

**A  
FAITH  
NOT LACKING**

THE BOOK OF JAMES





# How to use this book



## Personal Devotions

- Use this book to help you read your Bible every day. You will find a guide that will help you read through scriptures related to themes in our sermon series. Scribble down your thoughts and questions, and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word. Additionally we've recommended a verse to memorise each week.
- We have also suggested 'songs of the week'. So listen on Spotify by searching for the Church by the Bridge and St Augustine's playlist.
- Please make note of and pray too, for the mentioned 'what's on' events each week.



## Connect Groups

- Take this guide with you to your Connect Group each week. There are Bible Studies based on each Sunday's Bible talk theme and space to write down both prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.



## Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.

## Dear Church by the Bridge & St Augustine's,

2019 is our 'Year of Courageous Faith!' Our prayer is that as two churches in partnership, we'd 'be on mission with courageous faith'. So let me remind you of 2 very simple but profound truths:

i) The harvest IS plentiful (Matt 9:37-38). I know we often focus on the workers being few, but the harvest really is plentiful and the Lord gives us the strength and courage to live lives which shine and speak the gospel into the world.

ii) The power of the simple invitation. Remember Philip courageously said to Nathanael 'Come and see' – come and check out the man Jesus.... it's that simple!

With that in mind, here are a few goals for 2019:

- PRAY for 5 friends daily. Write down the name of 5 people you'd love to courageously share your faith with and pray for them every day!
- INVITE 3 friends to an Explore Course (Alpha or Christianity Explored) in 2019. They might say 'no' – but they might well say 'yes'! If every adult member invited 3 people, and if just 20% said 'yes', we'd have around 500 guests at Explore this year!!
- INVITE 5 friends to an event in 2019 (Christmas, Easter, a kid's event, outreach event etc)
- INVITE 5 friends to church in 2019. Every Sunday should be a good Sunday!

- PRAY for 100 newly baptized believers in 2019.
- PRAY for many more 18-30s in our church family (boldly ask for 100!?).

Looking forward to this first quarter, here are some things I'm excited about:

- Regular 'Stories' videos across all our gatherings;
- "Youth Connect" bible study for our teenagers, starting in February on Sunday afternoons;
- Our Marriage Course and Care Course starting this term;
- Training up teams of 10 people in each congregation who are trained in 'Well-being & Care';
- The launch of the Leadership Development Group on Wednesday evenings, to look at Leadership, Doctrine, Biblical counselling, Ethics, Church History, Mission & Apologetics;
- Connect Groups meeting up again – to dig deeper into God's Word and build relationships;
- All our kids and youth activities flourishing, as well as Scripture in Schools;
- Our mercy ministries (Greenway, James Milson Village, Lansdowne Gardens, Everyday English);

- Preaching through the book of James, asking the Lord to grow in each of us a 'Faith not lacking';
- Welcoming new people to our church, and seeing them integrated well;
- Our new websites gaining more and more traction (take a look!); and
- New wardens and parish councils being elected in February, with godly men and women eager to serve with Courageous Faith.

Two important things to remind you of:

1. **Easter 2019 is Friday 19th & Sunday 21st April.** Please make it a priority to stay around for Easter and remember the death of our Saviour and celebrate the Empty Tomb! We'd love lots of our regulars to be around to welcome visitors and celebrate together.
2. **All Church Winter Escape** – remember to put the date in your diary, **9-11th August!** Don't miss it, it's going to be amazing!

Please do pray to the Lord of plentiful harvest as we enter this 'Year of Courageous Faith' – that He would be honoured and His kingdom bear much fruit.

With love in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Dale". The letters are stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Paul Dale  
(Senior Pastor)

# Overview of James

**a) PRACTICAL:** James is a very practical letter, a letter written from a pastor who is concerned to see his people live out their Christian faith. He doesn't want them to be double minded, as he calls it in 1:8 and 4:8, to have one foot in the world and the other foot in the kingdom.

