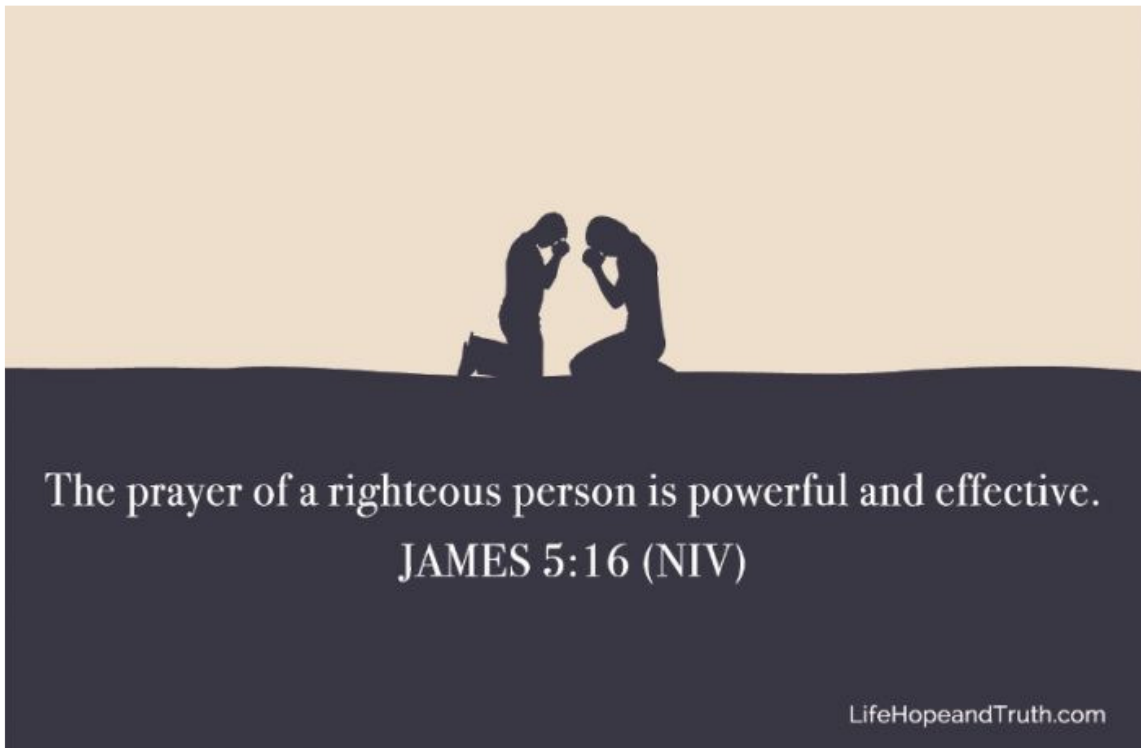


The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 144

James Teaches Us that
Prayer is Powerful



The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
JAMES 5:16 (NIV)

LifeHopeandTruth.com

2020

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Jesus Christ, God's Son, loves us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man. He lived His entire life without sinning and He went to the cross to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sins of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior, died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. When He was finished suffering in our place, then Jesus was buried but He rose again from the dead and He is alive today seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven. Believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ and you will be saved and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. (Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."



LESSON



Hi Kids. Today's lesson is all about how **POWERFUL PRAYER is!!!**

We're now going to look at **James 5:13-20**. These

are the things he wants us to remember as he ends his letter.

The two great themes of James in his final teaching at the end of his letter are first **patience**, and second **prayer**. So, this month we're going to hear what he has to say about **prayer**, while also hopefully clearing up some **possible difficulties** in the passage. **James 5:13-20** "Is anyone among you suffering? **Then he must pray**. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. (14) Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders (leaders) of the church and they are to **pray** over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; (15) 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. (16) 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.** (17) Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed intensely that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. (18) Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. (19) My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, (20) let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will deliver his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins."



Here James brings out the very center importance of prayer to the lives of his congregation. He urges them to sing the Lord's praises, to confess their sins to one another, to turn a brother from a sinful life back to the truth (most likely by speaking the truth of the Word of God to him).

And to pray, pray, PRAY!!! Prayer is mentioned in each verse from **James 5:13** through **18**. Pray for your needs; pray for others; and pray together as a group.

And then in verses **19-20** the practical message we are to take is to look out for one another. Restore the brother who is doing wrong.

We will look at material here in **James 5** that may cause difficulty for some members of the body of Christ, so that, it will not distract us from the lesson, which is the power of prayer.

