

## Black History Worship Service Outline

### Call to Worship Prayer

Compassionate God,  
who sent Jesus Christ  
to deliver us from all manner of injustices and inequalities,  
create in us new hearts and enlarged visions,  
to see the image of God in every person  
irrespective of background, race and ethnicity.  
May we be generous in our love of others  
as we work towards ending misunderstanding, racism and injustice; creating communities of  
human flourishing,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

(<https://www.churchofengland.org>)

### Worship Music

#### Opening Song Options

- "Lift Every Voice and Sing"
- "Open the eyes of my heart Lord" SB #270

#### Worship Song Options

- "Living in the Overflow" by Charity Gayle & Joshua Sherman
- "Joyful, joyful" – SB #39
- "So will I" by Hillsong
- "Come now is the time to worship" SB# 332

#### Altar Call Song Options

- "Here as in Heaven" by Elevation Worship
- "Change my heart, O God" SB#409
- "Fan the flame in Me" SB#287

### Responsive Reading

**Leader:** We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; Persecuted, but not forsaken; Cast down, but not destroyed.

**Congregation:** African American history tells the story of a people whose faith in God, hope in the future, and love for one another sustained them through every generation.

**Leader:** As You gave them strength to fight, give us power to break the chains of mass incarceration, poverty, violence, and the sins that so easily beset.

**Congregation:** As we gather for worship, we remember the sacrifices and faith of these courageous men and women.

**All:** Guide our feet, focus our minds, and sustain our hearts as we strive to serve this present age in unity and brotherhood.

Amen

### Media Presentation

Commissioner Israel Gaither Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfBtxwtR-II>

Black History Month PowerPoint Presentation "Wade in the Water"

[BHM 2020 WADE IN THE WATER - Powerpoint.pptx](#)

### Scripture Reading

#### James 5:7-20

<sup>7</sup>Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. <sup>8</sup>You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

<sup>9</sup>Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup>For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy. <sup>12</sup>But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned. <sup>13</sup>Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. <sup>14</sup>Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was as human as we

are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! <sup>18</sup>Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. <sup>19</sup>My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, <sup>20</sup>you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

## **Message**

# **THE HOPE OF RESTORATION EVEN THROUGH BATTLE**

## **Black History Month Service Sermon Restoration, God restores our souls (Psalm 23:3)**

**By Lt. Shanell Johnson**

**Scripture: James 5:7-20**

### **Introduction:**

The book of James was written by James, a leader in the Jerusalem church also known as Jesus' little brother. Yes, Jesus had siblings, brothers and sisters, though He was obviously the eldest. Scripture notes four brothers, James, Joseph or Joses as some translations call him, Simon, and Judas. Scripture also notes that he had several sisters as well.

(Insert a personal sibling illustration that ties into sibling disagreements or struggles.)

Those with siblings know that sometimes you don't always agree, and you don't always get along. While I am sure that Jesus siblings must have loved and cared for Him, when he finally returned home after starting His public ministry journey as an adult, He found that, he was rejected (Matthew 13:53-58), not just by the people in town but by His own siblings as well.

Now this particular brother, James was no different from the others (John 7:1-4), he was not a believer initially though he grew up with Jesus and was raised by Mary and Joseph, two individuals who received direct messages from God. But something changed when James saw Jesus after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7). Seeing Jesus, after He had been crucified, walk again, helped him to become a disciple, a believer in the Lord. He was so affected that he went on to become a leader of the church at Jerusalem. Along with Peter and John he became known as one of the pillars of the church (Galatians 2:9-12).

Therefore, who better to write this letter that that sheds light on some hypocritical practices that had made their way into the church. His writing was God inspired to teach proper Christian behavior to the believers of his time and it continues to teach us today. We are still learning and being reminded of what right Christian behavior should look like as was modeled by our Savior who came in human form to provide us a better way, one that leads to everlasting life.

## **Transition:**

While the book of James contains many lessons that are beneficial for right living, today we are - focusing in on James 5:7-20 this is how James ends the letter. His last advice encourages patience and endurance, it reemphasizes the power of prayer and it concludes with the hope of restoration for His people.

### **1. Maintaining patience and endurance through all of life's circumstances (James 7-12)**

- James calls for patience as we await the Lord's return, this is a message for the believers of that day that we must also recognize and receive as believers today. The Lord is faithful to His people and He keeps His promises so when He says that He will return we can have faith in that promise. When He says that He has a plan for our lives then that can be trusted, and when He says there will come a day where every tear will be wiped away from our eyes and that there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain then you can count on that. God will uphold His promises and such a day will come. That means that no matter the struggles and the circumstances that we must face this day we have to remain faithful, no matter what hardships we must endure we have to persevere to the end. We may not be able to see the next steps in our journey or the end to our present struggles, or suffering but when we trust in God we know that His blood covers us and His promises to us will never fail.
- James relates patient endurance to that of the farmer. Imagine this, rising early to put in a full day of hard labor tending to the crops day in and day out, waiting. Waiting for sprouts to appear, tending and waiting for the plants to mature, and then waiting for just the right moment to reap the harvest. Day after day, the farmer tends to the crops even when no progress can be seen to the naked eye the farmer has faith and patience that progress is being made and that the work is not done in vain. As believers, we must exercise such patient endurance as well because we will have struggles, we have had some already.
- It is Black History Month, a time that celebrates the continued faith and perseverance of an oppressed people who though they could not see the progress from day to day continued to labor in the work seeking equality and justice. They remained faithful in their circumstances. Although they could not see the next step along the journey or the progress that they were making from day to day. They remained in prayer and held faith that God's promises were for them as well. Praise God that, that work did not go in vain and a change can be seen and felt today, even though the work is not yet completed.
- Church we must establish in our hearts a love for God and a love for one another just as scriptures says in Matthew 22:37b-39, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself". That means we need to be loving to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ even while we are going through our own hardships we need to be praying for one another's struggles as well. When we are rooted to Jesus then we can be made known, and being

made new means that we can live differently than the rest of the world. We can sing praises when we struggle and faithfully pray with and for one another with a joy in our hearts because though our battle is ongoing we have faith that the Lord will continue to restore us each day. That is how we are able to live like He calls us to, like James clarifies for us in this letter.