James preaches with great warmth and affection – he uses the words 'brothers, my brothers, beloved brothers', time and time again. Furthermore he's saying, 'Don't compromise, stop compromising with worldly behaviour and start living the Christian life, wholeheartedly, committed to God!

James is not a reactionary letter - reacting against the world – it's looking positively at living God's way and responding obediently to the word of God, whilst you live in the world.'

There is lots of practical advice on how to live as a Christian – like how to care for the needy, how to control the tongue, strive for personal purity, use of money. But it's all based on solid doctrine – so we learn about the character of God, the one who is generous, gracious and jealous. We see how the end times, the return of Christ impacts our behaviour. We discover God's concern for poverty and wealth, his longing for people not only to know the Bible but to obey it, his desire to hear us pray. Plus we're seeking to protect ourselves from wandering and to bring others back to the truth!

**b) CONTROVERSIAL:** The book of James has had a chequered historical past. The place of James in the Canon was constantly contested and not finally accepted until the 4th century.

Writings of early church fathers such as 1 Clement (AD95) and Shepherd of Hermas (early 2nd century), happily used James, as did Origen who was the first to cite James by name as 'an apostle' who wrote 'Scripture'. James was also endorsed as Scripture by both Jerome and Augustine.

But other early church fathers struggled with 'general letters' and refused to accept James. It wasn't until the 4th century (Eusebius) when James' place in the canon was finally cemented.

However, down the centuries, theologians have continued to grapple with the letter for a few reasons. There's not much mention of Jesus or the gospel or the Holy Spirit or the church or the cross. Plus it's claimed that doctrine is somewhat lacking! (I think that's because people know the doctrine, the problem is with living it out!!!!)

Martin Luther called the book of James 'that right strawy epistle' and relegated it to secondary status in the New Testament. His problem was theological! For Luther, justification by faith was the 'doctrine on which the church stands or falls', and he claimed James 'mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul' (mainly in ch 2). Calvin on the other hand accepted James' full authority in Scripture.

**c) POPULAR:** James is one of the most popular New Testament letters today, because it's practical, clear, direct and concise. James contains more imperatives than any other NT book. So it's not just information, it's an exhortation and encouragement. It's more like listening to a talk than reading a letter. And it's full of illustrations, helpful pictures to help us understand how to 'just do it'.

### **AUTHOR: 1:1 "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus"**

There are at least 4 Jameses in the Bible: James father of Judas (Luke 6:16); James the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18); James the son of Zebedee (one of the inner circle of disciples who witnessed the resurrection of Jairus's daughter and the transfiguration - but he was put to death in AD44 by King Agrippa (Acts 12:2)); and James the brother of Jesus.

Most people accept that this last James is the real half-brother of Jesus, one of Mary's sons (Matt 13:55). That's why v1 is so shocking - he doesn't say James, a brother of Jesus Christ - he says James a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. There's humility, there's a recognition that physical brotherhood is nothing, it's all about spiritual brotherhood. We know from the rest of the NT that James was a leader - he saw the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor 15), he was a leader in the early church (Acts 12), he was a friend of Paul (Gal 1), and he chaired the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). But he's humble - he's a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **RECIPIENTS: 1:1 "To the 12 tribes scattered among the nations"**

So it's a general letter. James is writing to Christians, to the people of God, to the twelve tribes, but people who have been scattered throughout the world. They are probably Jewish Christians, living in Palestine and Syria - given that James refers to distinctive Jewish traditions (2:2, 2:19, 4:11-12). So they are Christians living in the world, but not of the world. Furthermore they are experiencing poverty and oppression and general suffering.

### **DATE:**

Most scholars date the book of James around 46AD, so it's one of the earliest letters.

