

Spiritual Alignment  
Sermon Series on James  
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First Church Westfield  
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How many have had at one time or another: back trouble? Knee? Shoulder? Neck? Foot? When one thing or another is “out,” it effects the whole body. It may happen only when you’re climbing stairs, or you’re turning a certain way, or when you’re getting up from a seated position, or you’re going into a seated position. But at a given moment, it hurts, and sometimes it hurts in ways that call attention to yourself!

In the Book of James several aspects of the life of the church are addressed. In the past two weeks we have talked about how to deal with hard times (which we all must endure; it’s called suffering and no one escapes it). We count on each other; we accept help; we “consider it pure joy” (that is, we try not to complain excessively!) and we trust that God will see us through (keep the faith).

Last week we briefly looked at our “isms” in life. We acknowledged that we all see through our own set of lenses and that people and things can show up only as our lens allows them to. You could call them “filters” as well. We saw that asking God to see things differently causes the light of Christ to shine upon those people and things and gives us the chance to actually *see* differently than we do now. This is how we ask God to change us rather than seek to change ourselves, which is kind of like moving the chairs on the Titanic: *You’re still going down.*

We’re right in the middle of the series now. I want to present to you a big metaphor. And that metaphor is the metaphor of *alignment*. People talk about wanting to become whole. I assert that you are already whole. You are already complete and wonderful and you have everything you need because God created you. You are not “missing any parts.” But what also may be true (probably IS true) is that those parts are out of alignment. Just like, looking out in this beloved congregation there are no missing parts. But the parts are kind of flung throughout this big room. So, it doesn’t seem like a body, but a bunch of body parts, not necessarily unified. Not wrong, just not cohesive. So, you and I are whole, we can just badly need an adjustment.

Have you ever had an adjustment at the chiropractor? Depending on which one you go to, you might have several different kinds of treatments. I like the one I go *okay*. But my chiropractor in Ohio was awesome. He used heat and traction, massage, and other stuff to get me back into alignment. He used something kinesthetics to determine where I was “off.” It was amazing. Dr. Weekly was his name and he was quite up in years, and I used to pray that he never retired. Then I moved.

As a beloved community we get to seek alignment together. We would never say to one another, “My goodness. you are really out of alignment!” But we might say (based on our

comfortability with each other), have you tried looking at that differently? Would you like to pray about that together?

So, spiritual alignment is having what we do line up with what we say. We not only keep our word to do what we say we are going to do (or we try our best, remembering that we are not perfect). We also base our actions on who we say we are: GOD'S BELOVED COMMUNITY. This is who we are as a body. And WHO WE SAY WE ARE as individuals: GOD'S BELOVED CHILD. Not perfect, that is, we make mistakes. But WE ARE WHOLE AND COMPLETE. We just may need an adjustment. You may get an adjustment from prayer. You may need to see a spiritual chiropractor (the pastor, spiritual adviser, trusted friend, etc.). You may need a conversation that is bathed in prayer. Conversation can be prayerful if it is truth seeking, open and humble (not trying to be right but trying to be aligned with God's purposes). And conversation can ignite miracles, things we never expected and thought to be intractable or impossible. HOLY CONVERSATION. Not frivolous or childish. More on that next week, Pentecost, when we talk about the POWER OF THE TONGUE.

And spiritual alignment is ultimately when what we say lines up with what we think. That is why we meditate on God's Word. That is why we come to worship. That is why we say sorry. So that even what we think is pleasing in God's sight. Once again, this prayer reflects our true desire:

God be in my head and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart and in my thinking;  
God be at my end and in my parting.

Amen.