The
CHURCH IN CHRIST

STUDY OF
THE EPISTLE OF



INTRODUCTION TO
THE
EPISTLE OF JAMES

When Was the Letter of James Written?

Most likely around A.D. 40–45. That means James was written very early, this is based on its Jewish tone, lack of reference to the Gentile mission, and the leadership of James the half brother of Jesus in Jerusalem.... It may possibly well be the first New Testament book written. This is only a few years after Jesus' resurrection, while the church was still young and mostly made up of Jewish believers.

Why Was the Epistle of James Written?

James writes as a pastor addressing Jewish Christians facing trials, poverty, internal conflict, and spiritual drift. His purpose is to call them back to a whole, undivided faith—a faith that is not merely professed but practised. Key reasons for writing include:

1/ To encourage perseverance under trials.
2/ To confront worldly living and moral compromise among believers.
3/ To correct favouritism being shown toward the wealthy and the neglect of the poor.
4/ To warn against destructive speech and community division.
5/ To insist that genuine faith produces works, not as a contradiction to what Paul would later write, but as evidence of true conversion.
6/ To call the church to prayer, humility, and mutual care. to produce mature, consistent, obedient disciples. If one truly believes in Jesus, it should be evident by the way one lives.

To Whom Was the Letter Written?

James addresses his letter to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" (1:1) meaning... to Jewish Christians living outside Palestine, scattered throughout the Mediterranean world.
These were:

1/ Predominantly Jewish believers,
2/ Scattered across different countries
3/ Experiencing poverty, persecution, and social tension.

The letter functions as a general epistle, intended for wide circulation among these scattered house churches.

Basic Breakdown of the Epistle of James

1/ **Trials and Hard Times** (James 1)
Life is hard; but God uses hard times to grow us. Ask Him for wisdom. Don't blame God for temptation.

2/ **Don't Just Hear the Word... Do It** (James 1)
Real faith listens to God and obeys Him. Take care of people in need. Keep your life clean from the world.

3/ **No Favouritism** (James 2)
Don't treat rich people better than poor people. Love everyone the same.

4/ **Faith Must Show Itself in Actions** (James 2)
Saying "I believe" is not enough. Real faith produces real obedience.

5/ **Watch Your Mouth** (James 3)
The tongue is powerful. It can bless or destroy. Use your words wisely.

6/ **True Wisdom vs. Worldly Living** (James 3–4)
God's wisdom is gentle, peaceful, and pure. Worldly desires cause fights and division. Be humble.

7/ **Warnings to the Rich** (James 4–5)
Don't boast about tomorrow. Don't use wealth to hurt others. God sees everything.

8/ **Prayer and Caring for One Another** (James 5)
Pray when you're suffering. Pray when you're happy. Pray when you're sick. Confess sins to one another. Help restore those who wander from the truth.

Chapter 1:1-8

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Chapter 1:1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:
Greetings.

James wrote his epistle before Peter entered Cornelius's house. At that time, Gentile inclusion had not yet occurred, and James had no reason to imagine Gentiles becoming part of the church. His letter reflects a world in which the church was entirely Jewish.

1:1... a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, Here are the humble opening words of a man who, like his brother Jude, does not claim the title apostle — even though both certainly held apostolic authority. Why does James refrain from using the title? Some suggest it reflects his earlier scepticism during Jesus' earthly ministry. The Gospels record that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him at first, even thinking He was out of His mind, see Mark 3:21.

Yet after the resurrection, James emerged as a pillar of the Jerusalem church; a man of prayer, authority, and doctrinal weight. He functioned less like a travelling apostle (as Paul did) and more like a foundational leader who anchored the early church. In his writing, he deliberately defers all honour to Christ, identifying himself simply as a willing servant.

It must be noted, however, that only an apostle could deliver binding doctrine. Luke wrote history, but he did not introduce new doctrine. James and Jude did; and they did so from the posture of servants rather than self- promoting leaders.

1:1... Greetings. James uses just but one word greetings which comes from the Greek word 'chairein' meaning 'be glad' and he uses it cleverly as a pivot, because in the very next verse he tells them to 'count it all joy.' No long introduction, no personal warm-up; just... greetings

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

Some may read those words and think 'you have to be kidding'

1:2 My brethren James immediately places himself on the same level as those he is writing to. He calls them brothers and sisters… family. There is no distance, no offered pecking order. He writes as one who stands in the crowd, not as an appointed head above and over them.

1:2… count it all joy when you fall into various trials When James speaks of various trials, he means exactly that. Believers will face many kinds of hardships. We are still in this world and therefore subject to its pains and pressures.

James is not talking about sinful desires here. He is talking about 'the external pressures of life' that test faith. It may be poverty, sickness, loss, persecution, or any circumstance that weighs heavily on one's soul and from that pressure suffering arises, which can lead to feelings of being treated unfairly.

