

James: Faith That Works — 5-Week Sermon Series

Five Sundays through James — the most practical letter in the New Testament and the hardest one to preach without conviction.

Whole-church series; strong fit for a new year or a discipleship push

About this series

James writes like a man with no time for abstraction. Fifty-four imperatives in one hundred and eight verses. He is not arguing against Paul; he is arguing against a church that had learned the vocabulary of faith without the behaviour of it.

Five weeks, one theme per week, with outlines, key KJV verses, and application questions.

The arc of the series

Trials that mature, a word that must be obeyed, a tongue that must be governed, a world that must be resisted, a prayer that must be prayed.

Planning notes

- Warn the leadership team: this series preaches the preacher first.
- Week 3 (the tongue) is the natural Sunday to address church conflict pastorally.
- Close week 5 with an anointing and prayer service from James 5:14-16.

Count It All Joy

Big idea

Trials are not interruptions of the Christian life; they are the workshop where patience is made.

Outline

1. The purpose of trial (v. 2-4)
2. Wisdom for the wavering (v. 5-8)
3. The anatomy of temptation (v. 13-15)

Key verse

Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:2-3 (KJV)

Application question

What trial are you asking God to remove that He may be using to build something?

Sermon notes

Doers of the Word

Big idea

A hearer who never acts is a man staring into a mirror and forgetting his own face.

Outline

1. Swift to hear, slow to speak (v. 19-21)
2. The mirror test (v. 22-25)
3. Respect of persons condemned (2:1-9)

Key verse

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James 1:22 (KJV)

Application question

What is one thing you already know God has asked of you and have not done?

Sermon notes

The Tongue

Big idea

The smallest member sets the course of a whole life — and a whole congregation.

Outline

1. The bit, the helm, the fire (v. 3-6)
2. Blessing and cursing from one mouth (v. 9-12)
3. Wisdom from above (v. 13-18)

Key verse

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

James 3:5 (KJV)

Application question

Whose reputation have you damaged in the last month, even mildly?

Sermon notes

Friendship with the World

Big idea

Most conflict between Christians is not a disagreement; it is a desire that has hardened into a demand.

Outline

1. Where wars come from (v. 1-3)
2. Draw nigh to God (v. 7-10)
3. If the Lord will (v. 13-17)

Key verse

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

James 4:8 (KJV)

Application question

What are you demanding from God or from someone else?

Sermon notes

The Prayer of Faith

Big idea

The letter of works ends on its knees — because faith that works is faith that prays.

Outline

1. Patience unto the coming of the Lord (v. 7-11)
2. Prayer over the sick (v. 13-16)
3. Turning back the wanderer (v. 19-20)

Key verse

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:16 (KJV)

Application question

Who has drifted from the church that you could call this week?

Sermon notes

Verse set — the whole series at a glance

Every key verse in this series, King James Version. Print this page for the worship team, the bulletin, or a memory-verse card.

Week 1 — Count It All Joy

Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:2-3 (KJV)

Week 2 — Doers of the Word

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James 1:22 (KJV)

Week 3 — The Tongue

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

James 3:5 (KJV)

Week 4 — Friendship with the World

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

James 4:8 (KJV)

Week 5 — The Prayer of Faith

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

James 5:16 (KJV)

Frequently asked questions

Is this series free?

Yes — free to preach, adapt, and reprint for your congregation.

Does James contradict Paul on faith and works?

No. Paul addresses how a sinner is justified before God; James addresses how a professing faith is evidenced before men. Both quote Genesis 15:6.

How many weeks can this stretch to?

Easily eight by splitting chapters 1, 2, and 5 into two Sundays each.

More free KJV preaching resources at biblesundays.com/for-pastors — sermon outlines, Sunday service readings, printables, and free Bible widgets for your church website.