Study on Prayer by Cindy Smith

March 4

James 5:14-18 “Is any one of you sick? He should call then elders of then church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **The prayer of the righteous man is powerful and effective**. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayer earnestly that it would not rain on the land for three year and a half years. Again he prayed and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.”

Vs. 14 Elders were first mentioned in Acts 11:30 as recognized leaders in the churches. There mention here and in Acts 14:23 relates to about the same period in the early church, before there were deacons and long before there were bishops.

Elders were the ministry office in Eph 4:11 And he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service.

Some understand the word “sick” in this verse to refer to spiritual, not physical, weakness, and the different word translated “sick” in verse 15 to mean “weary”. Thus the discouraged person will be restored to spiritual health by the elders prayer and anointing.

This “anointing with oil” we see in the OT in Isa 10:27 “In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from around your neck; the neck will be broken because you have grown so fat.” In Max Lucado’s Study Bible it says: “It shall come to pass in that day that his burden will be taken away from your shoulder. And his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.”

What is this with “the anointing”? What was anointing used for in the OT? “masah” to anoint, smear with oil, consecrate-occurs approximately 70 times in the OT-the first time in the OT is Gen 31:13 “where thou “anointest” the pillar and vow a vow unto Me.” The basic meaning of the word is to smear something or someone with oil. When the unleavened bread is tempered with oil= to our buttering our bread. The OT most commonly uses masah to indicate anointing in the sense of a special setting apart for an office or function. Thus, Elisha was “anointed to be a prophet ( I Kings 19:16) More typically, kings were “anointed” for their office (I Sam 16:12; I Kings 1:39) Vessels used in worship in both the tabernacle and temple were anointed as a means of consecration. There is even a special holy anointing oil recipe as presented in Exodus 30:22-25.

As a noun we see masiah-“anointed one”-which gives us the term “messiah” David refused to harm Saul because he was “the Lord’s anointed one”, The New Testament title of Christ is derived from from the Greek Christos which is exactly equivalent to the

Hebrew “Masiah” so the term Christ emphasizes the special anointing of Jesus of Nazareth for His role as God’s chosen one. Also in the NT Jesus spoke of the woman who anointed my body (Mark 14:8), anointed my head (Luke 7:46), And anointed my eyes (John 9:11), anointed the feet of Jesus (John 12:3), anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). I John 2:20 speaks of an anointing from the Holy One and in I John 2 :27, it speaks of the anointing that teaches us.

The anointing is something that is on the outside of us-it comes upon us as in Isa 61:1 which Christ also read about Himself in the synogogue: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor...” (Matt 11:5, Luke 7:22 and in Acts 4:26) We see a picture of the Aaron the high priest being anointed as it pours upon him, head to toe like oil;God says that there is a blessing that he commands when he sees us in unity-it is

like the precious anointing with oil and like the dew that covers Mt. Herman. At Passover, the doorposts and lintels were anointed with the blood of the Passover Lamb. Don't ever discount an anointing of the Lord!

If someone is sick physically or spiritually we are to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord. Why the name of the Lord? In Phil 2:9-10 it says, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord., to the glory of God the Father." In Song of Solomon it says in 1:3 "Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is perfume poured out."

Let us look at the next phrase: "And the prayer offered in faith". We need to understand that our prayer before the Lord is an offering. In Rev 5:8, prayer is described as incense: "and each one (speaking of the 24 elders around the throne) had a harp and they were holding golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Rev 8:3 says "Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar, He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it from fire on the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightening and an earthquake. Now I would say that that was effective prayer, it definitely had an effect on the earth!!!

In the OT, there was a lot of offerings, freewill offerings, heave offerings, peace offerings, ordination offerings, sin offerings, votive offerings, grain offerings, wave offerings, thank offerings, drink offerings, sacrifices with bulls and goats and lambs and doves and pigeons and burnt offerings-a lot of gore. A lot of people ask why so much gore and blood-it was because the life was in the blood. And God, foreshadowing the sacrifice of His own dear Son, through animal sacrifice was in essence preparing His

people for the exchange "My Life for your life, My blood instead of your blood. Offerings to God were always holy-and represented something unblemished, pure and innocent. Perhaps that is why Jesus said that when someone wanted to enter the Kingdom of heaven, they must come as a little child. When we approach God in prayer we do not need to put on airs, but come in faith, trusting. The offering He loves is when we come with a pure heart, a clean conscience and a sincere faith (I Tim 1:5)

Let's look at Hebrews 10:19-22. Part of the acceptance of our offering, our prayers to God is that we come in faith, in assurance-the way has been made for us to have acceptable sacrifices to God. Rom 12:1-2. We can know that our sacrifices, our prayer to God is acceptable, because we are obedient, and we know obedience is better than sacrifice.

The next phrase we look at in James 5 is the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. We need to take an in depth look at that word "faith". We understand that it this kind of prayer that opens the doors of heaven to miraculous healing, deliverance, provision and salvation. Anything we receive from God who is Spirit is "by faith".

For your homework next week please read Hebrews 11 and meditate on the verse in Hebrews 4:1-2. and Hebrews 11:6. Hebrews 11:2 says, "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard it did not combine it with faith." In Hebrews 11:6 it says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." We will receive reward because we are seeking Him out to know Him better and to both understand and apply His words.