

Seoul Grace Community
The Book of James: Confession & Healing
James 5:16-20
April 10, 2016

1. Introduction
 - a. James is ending his book with the most important advice for us as the church
 - i. Confession—bearing out our trespasses towards and against one another
 - ii. Reclamation—the healing of relationships and bringing the community together
2. The Necessity of Confession
 - a. James is a pastor of the church in Jerusalem and he's writing to Christians about confession
 - i. They are Christians working out their faith
 - ii. James urges confession (v. 16) and healing (v. 16, 20)
 - b. Why does he need to remind them of these two tools?
 - i. Because it's exactly those who go to church who most need to confess their sins to one another and reclaim, or help heal, one another.
3. What is Confession and Healing?
 - a. He says that the purpose of confession is healing (v. 16)
 - i. Not confess to God only but to each other
 - ii. Confess: exomologeisthe .
 1. Means to be of the "same word"—properly, fully agree and to acknowledge that agreement openly (whole-heartedly); hence, to confess ("openly declare"), without reservation (no holding back).
 2. This word means to affirm or relate. Means to agree and align with someone regarding your sin.
 3. It's saying you were right I was wrong. To ask for forgiveness.
 4. Not only tell your sins to God in the presence of someone, but to do it to each other.
 5. The confession is meant to heal the relationship.
 - b. What does real confession look like? The story of the Prodigal son (Luke 15).
 - i. "I will go to my father and say...." (Luke 15:18)
 - ii. He admits sin against heaven and he father. But he doesn't say that he is now restored.
 - iii. He realizes that the relationship is damaged. He doesn't demand to be reinstated exactly as it was.
 - iv. He wants to heal the relationship but he leaves it to the father to restore as he sees fit.
 - v. Then he offers to do what it takes to heal the relationship.
 - vi. This is a wonderful model of forgiveness.
 - c. What is spiritual reclamation/healing?
 - i. To pray for the sins of another and to work to bring them back to the truth of the Gospel (v. 19, someone who is wandering from the truth, that we are sinners saved by grace)
 - ii. When a person's error has affected his/her life direction
 - iii. Who does this?
 1. Everyone. Not just the elders or pastors. James says all people. (v. 16 confess to *one another*, v.19 *if anyone*)
 2. It's done in community for the purpose of a healed community
 - iv. Confrontation towards sin or confession of it should only be to get the other "back" as James says
 - v. This is not revenge or establishing some sort of spiritual superiority—but relational healing.
4. How is this type of confession possible?
 - a. What will this take?
 - i. Trust allows for vulnerability.
 - ii. We have to be vulnerable ourselves before the other person will be towards us.
 - iii. It requires you to be radically humble to offer this type of confession and healing.
 - iv. Where do we get this type of vulnerability?

1. If aren't confessing it means to some degree we are still holding onto our notion of self-respect.
 - a. We either feel too ashamed to admit our sins or we feel too self-righteous to confront them head on within our community
 - b. We haven't truly let grace break through.
2. In the story of the prodigal son, we see this played out
 - a. The degenerate son came back and was forgiven because he recognized the need for forgiveness
 - b. But the elder brother holds the grudge out of self-righteousness
 - c. If we are angered by forgiveness or unable to ask for it ourselves even of our good deeds then we are the elder son. We don't yet understand and embrace the grace we've been given!!
3. In the story the father runs to the son in forgiveness. This would have been humiliating.
 - a. To run after someone! To know that you were run to.
 - b. How do you know? See where God's own son covers you in prayer for your sins (Luke 23:34—"Father forgive them") in order to bring you "back" (John 17:21—"21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us")
 - c. This is the only way you'll be a confessing person and a forgiving person at the time!
 - d. Ultimate humility and confidence at the same time
 - e. Only the gospel gives you this perfect balance to know you were utterly in the gutter (as the younger brother in the story) or you refused to accept grace and instead tried to work for the Father's love (the elder brother) but that ultimately it was he who ran to you (the father) to embrace you
- b. James 5 urges us to confess to one another (out of the humility that comes when we realize the depths of our own sin and brokenness) and yet offers profound healing and reconciliation (out of the confidence that comes when we realize the lengths to which Jesus ran to us, died for us and brought us back home)