However, trials often create conditions where sinful desires may rise later if one's faith is not mature or genuine. Trials test your faith; temptation tests your desires, think about that. Both reveal what is inside you, but they are not the same thing.

Trials reveal whether your faith is genuine; whether you will cling to God when life hurts, or whether you will let go and fall away. Trials do not create faith, but they uncover the power of it. Paul writes in Philippians 4:11 I have learnt to be content in all situations. Contentment under trials test is the mature fruit of the same faith James describes, a faith that remains steady under pressure and refuses to be shaken by the given circumstances.

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Here comes the reason for the various trials.

1:3 knowing James tells us that we know these things. The Lord has not left His people uninformed or unprepared. We have the Holy Spirit, and He Himself teaches us how trials work. Through Scripture, through the examples of those who have gone before us, and through His inner prompting, the Spirit has already shown us that trials test faith and produce endurance. We are not

guessing; we are instructed. This means the believer should recognise the purpose of trials. We know that God uses hardship to strengthen faith. We know He uses pressure to produce endurance. We know He uses difficulty to shape maturity. James is not presenting a new idea; he is reminding us of what the Spirit has already made clear. The believer is not meant to be surprised by hardship, nor confused by it, but to understand it as part of God's refining work.

1:3... that the testing of your faith produces patience. Such is what comes from a tested faith: patience. How and why? Because faith grows stronger when it is forced to hold on. Hardship pushes the believer eventually toward God. Pressure drives the believer to seek God; sometimes in spoken prayer, sometimes in quiet hope, sometimes by turning to His Word. All react differently, but in the end the trials teach us to lean into Him in whatever way our faith expresses itself. Endurance cannot be learned in comfort; it is formed only when faith is stretched. Trials do not destroy faith; they refine it, strengthen it, and prove it. Patience is the fruit of a faith that refuses to quit.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

This is not an over night completion.

1:4 But let patience have its perfect work The word let shows that patience must be allowed to do its work; it is a process, not a moment. The perfect work means the work must be finished; brought to maturity. The Father desires the believer to climb to the pinnacle height of Christ likeness, and endurance is the path that leads there. This can seem like a lifetime, and in many ways it is.

1:4… that you may be perfect and complete Grace is often recognised after the event; praise is easily given in the triumph of completion, and rightly so. But true faith will allow a believer to praise even while walking through those hard moments. Remember, James is not speaking here about going through a moment of sin, but about a trial. He is stating that we are not to allow worldly trials to control us or to create an act of sin from within us. The goal is to reach the height of Christ-likeness, where the believer desires God rather than the world. To be perfect and complete does not mean sinless perfection in this life, but spiritual maturity regarding what ever it is one is going through... a believer whose faith has been strengthened, refined, and stabilised through endurance.

1:4… lacking nothing Allow me to forward a question: What does lacking nothing refer to? It refers to godliness; the fullness of spiritual maturity. Jesus said, "Ask whatever you want and you shall receive it," and for the mature believer, what they want is the Father Himself. When endurance has done its work, the believer lacks nothing essential for godly living. Their desires have been shaped, their faith strengthened, their character refined, and their heart aligned with God. To lack nothing is to have everything needed to walk in Christ-likeness.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

I am yet to meet anyone that has not at sometime needed to ask for this!

1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, Socrates who was a philosopher and believer, said, "I know one thing, and that is that I know nothing." Even outside the faith, people recognise their limits such as Charles Darwin, an agnostic, declared that "people with little understanding are often more confident than those who truly know." Two men with different beliefs, yet both recognised the reality James speaks of here.

1:5… let him ask of God The Lord delights in this. He is the everlasting One who lacks nothing. He pours generously over the one who asks, for such is loving grace. A humble heart asks and receives. Wisdom is not earned; it is given. And God gives it gladly.

1:5… who gives to all liberally and without reproach We need not fear the Lord when we ask for wisdom. We all fall. We all need His help. We all need humility. And He gives what is needed to get us through the issue. He gives the strength to look toward Him and believe. God is not like man... He does not scold, mock, or shame His children for coming up short. And when we recognise

that we need His wisdom, the Holy Spirit; through the righteousness of Christ, gives us the holiness and confidence to approach the throne, and He teaches us to come with joy.

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.
The word we really need to zero in on is faith

1:6 But let him ask in faith, This is often misunderstood and can cause a believer much anguish. James is not telling us to have faith that the problem will vanish or that we can rebuke and cast it away from us. The faith James speaks of is a faith that is not divided, a faith that turns fully toward Christ and away from the pull, lure, and weight of the world. It is not faith to overcome the issue, but faith that... because Christ has overcome the world; the pull, lure, and weight of worldly desire was and is broken by believing in who He is and what He has done. This is the faith James speaks of: a faith that is not divided, a faith that is submissive fully toward God, a faith that allows the cares of this world to become secondary to Christ.