In the mid-40s, Paul's preaching in Tarsus (Acts 9:30) and in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26) has been misunderstood by some who used 'faith alone' as an excuse for neglecting practical Christian living. So James attacks this perverted Paulinism in James 2. The absence of the 'circumcision debate' suggests a dating pre-Apostolic Council. We also know that there was a famine in Judea in AD46 (Acts 11:28), which would confirm the early dating. We know James suffered a martyr death in AD62 so it had to be written before then.

In most early manuscripts, James follows Acts - again suggesting an early dating.

## GENRE:

James is a 'general letter'. There are no greetings, no references to fellow workers, no travel plans, no names of specific people, no situations. It's a circular letter, written to be passed around to Christians. Plus it's heavily dependent on the teachings of Jesus. There are close parallels to the gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount.

It is, however, lacking in structure – he seems to jump from one topic to another with little clear connections!

## THEOLOGY:

As mentioned, there is little about the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, or the Old Testament. Although James is a practical pastor, the letter is still undergirded by important theological themes:

- a) God: Our Christian conduct is always grounded in nature of God. So the themes of 'oneness' (2:11, 2:19, 4:11), right jealousy (4:5) and grace (4:6) are prominent.
- b) Faith, works and justification: James condemns 'actionless orthodoxy'. So whilst faith (not works) is the only grounds for establishing our relationship with God, genuine faith will always show itself in works. Biblical faith cannot exist apart from acts of obedience to God.
- c) The Law and the Christian life: James refers to the 'royal law' in 2:8-12. This refers to the 'love command' of Leviticus 19 (love God and love others). So for

James, the law and the gospel become intertwined. So God's people should have a loving concern for helpless in society (1:27), a meek and unselfish attitude toward others (3:13-18), renounce discrimination (2:1-13) and not speak evil of others (4:11-12). The key issue for James is not 'Judaisers' who are insisting on law, but worldliness!

- d) Eschatology: James warns of the coming judgment as the stimulus for right behaviour (1:10-11, 2:12-13, 3:1, 5:1-6, 9, 12). Do not be 'double minded' (1:6, 3:9-10, 2:14-26) because our Judge is coming!
- e) Wisdom: For James, wisdom is always tied to action (not just understanding) (e.g. 1:5, 3:13-18).
- f) Poverty & wealth: God is concerned for the poor, downtrodden, outcasts (Ps 68:5), and God's people are called to imitate God by showing that same concern (Deut 10:18-19). James often links 'rich' with 'wicked' (e.g. 1:10-11), emphasizing the dangers of wealth for wandering in our faith.

## STRUCTURE & THEME

It's interesting that 'testing' and 'trials' feature prominently in the opening (1:2-4, 12) and closing (5:7-11) of the letter – therefore that's the context in which James must be read! These trials take many forms (1:2), particularly poverty and oppression. Beyond that, it's difficult to see any clear structure!

1:26-27 clearly form the basis for the following chapters, namely:

Ch 3 – keeping a tight reign on the tongue (1:26)

Ch 2 – caring for marginalized, without favouritism (1:27)

Ch 4 & 5 – keeping oneself from being polluted by the world (1:27)

The over-riding theme is one of 'living out your faith, in word and deed, in an increasingly godless world' We are urged to give ourselves 'wholly to the Lord' and not to wander.

James highlights the dangers of worldliness in the church:

- fawning deference to the rich and callous indifference to the poor (2:1-4)
- uncontrolled & critical speech (3:9-12, 4:11-12)
- wisdom that is 'earthly' (3:15), leading to violent quarrels (4:1-3), arrogance (4:13-17), double-mindedness (1:8, 4:8)
- spiritual schizophrenia that interferes with prayer (1:5-8)
- failure to put into practice what we believe (1:21-27, 2:14-26)

He then calls us to repent from compromising spirituality (4:4-10) and to intervene in lives of people who are straying down a dangerous path (5:19-20)!

