

Sermon
March 31, 2026
"Words That Heal"
James 5:13-20
Passion/Palm Sunday



In James 5:13-20, the apostle speaks not to skeptics but to believers. He asks simple, direct questions: Are you suffering? Pray. Are you cheerful? Sing. Are you sick? Call for the elders. And then comes the invitation that unsettles us: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." James assumes something we often resist. He assumes that healing happens in an honest community.

Here is the problem James names: we resist the vulnerable practices of prayer, confession, and restoration that God uses to heal our community and us. We believe prayer matters, but we struggle to pray when we are weary. We believe in forgiveness, but we hesitate to admit we need it. Confession feels exposed. Restoration feels complicated. So, we manage. We stay polite, sometimes even aloof, even with God. Over time, careful distance can slowly become isolation.

John Wesley built early Methodism around small gatherings called class meetings, where people regularly asked one another a simple question: "How goes it with your soul?" That question assumes something we often avoid. It assumes that healing requires honesty. It also assumes that faith is lived inside a covenant community — a shared corporate life in which we belong to one another deeply enough to speak truth, to seek understanding, and to receive grace. James is not describing private spirituality but a people whose lives are intertwined, where trust, vulnerability, and accountability grow out of lived relationships.

The good news is that this kind of community is not created by willpower. Grace comes first. Where we fail to pray honestly, Christ prayed faithfully. Where we resist confession, Christ bore our sin openly. Where we hesitate to restore, Christ pursued us. Through his cross and resurrection, he creates a covenant community where healing becomes possible.

Today God invites us to trust the One who has already walked the road James calls us to walk. Through his cross and resurrection, Christ has created a covenant community where confession is safe, healing is real, and love has the final word.

The good news is not that we finally become brave enough to confess perfectly. The good news is that Christ has already secured our healing.

Hosanna means "Save us." And thanks be to God, in Christ, we are being saved.

Christ is the Word of healing incarnate.