Here in this passage are several practices (other than prayer) that James commands these believers to perform. They include the following:

1. Elders anointing the sick with oil.
2. The prayer of the elders offered in faith will result in a miraculous healing, with the Lord raising the sick person up and forgiving his sins.
3. Confessing sins to one another.
4. The brother who turns a sinner away from the doing wrong and back to the truth will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

We will cover each one of them. First and most importantly, we'll see that these were **Jewish practices in the first century during the years when Jewish believers were expecting their Messiah to return after the great Tribulation and bring in the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus Christ will reign over the entire world as King of kings and Lord of lords.**



For example, during the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the ministry of the twelve Apostles after our Lord's resurrection and session, **miraculous healing was linked with the forgiveness of sins.**

So, what's going on here? Does this happen today?



Well let's walk through this passage in James together. James 5:13 "Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises." The first urging is for the suffering believer to pray for the patience to go through that suffering. We are to turn to the Lord whether we are suffering or cheerful.

Paul says the same thing in Romans 12:9-13 "Let love be without hypocrisy. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. (10) Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (11) not lagging behind in persistence, enthusiastic in spirit, serving the Lord; (12) rejoicing in hope, enduring in troubles, devoted to prayer, (13) contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality."

Jam 5:14 "Is anyone among you (physically) sick? Then he must call for the elders (leaders, mature Christians) of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; (15) and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up (get him back on his feet again), and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him." James is talking about physical sickness here. The elders were the more mature men in the assembly.

Five points will help us understand what is going on here:

1. It's the PRAYER offered in FAITH (confident that the Lord's will is to heal the person) that restores the one who is sick. (also read Mat 21:22).
2. In the first century, anointing (or applying) with oil was used as a medicine. Luke 10:33-34 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, (34) and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him."



3. James expected the return of Christ as Messiah. The announcement of the coming Millennial kingdom was accompanied by anointing the sick with oil and healing them. Mark 6:12-13 "They went out and preached that men should repent (change their minds about Christ). (13) And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them."
4. James ministered in the period when miracles were common, especially healings. Please read Acts 2:43; 3:1-9; 4:7-12, 29-30; 5:12-16; 8:5-8; 9:32-42; 14:8-10; 15:12-13; 19:11-12; 1Co 12:9,28. Acts 5:15-16 "...to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when (Apostle) Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. (16) Also, the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed." The gift of miraculous healing was present in the early chapters of Acts, and was a sign to the Jews that their Messiah, the Lord Jesus, had risen from the dead.

5. During our Lord's earthly ministry, healing and the forgiveness of sins went hand in hand, together.

Luke 5:17-25
 "One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to



perform healing. (18) And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him (Jesus). (19) But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. (20) Seeing their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven you.' (21) The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?' (22) But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, 'Why are you reasoning in your hearts? (23) Which is easier, to say, your sins have been forgiven you, or to say, get up and walk? (24) But so that you may know that the Son of

Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, — He said to the paralytic — I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.’ (25) Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.”

Today in the Church Age, there are no visible miracles like in the time of Jesus’ ministry on earth. Today, we are to pray for one another to be healed of any sickness and God does the healing. That’s the message we should take away from this verse.

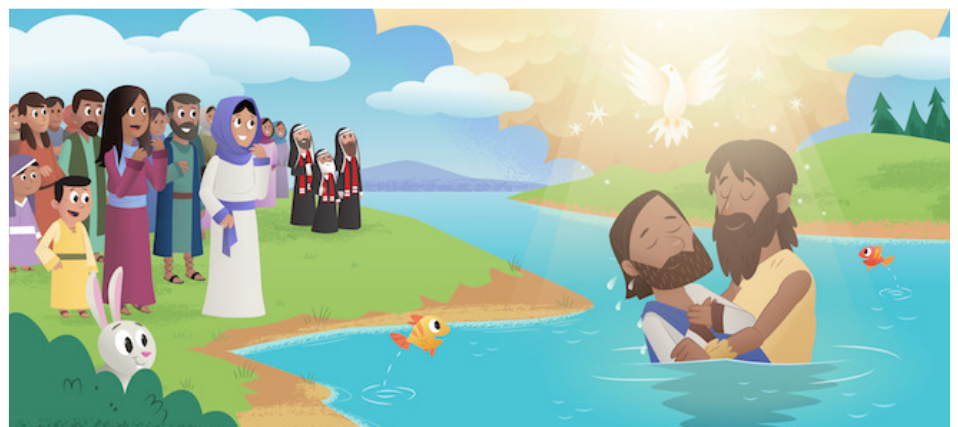
Jam 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” But of course, here there is also the statement about confessing sins to one another. We need to look at that as well. We don’t want this to take away from the central message of prayer. This is the only verse in the New Testament that openly commands believers to confess their sins to one another. Remember, James was teaching first century Jews.