So how do we live as Christians in this ungodly world, facing trials of many kinds, yet not wandering? By humbly accepting God's Wisdom, found in God's Word and then actually doing it!

Key verses:

1:22 'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says'

1:27 'Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world'

2:17 'In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead'

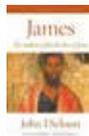
4:4 'You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?'

5:19-20 'My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins'

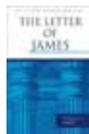
## Recommended books:



Alec Motyer:  
James (BST)



John Dickson:  
James, The wisdom of the brother of Jesus



Douglas Moo:  
The Book of James

## Sermon 1

# James 1:1-18

### SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

<sup>2</sup>Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,<sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup>But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup>Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. <sup>9</sup>Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. <sup>10</sup>But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. <sup>11</sup>For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business. <sup>12</sup>Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. <sup>16</sup>Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

# Sunday 10th February

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 11th February

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 1:1-18

Tuesday: James 1:1-8

Wednesday: James 1:9-12

Thursday: James 1:13-15

Friday: James 1:16-18

**Songs for the week:**

God is for Us

Desert Song

**Memory verse:**

James 1:2-3 "2Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,<sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

**What's on:**

w/c 11th: Evening Connect Groups Commence

Mon 11th: MoneyWise (wk 2 of 3)

Tue 12th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Commence (wk 1 of 10)

Tue 12th: Women's AM Connect Groups Commence (Kirribilli)

Wed 13th: Women's AM Connect Groups Commence (Neutral Bay)

Wed 13th: Evening Women's Connect Living Courses Commence

Wed 13th: Leadership Development Group Commences

Wed 13th: Establish Course Commences

Sat 16th: Monthly Prayer Breakfast

Sun 17th: St Augustine's AGM

## Bible study 1

# Big Idea:

## Maturing Faith

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 1:1-18

What is perseverance and why does James value it so highly?

How can we define trials? (v2)

What can we learn from James about how to respond to trials?

What is the “crown of life” in verse 12?

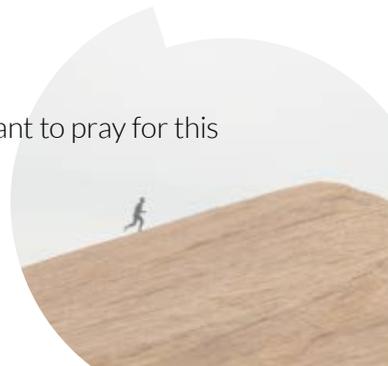
What truth from this passage can we bring into either a trial or temptation we are facing right now? Spend some time as a group praying for each other about this.

## Hymn:

What a Friend I have in Jesus  
Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

## Courageous prayer:

Begin sharing with your group the five friends you want to pray for this year.



## Sermon 2

# James 1:19-27

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>19</sup>My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup>because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. <sup>21</sup>Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. <sup>22</sup>Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup>Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup>and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup>But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. <sup>26</sup>Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

# Sunday 17th February

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 18th February

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 1:19-27

Tuesday: James 1:19-21

Wednesday: James 1:22-25

Thursday: Psalm 119:89-104

Friday: James 1:26-27

**Songs for the week:**

Come Thou Fount

Beneath the Waters

**Memory verse:**

James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says"

**What's on:**

Mon 18th: Church by the Bridge AGM

Mon 18th: MoneyWise (wk 3 of 3)

Tue 19th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 2 of 10)

Thu 21st: Worship Team Night

Sat 23rd: Refresh: Half Day for Women

Sun 24th: Baptism Sunday

## Bible study 2

# Big idea:

## Live out your faith

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 1:19-27

What does James tell us we should be doing?

What are the hinderances to these things?

Verses 22 and 26-27 are key verses in the book of James. What do they challenge us to take seriously?

Group members may be willing to share their goals from Sunday of how they would like to change.



