

July 14, 2024 PM– Pastor Kevin Olivier
James 5:19-20 – “Shepherd One Another”

- A. It is not too hard to imagine a scenario wherein a church member stops coming to worship for some weeks at a time. Later their absence turns into months. What do we do?
- B. In this very practical epistle, James again gave us some answers to this very common problem in most churches.

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| Consider your calling to shepherd one another. | I. SEEK THE ONE WHO STRAYS II. THE LOVE THAT COVERS SIN |
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I. SEEK THE ONE WHO STRAYS → vv19-20

- A. If someone in the congregation strays from the truth, most would look at the pastor and elders and call upon them to go to him or her.
 - 1. Notice that in this text, it is not a pastor, elder, or deacon who is being called to this task. James said, “**my brethren,**” this is your calling and privilege as a Christian community.
 - 2. This same teaching was given by the Holy Spirit to the Apostle Paul in **Gal 6:1-2**: “**Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.**” Concerning this law Jesus said,
 - a. **Jn 13:34** “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.**”
 - b. **Jn 15:17** “**This I command you, that you love one another.**”
 - 3. Jesus, James, and Paul united to teach us that God calls each of us to shepherd one another.
 - 4. This fits with Paul’s analogy of the church being like the human body where “**the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it**” (**1 Cor 12:25-26**).
 - a. When your little toe is injured and becomes infected and painful, you may get a headache and insomnia. A severe infection can cause sepsis which can lead to death!
 - b. In a similar fashion, when one member of the body of Christ is hurting and straying away from the truth, it should hurt each one of us.
- B. Both James and Paul said we should shepherd one another; however, Peter wrote about the particular, official duty of the elders. → **1 Pet 5:1-5**.
 - 1. The author of Hebrews gave another reason why elders ought to be careful in shepherding the flock. **Heb 13:17** says, “**Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.**”
 - a. An elder may be motivated to shepherd the flock out of his concern about having to give an account to the Lord.
 - b. A non-ordained person is not given a charge to shepherd the flock, yet James encourages all to this endeavor because of the eternal weight of the matter and because of love.
 - 2. Put yourselves in the shoes of one who is straying from the truth, consider which of the two following scenarios would have more of an influence upon you.
 - a. As your pastor or teaching elder, I called you and one of the ruling elders called as well.
 - b. I called you along with both elders. Then you get calls, emails, and letters in the mail from most of the congregation expressing love and concern and saying how they are praying for you. Would not this scenario hold more weight of persuasion?

II. THE LOVE THAT COVERS SIN

- A. James sought to encourage the one that seeks out the straying brother to turn that **“sinner from the error of his way” (v19)**.
1. If God grants him success to turn the sinner back, he **“will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (v20)**.
 2. Ultimately, it is the blood of sinless Christ that saves a soul from eternal death and covers a multitude of his or her sins.
 - a. Speaking of Jesus, Paul wrote in **Eph 1:7: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”**
 - b. James knew this truth, yet he still told his readers they have a vital part in the individual salvation of certain sinners.
- B. The love of God in salvation is a work of our Triune God.
1. The Father calls sinners to Himself. It is His love that motivated Him to send His Son.
 2. The Son accomplished salvation through His sacrifice on the cross.
 3. The Holy Spirit brings about conviction of sin, enlightens one’s mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renews the will to persuade and enable a believer to embrace Jesus Christ.
- C. Even though salvation is primarily God’s work, James gives a brother or sister in Christ credit in having a role in the salvation of a straying sinner when God uses him or her.
1. God uses our words to bring the message of salvation.
 2. When He chooses to do so, the Holy Spirit can use your words to persuade sinners to turn back to the truth of the gospel if they have strayed from it.
 3. The love of God in Christ ultimately covers sin, yet God uses means to bring that love to sinners or sinners to that love.
 - a. When you share the gospel or Scripture, you bring that love to them.
 - b. When you invite them to church to hear the Word preached, you bring them to that love.
- D. We are the body of Christ here on earth. He ministers to the need of others through us.
1. When you speak the truth in love, you serve as the lips of Christ.
 2. When you pursue those who are straying from the truth, you serve as the feet of Christ.
 2. When you feed the needy, you serve as the hands of Christ.

Review, further application, and conclusion: