

THE FIRST 15

Friday, August 16, 2024

Please be in continued prayer for our team currently in Tanzania serving alongside Zoe Ministry.

Today we pray for ongoing income, that no child will be vulnerable to exploitation. To learn more, visit our website at fmcm.org/ZOE, or for the prayer guide go to fmcm.org/ZOE-Tanzania.

Today is Friday, August 16 and we are studying what the Bible says about anointing with oil.

OPENING PRAYER

I come to this quiet space and seek the presence of God, my gracious host - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I still the rushing thoughts of my busy mind and focus on His presence. I calm my body and slow my breath. As I breathe deeply, I inhale God's gifts of healing, holiness, joy and peace and exhale any negative thoughts, worries or concerns. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. James 5:13-16

REFLECTION

In ancient times, one of the many uses for oil was for medicinal purposes. Anointing someone was an act of healing. Oil was used to soothe the skin and heal various illnesses and diseases. Anointing the head with oil was thought to lift a person's spirits and pull them out of a period of sickness, mourning or grief. In the early church, the Apostles anointed with oil when called to heal someone. Anointing the forehead with oil was a sign-act invoking the healing love of God. The oil points beyond itself and the person being anointed to the action of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the healing Christ who is God's anointed one.

The root word for healing in Greek is *sozo*. This is the same word that means salvation and wholeness. God wants to bring balance and harmony into your life. God desires wholeness of body, mind, spirit and relationships for you. Healing happens in us when we confess our sins, receive forgiveness and are reconciled with God through Jesus Christ. The greatest healing of all is the restoration and renewal of your relationship with God. When you draw closer to God through Jesus and your relationship is restored and renewed, physical healing sometimes occurs, mental and emotional balance are often restored, spiritual health is enhanced, and relationships are healed.

When the Psalmist cries out, "You anoint my head with oil," this concept of God's gift of wholeness and healing is celebrated. Whatever is going on in your life and wherever you need healing and restoration, God wants to pour out his healing love upon you. Invite God's Holy

Spirit to heal you - body, mind, soul and spirit. Invite God to heal broken relationships, wounded hearts, torn memories and fractured emotions. Invite his healing balm to work in you, in your relationships and in your life.

Ask: How might I open myself to the healing work God wants to perform in me today? What part of my life or my heart might God want to heal and restore to wholeness?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as Your holy Apostles anointed many who were sick and healed them, so pour out Your Holy Spirit on me, my life and my relationships. I confess my sins and repent of my transgressions. I open the wounds of my heart and soul to Your soothing, healing touch. I pray to receive the blessing of Your anointing and be made whole, through Jesus Christ the Great Physician, Jesus Christ my loving Shepherd and Lord. Heal me. Restore me. Renew me in Your love. Amen.

Weekend Prayers for Tanzania Groups:

Saturday, August 17th - Adequate housing and health resources. That no child will suffer.

Sunday, August 18th - Every child to know and assert their rights. That no child will be vulnerable to abuse.