## Sermon 3

# James 2:1-13

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. <sup>2</sup>Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup>If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," <sup>4</sup>have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup>Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? <sup>8</sup>If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right. <sup>9</sup>But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup>For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. <sup>12</sup>Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,<sup>13</sup>because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

# Sunday 24th February

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 25th February

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 2:1-13

Tuesday: James 2:1-7

Wednesday: Leviticus 19:1-18

Thursday: James 2:8-11

Friday: James 2:12-13

**Songs for the week:**

Who You Say I Am

God You're So Good

**Memory verse:**

James 2:1 "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism."

**What's on:**

Mon 25th: One Another Care Course Commences (wk 1 of 4+2)

Tue 26th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 3 of 10)

Tue 26th: Belonging Course Commences (wk 1 of 3)

Sat 2nd & Sun 3rd: Table for 8 Meals

## Bible study 3

# Big idea:

## Faith without favouritism

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 2:1-13

How would you define favouritism? What causes it? What values lie behind it?

From the passage, what does James say about favouritism?

How can we avoid showing favouritism? (v12-13)

What does this passage tell us about God's concern for the poor? How should this impact us?

## **Courageous prayer:**

Spend time praying for your five friends who you are committing to the Lord this year.



## Sermon 4

# James 2:14-26

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup>Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup>You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. <sup>20</sup>You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup>Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup>And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup>As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

# Sunday 3rd March

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 4th March

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 2:14-26  
Tuesday: James 2:14-19  
Wednesday: Genesis 22  
Thursday: Joshua 2  
Friday: James 2:20-26

**Songs for the week:**

Jesus is Better  
Build My Life

**Memory verse:**

James 2:17 "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

**What's on:**

Mon 4th: One Another Care Course Continues (wk 2 of 4+2)  
Tue 5th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 4 of 10)  
Tue 5th: Belonging Course Continues (wk 2 of 3)  
Wed 6th: Monthly Central Prayer Evening  
Thu 7th: First Time Mums Group (monthly)

## Bible study 4

# Big Idea:

## A faith that works

Central Prayer Week

### **Purpose of our Connect Groups:**

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### **Story of maturing faith:**

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### **Connect group activity:**

Why not plan an activity to do a practical act of kindness for someone together. E.g. Cook meals together to put into the church freezer for the meals ministry, serve at Greenway that month, visit Lansdowne Gardens or James Milson Village, do some practical tasks...

**READ James 2:14-26**

What are the signs of dead faith?

What are the signs of living faith?

How can we bring James' warning about dead faith into our daily lives without crushing us under a load of guilt for not having done enough?



## Sermon 5

# James 3:1-12

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>1</sup>Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup>We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. <sup>3</sup>When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup>Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup>The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup>Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup>Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup>My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

# Sunday 10th March

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 11th March

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 3:1-12

Tuesday: James 3:1-6

Wednesday: James 3:7-12

Thursday: Proverbs 10:18, 12:18-19

Friday: Proverbs 18:18, 26:28

**Songs for the week:**

Be Thou My Vision

10,000 Reasons

**Memory verse:**

James 3:5 “Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts”

**What's on:**

Mon 11th: One Another Care Course Continues (wk 3 of 4+2)

Tue 12th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 5 of 10)

Tue 12th: Belonging Course Concludes (wk 3 of 3)

Thu 14th: Oaks Outreach Event

Sat 17th: Monthly Prayer Breakfast

## Bible study 5

# Big Idea:

## Tame the tongue

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 3:1-12

What danger do we face because of our tongue?

Why does James use these three analogies when speaking about the tongue? What is he trying to get his reader to understand about the tongue?

The 'Tim Keller' tongue test: for one week...

1. Don't complain or grumble about anything
2. Don't boast about anything at all
3. Don't gossip or report bad information about anybody
4. Don't run something or someone down – even a little bit
5. Don't defend or excuse yourself
6. Do always affirm other people

What do you find hard in this list?

What is one specific situation in which you would like to exercise better control of your tongue? Pray for one another in this regard.

