

Anointing With Oil
James 5:13-18
June 21, 2026

We started the year bearing Jesus' fruit and then began working our way through Genesis and we will return there, God willing. But we have taken a break to address some other items including the importance of our words, Jesus' second coming and other vital topics. Today, we want to look at another. Please open your Bibles today to James 5.

What a joy it is to celebrate baptisms today of 3 souls. I pray that each of you will join us as we reconvene our worship at Edinburg Mill, because what we do there is NOT just something "for" those being baptized. It is an important moment in the life of the entire Antioch church family. We are officially recognizing their commitment not only to follow Jesus, which is reason itself to be there, but also their commitment to us. To the brothers and sisters of Antioch CBC. We will vow to support them here, and the first way we can do that is by witnessing their baptisms there. So I hope you will attend and celebrate. Cracker Barrel will still have plenty of food left when you get there.

But baptism is only one of 8 ordinances practiced by the Covenant Brethren Church. Say ordinance. Not ordnance, without an i, that refers to weapons and bombs and we want to avoid those this morning. An ordinance is something **ordained** or commanded in the New Testament for the church to practice which requires two or more believers to perform. An ordinance is an outward symbol and a visible sign of inward and spiritual truths. Doctrines are what we believe, ordinances are what we do because we believe. Besides baptism, other ordinances include Love Feast, Communion, Footwashing, the Holy Kiss, proper appearance in worship, Laying on of hands, as we just did for those going to Puerto Rico, and the one we're going to talk about today, say Anointing. So we are observing or practicing several ordinances today to obey Jesus and His teachings.

Anointing is found in different places in the Bible, and the clearest directive for us regarding it is found in James 5. If you are able, please stand as we read James 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land

for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

James 5 is the classic passage of scripture that we often read whenever we have an anointing service as it highlights the foundational Scriptural reasons for it. But before we jump into anointing, let's note the context. Vs 13. If anyone is in trouble, he should do what? Pray! If anyone is happy, he should do what? Sing praise songs! I heard someone say recently if we are what we eat, some of us should eat more happy meals. Instead of grumpy grub. We will sing!

Then, James, who was Jesus' biological brother, gives the remedy for sickness. Vs 14 He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. Let's flesh this out a bit. First of all, anointing is for the sick. Say Sick. Someone who is suffering. There are 3 general purposes for anointing and one of those is for the healing of the body according to God's will and wisdom. So it is for someone who is sick, although it is usually reserved for more serious sicknesses. Not stubbed toes or sore throats. Upcoming surgery, a test, a cancer diagnosis or treatment, persistent pain or issues that don't seem to respond to treatment. But don't feel like it's a last resort, if all else fails. Anointing is also not last rites, or extreme unction. That is a Roman Catholic ritual that we can find no Scriptural basis for. Certainly whenever someone passes away, we pray and thank God for them and pray for comfort for the family, but nothing I say will change that person's standing before God at that time. We need to live our obedience before Him always.

So don't wait till all else fails to ask to be anointed. God should be our **first** go-to for healing. My Dad asked to be anointed by me and my Uncle Ralph for the proper adjustment of his medicine which had been causing him problems. We did and God moved in a miraculous way for a dose with minimum side effects. Some are anointed for intense emotional or spiritual struggles. The Greek word for sick in this passage means to be feeble in any sense. We can be sick and feeble physically, as well as emotionally and mentally. And God can heal all of that.

According to this passage, anointing is also generally initiated by the one who is sick. "**He** should call." Not the elders call him. I generally do not ask someone if they want to be anointed, although I do sometimes. Let him or her ask. In some cases, a person may be in a coma and not able to ask so his or her family should ask for them, even as the crippled man's friends brought him to Jesus.

Who do they ask? Say elders. The elders are the church leaders, usually older in age, but not necessarily. In NT times most leaders were older but the word is often translated leaders. They should certainly be older spiritually, more spiritually mature. These are usually the pastor and/or deacons. And they are to pray over him or her, AND anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

In Biblical times, olive oil was often used as a medicine, like a salve or even mixed into a paste. In Luke 10, Jesus tells us the Good Samaritan bandaged the sick man's wounds and poured oil and wine on them. Olive oil is what we often use to anoint folks, not Pennzoil. Some anointing oil has fragrances added and that's OK, but the actual liquid is not the important part. There is nothing magical about the oil. It isn't a magic spell. I have used soap, vegetable oil and even water when I didn't have olive oil with me. The most important part is the faith which we'll say more about in a bit.

Olive oil was used as a medicine so God is not against medicines. God made our bodies AND He made the chemicals that medicines are made from and He has given knowledge and skills to doctors and nurses. It's not either we're anointed and pray OR we go to the Dr. God uses both. I know some folks who have anointed the surgeon's hands prior to surgery. But let's recognize that medicines and doctors are not our Saviors. Only Jesus! Most doctors will tell you that they can only do so much, healing comes from God! Overuse, improper use, and dependency on pharmaceuticals can lead to very serious problems as the long list of disclaimers and side effects on any Rexalti commercial remind us.

Some believe that since we have better medicines now, anointing is no longer needed. But Alexander Mack and the early Brethren took the Bible very literally. If the Bible says do it, we do it. Period. Whether we understand it fully, whether it seems outdated, we do it. God has His reasons. So we continue to do it.

What does anointing look like? I remember when my Sunday School teacher, Ms. Gertie Sager showed us pictures of Samuel anointing David as king of Israel. He took out his horn of oil and dumped it on David's head. And in Ps 133:2, David describes unity like "precious oil poured on the head, running down on ... Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes." So as exciting as that sounds, that's not the way we do it today. Anointing in the Old Testament was usually for assuming leadership as a king or a priest. It seems the New Testament practice was similar to what we do, where we pour a little oil into our palm and then use our finger to apply some to the forehead, usually 3 times in the Names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Sometimes it is applied in the shape of the cross, sometimes a circle. The Bible doesn't not prescribe that. But we're not going to dump a quart of 10w-40 weight on your head.