The practice of confessing sins started in the Law of Moses. It was part of the Jewish Age...NOT the Church Age, which started on the Day of Pentecost when all Christians received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Please read **Lev 5:5; 16:21; Num 5:7**. Here confession of sins was part of a religious ritual for forgiveness. The confession was public. Confessing sins is also mentioned in **Psalms 32:5** and **38:18**. Nehemiah and Daniel confessed the sins of the people of Israel to the Lord (**Nehemiah 1:6; Dan 9:20**). The remainder of Israel that returned with Nehemiah to Jerusalem confessed their sins as well as the sins of their fathers. (**Nehemiah 9:2-3**). The same thing occurred with **Ezra 10:1,11**.

John the Baptist baptized the Jews in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. They did this once, as part of a ritual that prepared them for their coming Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.



Mark 1:4-8 "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance (change of mind) for the forgiveness of sins. (5) And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. (6) John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey. (7) And he was preaching, and saying, 'After me One (Jesus the Messiah) is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. (8) I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'" Jesus did not command people to confess their sins.



So, these were Jewish practices in the Jewish Age of the first century during a time when Jewish believers were expecting their Messiah to return soon to usher in the Millennial kingdom.

Now, back to **James 5:16**, the b part: "the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." This is the central message of **James 5:13-18**. Today's lesson title comes from this verse.

Today as members of the body of Christ, we know that we are declared to be righteous in God's eyes forever on the basis of faith (believing in Jesus) in the good news of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we qualify here, and again the message, the clear takeaway is this: **PRAYER IS POWERFUL!!**

As we have seen before, James uses a couple of techniques when he really wants to emphasize one of his teachings. He uses poetic language, and/or he gives an illustration using a prominent figure from the Old Testament. So, here James brings up Elijah. And Elijah is a wonderful illustration. **James 5:17** "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. (18) Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit." God answered and brought the rain.



First of all, bringing in Elijah allows James to once again use the image of rain. This ties together his teaching on patience in **James 5:7** with this teaching on prayer. "The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, which comes after the early and late rains. When the sky pours forth rain, the earth produces its fruit."

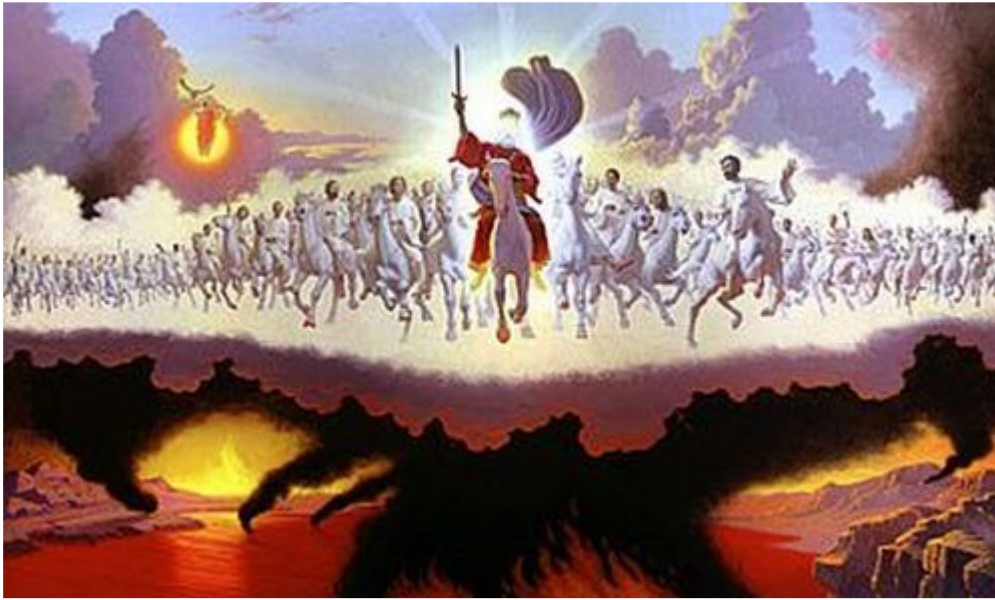


Second, Elijah performed miraculous healing through prayer. **1 Kings 17:17-24** "Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and **his sickness** was so severe that there was no breath left in him. (18) So, she said to Elijah, 'What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to put my son to death!' (19) He said to her,

'Give me your son.' Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. (20) **He called to the Lord** and said, 'O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?' (21) Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the Lord and said, '**O Lord my God, I pray You**, let this child's life return to him.' (22) The Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived. (23) Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house and gave him to his mother; and Elijah said, 'See, your son is alive.' (24) Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.'"