## A prayer:

“They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city. See what they spew from their mouths – the words from their lips are sharp as swords, and they think, ‘who can hear us?’” Psalm 59:6-7

Lord, save me from the sins of my tongue and the flaws of character that fuel them. Make my words honest (by taking away my fear), few (by taking away my self-importance), wise (by taking away my thoughtlessness), and kind (by taking away my indifference and irritability). Amen (Source: Tim Keller)



*"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness."*

**James 3:17-18**



## Sermon 6

# James 3:13-18

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

# Sunday 17th March

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 18th March

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 3:13-18

Tuesday: James 3:13-16

Wednesday: Proverbs 2

Thursday: James 3:17-18

Friday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

**Songs for the week:**

Where Can I Look

Oh Lord, My Rock & My

Redeemer

**Memory verse:**

James 3:17-18 <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness."

**What's on:**

Mon 18th: One Another Care Course Continues (wk 4 of 4+2)

Tue 19th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 6 of 10)

Thu 21st: Oaks Outreach Event (Rpt)

Sat 23rd: Refresh: Half Day for Women

## Bible study 6

# Big Idea:

## Wisdom

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 3:13-18

What does a wise person look like?

What does worldly wisdom look like?

What does it mean to do deeds with humility?

In verse 17, James mentions a number of traits found in the wise. Discuss the definition of each and what they look like in concrete, practical ways when people are practicing them.

Why is each of these traits important for developing wisdom in relationships? Is there one of these traits that you feel weakest and would like to see cultivated?

## **Prayer:**

Revisit your goal from week two. How are you going? Use this as a time to pray for each other in becoming more like Jesus.



## Sermon 7

# James 4:1-12

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>1</sup>What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup>When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? <sup>6</sup>But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble." <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

<sup>11</sup>Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup>There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour?

# Sunday 24th March

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 25th March

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 4:1-12

Tuesday: James 4:1-4

Wednesday: James 4:4-6

Thursday: James 4:7-10

Friday: James 4:11-12

**Songs for the week:**

How Great Thou Art

Look & See

**Memory verse:**

James 4:4 “You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?”

**What’s on:**

Mon 25th: One Another Care Course Continues (wk 5 of 4+2)

Tue 26th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 7 of 10)

## Bible study 7

# Big Idea:

## Humility vs Pride

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

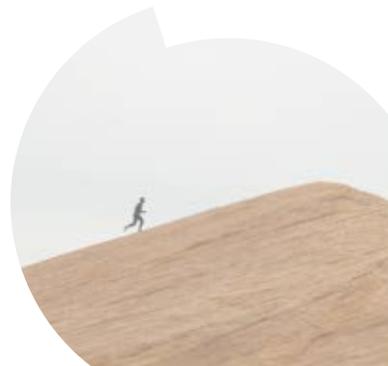
### READ James 4:1-12

What does James identify as the issues his readers are facing?

What language does James use in verse 4-5 to describe a friend of the world? Why does he use such strong language?

James provides a means of changing behaviour in verses 6-12. What is this? What are the marks of humility?

So what is the right response to a gracious God and what is God's promise to us?



## Sermon 8

# James 4:13-5:6

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>13</sup>Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” <sup>14</sup>Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.<sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup>As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup>If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

<sup>5:1</sup>Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. <sup>2</sup>Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. <sup>4</sup>Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup>You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup>You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

# Sunday 31st March

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 1st April

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 4:13- 5:6

Tuesday: James 4:13-17

Wednesday: Psalm 39

Thursday: James 5:1-6

Friday: Proverbs 27:1, James 4:15

**Songs for the week:**

Be Thou My Vision

When I Survey

**Memory verse:**

James 4:15 "Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

**What's on:**

Mon 1st: One Another Care Course Concludes (wk 6 of 4+2)

Tue 2nd: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 8 of 10)

Tue 2nd: Belonging Course Commences (wk 1 of 3)

Wed 3rd: Monthly Central Prayer Meeting

## Bible study 8

# Big Idea:

## Worldly planning and wealth

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### READ James 4:13-17

What does James notice about his readers decisions about life? What does he think about this?