But there's another aspect of this and that is to pray. Say pray. So it's not just medical, it's spiritual. Because we humans are a combination of body and soul, physical sickness can be related to spiritual sickness and vice versa. So while we are spiritual beings, we live in physical bodies. We anoint the physical body while we pray with our spiritual souls. We usually place our hands on the head or touch the shoulder and pray.

Notice also the role of faith in this ordinance. Vs 15 “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.” Say faith. Faith is believing that God can do what we ask Him to do. If you don’t think He can answer your prayer, how stupid to pray. But He can and He does! In addition to previous studies that have proven the same thing, a recent double-blind study again revealed that people who are prayed for, even if they don’t know it and even if they don’t want it, did better than those who were not prayed for. What a coincidence.

It’s important that all those who participate in anointing believe God can heal the person. Including the person being anointed. I often ask that person if they believe God can heal them. Obviously, if they’ve asked to be anointed, it seems they do, but I ask them to state it out loud. Many times Jesus invited some type of statement of belief from those He healed. If you don’t believe, let’s not waste our time and God’s. Of course the elders of the church should believe that God can do it as well. Notice the reminder in verse 16, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Your prayers are powerful and your prayers are effective. The KJV says the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much! Your prayers accomplish a lot! But we do need to be righteous. Our righteousness comes from Jesus but we also seek to live holy obedient lives before Him. Elsewhere the Bible indicates our sinfulness can hinder our prayers. But we don’t have to be perfect. Only God is. In verse 17, James reminds us of Elijah, who was a man just like us. We have a tendency to think these people in the Bible were half angel or something. NO! They were people just like us! You have the same access to God’s power through prayer that Elijah had! Use it!

Do we need perfect faith? Unwavering faith? No. Come as you are but come asking God to raise you higher. Lord I believe, help my unbelief. One of the other main purposes of anointing is for the strengthening of our faith. Both the faith of the person being anointed as well as all those participating including the church elders. Eph 2:8 tells us faith is not from ourselves, but is the gift of God. Faith is not something we can manufacture or drum up within us on our own. So we ask Him to heal the body but we also ask Him to strengthen our faith. The anointing service can also be a powerful witness to non-believing family members who may be present and can strengthen their faith or lead them to it.

And notice also how confession and forgiveness are woven throughout this passage. Vs 15, “If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” Confess your sins that you may be healed which surely sounds like our healing is connected to our confession and repentance. Do we want to be healed to continue in known sin? Why would God do that? Why would we ask Him to? Another question I ask before anointing someone is, “Is there anything in your life that might keep you from receiving God’s full blessing? Anything standing in God’s way of blessing you?” Any known sin? If so, we confess it and ask God to forgive it which He has promised to do. Those participating should also

be on praying ground, with sins confessed and forgiven. The third purpose of anointing is forgiveness of any sins in the life of the sick person as well as in those participating.

When and where do we anoint someone? Whenever and wherever they ask. I've done it in homes, in hospital rooms, emergency rooms, outdoors, at prayer meetings, at Bible studies, etc. One of the things I'd like to see us do more is use this space up here at the end of our services. Come and pray for yourself, for others, for our congregation, for our nation, etc. Not for show. God knows the difference even if others don't, but if the Spirit urges you to come, come. Our last song is called the song of response. It's not just a closing song, it's so much more than that. It is worship, and it is an opportunity for us to respond to the Word of God that has just been proclaimed. To respond in whatever way the Spirit leads. It may be to worship God quietly and pray at our seats. Or it may be to loudly sing glory to God. Or it may be to come and pray or ask to be anointed. We can anoint someone publicly, or we can do it later privately, but one of the benefits of a public anointing is the involvement of the entire congregation. They can share in the prayers and then they can share in the praise and celebration when God answers.

Before we close, let me tell you about some amazing miracles I've seen God do through anointing. When my son Allen had been hit in the eye with a softball, his pressure would not go down. We gathered and anointed him and prayed over him in our living room and in short order the pressure came down. He can still see well out of that eye and we praise God. I saw it with my Dad multiple times as well as with Shirley Patton, Hank Hoover, Delmar Weaver, my Aunt Jane, and many others. God is still in the miracle business! If you are sick, call.

And sometimes, people are not physically healed. What does that mean? Does it mean they didn't have enough faith? That can be a factor, but only God knows that. Anointing is not an automatic vending machine of wholeness where we tell God what to do for us. God has His own plans and reasons and will that are beyond and better than our own. Anointing is for the healing of the body according to God's will and wisdom. Not ours. And ultimately, all our bodies are mortal. It doesn't matter how much oil we dump on your head, how long and fervently we pray, one day, unless Jesus comes first, every human body will die. And if we're a believer, death is ultimate and total healing! In addition, even when physical healing doesn't come in response to anointing, I've often heard folks express how they received peace of heart, soul, and mind from the experience. Peace that passes understanding and strength to deal with and handle whatever may come. Anointing is a way of putting our situation and our very lives into God's hand to do whatever He wants. Because that will be best! Anointing is a way that God has given to us to access and receive His grace and His power and we should ask for it and not neglect it or be scared of this ordinance.

So, is any one of you in trouble? Pray! Is anyone happy? Sing praise! Is anyone sick? Ask to be anointed. Anointing is for Christians, not unbelievers. If you've never

accepted Jesus as your Savior, that is the most important thing, So come during our song of response. If you are believer, pray, sing praise, or ask as we sing.