Third, the Jewish people knew that seeing Elijah's return would mean that the Millennial Kingdom Age of Christ will soon begin. We have to look at these next two Old Testament passages in light of the letter of James. **Malachi 3:1-6** "'Behold, I am going to send **My messenger (John, the Baptist)**, and he will clear the way before Me (Jesus). And **the Lord, (Jesus) whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple**; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,' says the Lord of hosts. (2) 'But who can endure **the day of His coming**? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. (3) He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. (4) Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and

as in former years. (5) Then **I will draw near to you for judgment**; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against **those who swear falsely**, and against **those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan**, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,' says the Lord of hosts. (6) 'For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob (the Jewish people), are not consumed.'" Wow. This adds even more importance to the fact that James was awaiting the Second Coming of Christ in all that he wrote in his letter.



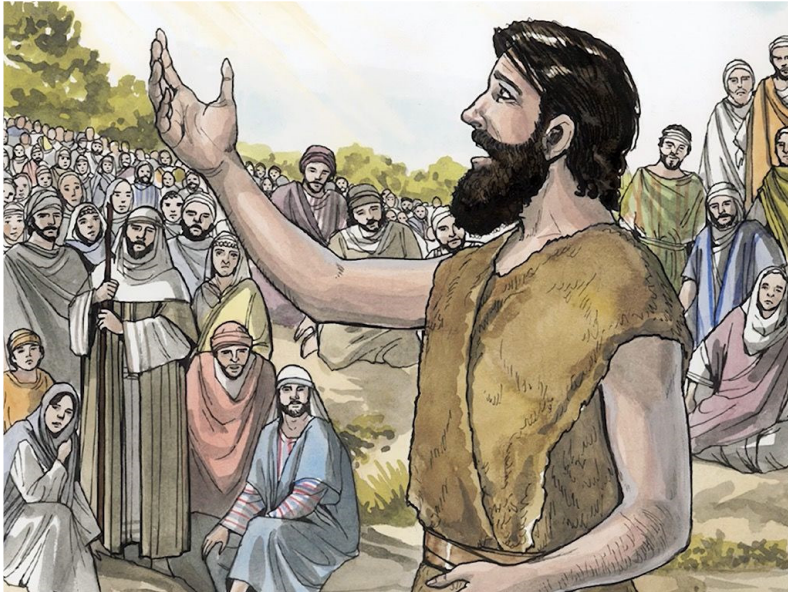
Let's look at Mal 4:1-6 "For behold, **the day** is coming (Jesus' return to earth that will end the horrible Tribulation), burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,' says the Lord of

hosts, 'so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. (2) But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. (3) You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing,' says the Lord of hosts. (4) 'Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. (5) Behold, **I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord (the Tribulation)**. (6) He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.'"

And John the Baptist, whom we last saw baptizing Jews in the Jordan River, was the Elijah to come making the way for Jesus!

Luke 1:13-17 "But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayers have been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. (14) You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. (15) For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the

Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. (16) And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. (17) It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him (Jesus) in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (to rule over them in the Millennial Kingdom)."



John the Baptist was the one who paved the way for Jesus Christ the Messiah but most of the Jews and Jewish leaders rejected Jesus when He came and so the Millennial Kingdom and the reign of Jesus Christ over the Jews and the fulfillment of their promised covenants was postponed. The Jews who believed that Jesus was their Messiah accepted John as the Elijah who was to come but the majority did not. Here's

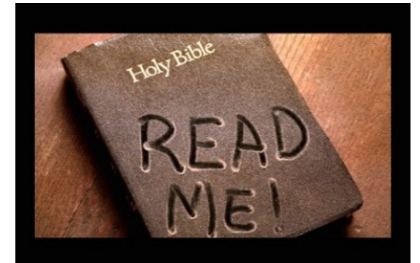
what Jesus said about it to the Jewish people. **Matt 11:9-15** "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. (10) This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU. (11) Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John, the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the (Millennial) kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (12) From the days of John, the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. (13) For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. (14) And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. (15) He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'"

Well, as we see this teaching on Elijah it becomes very clear that we aren't going to be finishing our study of James with this lesson. Get ready for our next lesson because we are going to hear James final advice. It is a call to action on behalf of others. And we will see how these two verses in **James 5:19-20** call for us to return to the things that James had been urging us about back in **James** chapter 1: "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, (20) let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will deliver his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." Only God can cover sins.

Our sins have all been covered already Rom 4:5-8 "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, (6) just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: (7) 'BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. (8) BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.'"

So, until next time, stay in God's Word...

Close in prayer.



Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on 6-11-2017
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