## **2. Trust in the power of prayer (James 5:13-18)**

- There is power in prayer. Did you know that? Prayer is not a useless past time, or a meaning less action to make you feel better. There is real power in prayer. Jesus and His disciples battled in prayer, “God shut the heavens and prevented rain from falling for three years at Elijah’s request. He parted the red sea for Moses to lead His people through. He cast out demons; Jesus healed the sick and gave sight to the blind, and, on more than one occasion, raised people from the dead, like Lazarus.” (Riggleman, 2020. para. 4).
- So when is it appropriate to use this magnificent resource? In times of suffering, in times of joy, when you feel cheerful, and when you need strength. Pray when you are sick and when you are well. Pray when you are in need and even when you are content. This is how we communicate with the Lord all of our ups and downs, all of our needs, our worries, and all of our praises. Why do we pray? We pray because God hears our prayers and He answers them in a timely fashion. We may not always get the answer that we want but He always provides the perfect answer that is always right on time.
- In 1964, Ruby Bridges, a six year old at the time, was being integrated into the school system in Louisiana. Do you know that even this young girl knew the power of prayer? She prayed that God would help her with her enemies. That He would take care of her even though she was facing her own hardships at just 6 years old. Prayer sustained her as it has done for many believers throughout time. Even Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Do you know what the secret to the success of his work in the civil right movement was? it was prayer. It was prayer that kept him speaking and preaching even when he and his family was threatened. It was prayer that got him up to face those who wanted to silence him each day, and it was prayer for those around him that helped to continue the progress of his work even when he could not see immediate resolution.
- So do as the Word of God says, and pray for one another not only that also confess to one another. Through mutual prayer and confession, we can see physical and spiritual healing. This is how true change occurs.

## **3. Trust in the hope that is provided that allows all who believe the privilege of being restored, redeemed and renewed. (James 5:19-20)**

- Finally church in all things trust in the Lord. Trust in His faithfulness and remain faithful to Him for He has allowed all who believe in Him the privilege of being restored, redeemed, and renewed. He allowed us to all come to Him and He allows us to come back if we fall away. The only thing that can separate us from God is our desire to turn away from Him but even then, He still continues to call out to us.

Church can you see the hope that? He continues to offer us redemption even when we have turned away.

- We live in a sinful world that works hard to tempt and distract us from the work of God and the life that He would have us live. We all have faced sin and temptation in our lives. Please remember that you do not have to live in that sin. You do not have to remain chained to the wicked ways of this world because God offers us a way for redemption. No matter how far we may have wandered, He still knows our names, he still calls us into repentance and He still is waiting at the door so that we can let Him.
- When we face struggles in this life, it is easy to give up hope, to lose faith and to get comfortable in the sins around but please know that, that does not have to be the end. When we face persecution and opposition it is easy to want to take things into our own hands and do things our own way but don't take the easy way out, trust in God's plan and remain faithful to the end because He works for the good of His people.
- The last two verses in this chapter, verses 19 and 20 speak about wandering believers. Those who know the Lord but for one reason or another they have wandered away from His Word. Praise God that the story does not end but that God still forgives. We can have continued hope because He is still in the restoration business. He can and will restore our souls when we come to Him just as He has done all throughout history. We read about His restoration throughout the very Word of God.
- The book of James is a letter about what it looks like to live like a Christian. It challenges us and it calls us to commit to the Lord through all things.

#### **4. Conclusion – God's will for us and our response**

- Although we struggle and our battle is ongoing, he restores our soul. We can have hope. We can celebrate because the battles faced today all have an end, Jesus promised us that.
- When the things of this world weigh heavy on you recall the great prayer warriors from scripture, be reminded of the prayer warriors that have lived since then and be encouraged to draw from the strength that the Lord offers each of us.
- Remember He restores our souls so that we can be reconciled back to Him. And because we can be restored, we have hope that no one can take away from us, because once we cling to Him nothing can separate us from Him, not other people, not our circumstances, nor our struggles in this life.
- Do not leave here heavy burdened, do not leave with a weight to bear. Carry it to the foot of the cross, Carry it to Jesus and choose this day to leave it there.
- Here are the words of Psalm 23, a familiar passage that I hope can bring you peace and comfort this day regardless of your current circumstances. May the Lord be with you.
- "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23)

### **References**

Riggleman, H (2020, April 21). What is the power of prayer. Christianity.com, retrieved from <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/prayer/what-is-the-power-of-prayer.html>

### **Benediction**

May the God of love, peace, compassion, justice, and grace walk with us as we leave this space.  
May His light shine in us and through us so that all who we encounter may see Jesus.  
May we love like He who first loved us and may our words, thoughts, and actions align with the will of God and reflect those of our Savior Christ Jesus.

Amen