



“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053



## *Should Elders of the Church Anoint the Sick with Oil?*

Chuck Northrop

Something which affects every person is physical illness. It is a universal affliction. There is no person who can escape from its clench for it has a hold on us and will not let go. No matter how we try to keep it away, it just keeps coming back. Thankfully, however, we have a way to relieve some of the pain and suffering associated with it. We can beseech the Father in prayer. “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:14-15). Sadly, there are some people who turn to this verse to appeal to the anointing of oil in order to relieve illnesses. It is for this purpose we ask, “should elders of the church anoint the sick with oil?”

There are three interpretations of this passage which ought to be considered.

First, there are some who say this passage concerns only “sin-sickness.” The difficulty with this understanding is possibly redundancy. James would be saying, “pray for him that are sin-sick . . . and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” Those who are sin-sick have committed sins. The word translated “sick” in this passage is the common word for “suffering” or “trouble” and is generally used “for suffering bodily ailments.” However,

this word can be used figuratively for spiritual sickness as in Matthew 9:12 where Jesus said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

A second view is the anointing of oil was for a medicinal purpose. It is the case in the first century oil was used for this purpose. In the account of the *good Samaritan*, Luke records the good Samaritan went to the victim who fell among thieves and “bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine” (Luke 10:34). The wine was to cleanse and kill any infection while the oil soothed the wound and protected it from further infection. In this view, the elders of the local congregation are called to pray over the sick and to help with any medical needs. Like any benevolence, it is done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord. The fact that God does the healing in no way implies medicines cannot be given. God heals today by natural means.

In the third view, the anointing of oil is symbolic or ceremonial of miraculous healing. It is true anointing of oil accompanied healing in the first century. When the twelve were sent on the limited commission, they took oil to anoint the sick and heal them (Mark 6:13). It was like the “laying on of hands” (Mark 1:41) and the anointing of the eyes of the blind man with the clay (John 9:6). In any of these cases, the action could not accomplish the results. The power of the miracle was not in the oil, the hands, nor the clay. These actions were to call attention to the miracle. In this view, the anointing of oil has no application for us. For three reasons we know that miracles have ceased. One, they were to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Once the word was confirmed, there is no need for further confirmation. Two, they could only be passed on by the apostles (Acts 8:14-24). When the last apostle died, the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit discontinued. Three, the scriptures teach the miraculous gifts would cease (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Whichever view you take, there are many lessons to be learned from the text:

It is the “prayer of faith” which saves the sick. The “prayer of faith” is the prayer resulting from faith. The word “save” in this text means “to make one well.” It is this prayer which accomplishes the purpose of healing.

It is **not** the anointing of oil which saves the sick. The Lord through James said, “the prayer of faith shall save the sick” and **not** “the prayer of faith and anointing him with oil shall save the sick.” The anointing of oil has absolutely no value if the Lord does not make a person well.

The way the sick are raised and the result of the “prayer of faith” is “the Lord shall raise him up.” That is, the Lord shall raise him up from his bed of affliction. Thus, the Lord will accomplish the action.

The application James made is found in verse 16, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Whether a person is praying for physical ailments or for the spiritual ailment of sin, this truth sustains us in times of trouble and difficulties. By this truth, we can “count it all joy” when we fall into various trials (James 1:2).

# Things Aren't What They Used To Be...

Ted J. Thrasher

Time is irreversible, irrecoverable, and irrevocable. We cannot change its onward march, call back one moment of its events or change one incident in the past. The past belongs to eternity, the future to God, and the present to each one of us.

Places change with the passing of time. They are modeled and remodeled to suit the “modern” times. People change with each changing year, and the fashions and customs of society change with the times and seasons.

“If the times do not fit you, fit yourselves to the times.” This is certainly good advice, if it is considered in the context of adjusting our lives to cope with the problems and needs of a changing world in which we must live. However, many have taken this statement literally. They have become “fit” for the times of the world and overlooked the fact that they have in the process become “unfit” for service of God.

## ...Or Are They?

The Word of God is unchangeable, unalterable, and eternal. We who are confronted with the constant changes of the world, do not have to compromise and “flow” with the crowd. We have the “sure word of prophecy” to guide us, instruct us, and comfort us in our efforts to serve God and oppose the forces of Satan (2 Peter 1:19).

While the changeable world says it is all right to expose the body in swimming suits and other scanty attire, the unchangeable Word of God says it is not (1 Timothy 2:9). While the alterable world says divorce and remarriage can be had for many reasons; the unalterable Word of God gives only one reason: fornication (Matthew 19:9). While the temporary world would have us to believe sin is not really all that bad; the eternal Word of God still says, “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). And while the “change agents” seek to alter God’s plan of salvation and the church for which Christ shed His blood; the unchanging Word of God tells us those that penitently believe must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins in order to be added to the church (Acts 2:38,41,47; 22:16), and members of the church must worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

Yes, “the times they are achangein’” but the Word of God and faithful servants of Christ are not changing to fit the pernicious ways and times of the world.

# Observations and Concerns

March 13, 2024

**Welcome Visitors!** A special Greetings to our special Guests.

**Praise in Psalm:** “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; *for he is holy*” (Psalm 99:5).

**Declaration of Appreciation:** Let us remember to give thanks to God for those who invite friends and family to services.

The annual Oologah lectureship is just over a week away — March 22-24. This year’s theme is “**Conversions in Acts.**” Please plan to attend and invite others. Flyers are available in the foyer.

Remember, there will be a *potluck dinner* at noon on Saturday, March 23 for all who attend our lectureship.

Azalea Gospel Meeting: April 14-17; Matt McBrayer

Weleetka Gospel Meeting: April 7-10.

## Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Bill Dilks** is having some health issues.
- ▶ **Pat Taylor** is seeing a doctor for a spot that was found on her thyroid. Surgery for her carotid artery is scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- ▶ We are thankful **Margie Casebolt**, mother of Jody Northrop, is doing better.
- ▶ **Glen**, brother of Dicie Jackson, has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- ▶ **Tricia Moses**, a member at Ramona, is doing very poorly.

Schedule of Services	Assignments		
	Wednesday, March 13	Sunday, March 17 AM	Sunday, March 17 PM
Sundays			
Bible Classes . . . . . 9:30 AM	Chuck Northrop	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson
Worship . . . . . 10:30 AM	Chuck Northrop	Ross Swearingen	Chris Nelson
Worship . . . . . 5:00 PM (except 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday – 2 PM)	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks	Doyle Jackson
Wednesdays			
Bible Classes . . . . . 7:00 PM		Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson
Website: oologahcofc.org		Doyle Jackson	Chuck Northrop
	Lesson	Chris Nelson	Chris Nelson
	Prayer	Bill Dilks	Chuck Northrop
	Door Attendant	Doyle Jackson	Chuck Northrop
		Chuck Northrop	Ross Swearingen