

1. The Church as a Healing Community (As our culture trends ever more toward the emptiness and hopelessness of nihilism--the consequences of such become more evident as people seek to numb themselves to it--addictions of all kinds, violence, oppression, abuse--all lead the headlines. Pain--both emotional and physical--devastate us. To address this God created the community he calls church--his desire is for us to be an oasis-- a healing place in the midst of the hurt.)
2. (Let's allow James to help us envision it) James 5:13-20 (background)
3. What this looks like:
  - a. A proactive community (first and foremost notice the language of the text--the church takes the lead--does not wait around--actively engages each other)
  - b. A praying community (evident all thru the text)
  - c. A praise community (healing leads to praise)
  - d. A confessing community (secret sins are rooted out: they are corrosive and harmful--cannot really heal otherwise. James connects sin and suffering all in this text)
  - e. A forgiving community (healing and forgiving go hand-in-hand)
  - f. A patient community (one that understands patience gives God an opportunity to work--**Quote 1**)
  - g. A rescuing community (again--the connection between suffering and disconnection from God. A healing community actively seeks to rescue those who disconnect. It is the redeeming quality of the church of God. The picture James paints here is a holistic one--where healing effects both body and soul and is just a natural part of the church. **Quote 2**)
4. (Now think in terms of the church as a healing community in terms of how Jesus framed his own mission in) Luke 4:18-19; also Isaiah 61:1 (and now just imagine again what this would look like to a world with no hope. We have a great opportunity to make a difference as a healing community, but we must start proactively practicing it by doing what James teaches--and make no mistake, that is on us. Are we ready?)