**Confess Your Sins and Pray for One Another**

**The Word**

Read together James 5:13-18

**The Big Idea**

As pilgrims traveling together towards the light of God’s truth and grace, we are to confess the dark parts of ourselves and bring them into the light, praying for one another, that we might experience healing together.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Can you recall any experiences of confession from yourself or from someone else that made an impact on you? Without sharing specific details, what have you discovered about confession through those experiences?

2. As you consider your current practice of praying for others, where do you experience that as a privilege and where do you experience that as a challenge?

3. It would be especially appropriate today to make your prayer requests known and to pray for one another.

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

A. This summer we are exploring the “one anothers” in Scripture as a way of considering what the church is. Today’s one another is found in v. 16 (there are two one anothers): “Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another.”

B. Our journey together is one of moving towards the light of God’s truth and grace

1. “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” - 1 John 1:5-9:

2. “Live as children of light. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.” - Ephesians 5:8-11

C. Many Christians fear this journey and prefer to keep certain parts of themselves in the dark

1. When Adam and Eve encountered their sin, their response was to cover and hide

2. Likewise, we often cover and hide our dark places

3. We engage in spiritual image management. “We put on a face to meet the faces that we meet.” – T.S. Elliot

D. The healing nature of confession

1. Obviously, we need to use discernment in who we confess our sins to.

2. Confession is so healing for the confessor

a. Unconfessed sin is the devil’s playground

b. When we live with unconfessed sin, we either close ourselves off and lose intimacy with God or we live in guilt and shame

c. Confessing to a trusted believer can remove the secret power of shame

d. As the body of Christ, we can be tangible expressions of God’s grace to one another: It is good to be able to actually hear out loud from another believer that we are forgiven, rather than simply considering it in our own minds.

3. Confession is so healing for the listener

a. It frees the listener up to be vulnerable too

b. It reminds the listener of the grace and forgiveness of God

c. “Will not my brother’s sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God? Thus, the very hour of disillusionment with my brother becomes incredibly valuable, because it reminds me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together—the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.” – Deitrich Bonhoeffer

E. The privilege of praying for one another

1. It is a privilege to bring another believer before the throne of grace in prayer

2. Surely God delights in his children praying and pleading on behalf of each other (any father would love to hear his children asking on behalf of each other).

3. Prayer for one another is powerful and effective (v. 16-18)