What does he think his readers should be doing?

How, if applied, would this passage make a difference in the way you currently plan or make decisions?

Read: James 5:1-6. What is James' warning to the wealthy? Why does he use such strong language?

What do you think constitutes a life of 'luxury and self-indulgence' and 'hoarding wealth'?

What makes these behaviours of offense to God?

How do you go about discerning if you have crossed the line into these behaviours?



## Sermon 9

# James 5:7-12

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>7</sup>Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup>You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup>Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup>Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup>As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. <sup>12</sup>Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

# Sunday 7th April

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 8th April

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 5:7-12

Tuesday: James 5:7-9

Wednesday: James 5:10-11

Thursday: Job 42

Friday: James 5:12

**Songs for the week:**

Living Hope

Rejoice

**Memory verse:**

James 5:11 “As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”

**What’s on:**

Tue 9th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Continue (wk 9 of 10)

Tue 9th: Belonging Course Continues (wk 2 of 3)

Sat 13th: Working Bees

## Bible study 9

# Big Idea:

## Patience in suffering

### Purpose of our Connect Groups:

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### Story of maturing faith:

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### Central Prayer Week

#### READ James 5:7-12

What does the picture of the farmer contribute towards the readers understanding of patience?

James mentions patience four times in these verses. Why do we find patience so hard?

Why does James remind his readers about Job's perseverance? What can you remember about Job from our sermon series in 2018? How might this encourage them? And us?

What are the two dangers that James warns his readers that hinder patience and perseverance?

How does this passage unpack James 1:4 "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking."



## Sermon 10

# James 5:13-20

SERMON NOTES:

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<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup>Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. <sup>19</sup>My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, <sup>20</sup>remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

# Sunday 14th April

**WEEK BEGINNING:** Monday 15th April

**Bible readings:**

Monday: James 5:13-20

Tuesday: James 5:13-16

Wednesday: 1 Kings 18:16-46

Thursday: James 5:17-18

Friday: James 5:19-20

**Songs for the week:**

Hear Our Prayer

Jesus Paid It All

**Memory verse:**

James 5:19-20 <sup>19</sup>My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, <sup>20</sup>remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins."

**What's on:**

Tue 16th: Alpha AM & PM Courses Conclude (wk 10 of 10)

Tue 16th: Belonging Course Concludes (wk 3 of 3)

Fri 19th: Good Friday Services

Sat 20th: Monthly Prayer Breakfast

Sun 21st: Easter Sunday Services

## **Bible study 10**

# **Big Idea:**

## **Praying faith**

### **Purpose of our Connect Groups:**

To connect with God & connect with other. To experience Christ through his powerful word & presence of others. We want Christ to transform & change our lives!

### **Story of maturing faith:**

Each week someone share an event or something from your past through which God has taught you and grown your faith. What was the event? (Share as much as you feel able to share.) What did you learn about God and yourself?

### **READ James 5:13-20**

Spend time reflecting and discussing how you found last Sunday's service of healing.

When does James tell us to pray? How can we do this together in our connect group?

Why does James refer to Elijah in this passage? What can we learn from Elijah? (See 1 Kings 18 – especially v 43-45)

Verses 19-20 are key verses to the book of James. What do they challenge us to take seriously?

What has challenged you most from the book of James?

How have you seen yourself change in response to this series on the book of James? Spend time in your group giving thanks to God for these changes.

# Personal Reflection

How has our series on James changed your view of:

- *God – Father, Son & Spirit?*
- *Yourself?*
- *The world in which we live?*

What is one area you have changed?  
(in your thinking or actions)

What is one question that you still have?

NOTES:

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NOTES:

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