1:6... with no doubting, We ask for wisdom by a faith that is locked into Christ; by believing in who He is and what He has done. This cannot rest between two masters. So what is it that one doubts? As we have studied, the Greek word for doubting 'diakrinomenos' means 'an internal wavering.' It describes someone, often unintentionally, trying to hold onto both God's direction and worldly solutions at the same time. But one cannot drink fresh water from the ocean. A divided heart cannot receive wisdom, because it is pulled in two directions at once. I want to make this clear, James is not describing a rebellious heart but one that needs immediate attention.
This describes the earlier stage; the root cause, the very seed... of a divided loyalty. If this inner conflict is never corrected, it can grow into the full spiritual complacency we read about in the Book of Revelation 'a lukewarm heart'.

1:6... for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. There is no anchor. The divided heart is pushed by whatever wind blows next: fear, desire, worldly thinking, or the given circumstances. This is a believer torn between God's way and the world's way, they cannot hold a steady course, just as a wave cannot resist the wind.

James 1:7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;
The problem is not God's willingness, but the inner conflict of the person asking. Our Lord is generous beyond belief (v.5); He is more than willing to aid the believer (v.5); He gives without reproach (v.5). The issue is not God... it is the divided heart (v.6–8). Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. This man does not receive because his heart is not fully resting in who Christ is and what He has done. His divided loyalty keeps him from embracing the Gospel's full assurance, and therefore he cannot take hold of the wisdom God freely gives, which is trusting in His Son and what He has done. The Father Himself warned, "This is My beloved Son… listen to Him." The divided man cannot receive because he is not fully listening Christ, he does not listen as he should because he does not trust. Such cannot see the Father, for Christ alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

James 1:8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
And thus ends this portion of James summary on he who needs wisdom!

1:8 he is a double-minded man, We have covered this well in the previous verses, and we should I hope all understand why this person is in such a condition. His desire for God is genuine, but he lacks mountain-moving faith; that is a wholehearted trust that stands firmly in Christ without divided loyalty. He still clings to certain earthly desires and has not yet fully entrusted himself to Christ's way. This person could well have been walking in this condition for some time, allowing divided loyalty to become a settled pattern rather than a passing struggle. This is a dangerous position to be in, because long-term instability leaves the believer spiritually vulnerable and unable to receive the wisdom God freely gives.

1:8... unstable in all his ways. At this point I wish to introduce the man who said to Jesus, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (see Mark 9:24). He was not double-minded. He wanted to believe and declared his belief. His faith was weak, but it was not tinged with divided loyalty. If what has been spoken of reveals a truth in your own life, then become as this man; honest before God and asking for help, "Lord, I believe; but help my unbelief!"
The only way forward from this inner conflict is total honesty. This person needs wisdom added to their desire for God; therefore they must proclaim to the Father what is truly in their heart, and this must be done in the name of the Son. They must not lie, must not delay, must not deny the truth. The instability comes from the friction between a convicted conscience and an unyielding worldly desire.

Let us all desire one thing His truth... who He is and who we are...for such shall set us free.

Amen and amen

Chapter 1:9-16

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Before we move into the next section of James, let's briefly remind ourselves of what we learned in James 1:1–8, as 1:9 changes the focus slightly.
Trials are not obstacles but opportunities, such produces endurance and maturity in us. We are to ask Him for wisdom, especially in seasons of pressure. But a double-minded man should not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord. Such is a dangerous place to rest one's faith.

James 1:9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,
Godly glory does not look like what man thinks!

1:9 Let the lowly The word lowly does not mean in the spiritual sense but the physical. How is it that there are poor believers in Christ? Jesus said "The poor you will always have with you" Events happen that are out of man's control, such can cause poverty; Natural disasters, unjust taxes, wars and of course there those things man can control such as laziness, the pursuit of self pleasure etc., these can cause in the long run poverty.

1:9... brother This is a brother in the Lord. He is family, a child of God! James is not talking about the poor in general, but a believer.

1:9... glory in his exaltation, The believer who lacks material wealth is nevertheless spiritually wealthy in Christ; not because he is physically poor, but because his faith is rightly placed in Christ and in what Christ has accomplished. His earthly poverty does not decrease his heavenly standing. Just as all believers must recognise the truth of Christ and seat that truth within their lives, so the poor believer must glory in what God has done for him in Christ, not in what he lacks in the world.
What then is this exaltation? It has nothing to do with being physically poor or physically rich. The exaltation spoken of here is faith in Christ and in His finished work. It is understanding who He is and who we are in Him, for through His grand work we have been exalted. Such a believer desires more of Christ and less of this world.

James 1:10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.
This is speaking of a wealthy believer. The rich brother must glory in his humiliation, not because he is spiritually low, but because his earthly wealth is temporary and cannot elevate his standing before God.

1:10... because as a flower of the field he will pass away. Here is the reason for his humiliation: wealth offers no one entry into heaven. Money cannot buy true love, money cannot change the inner soul of a man, and money is powerless in the Kingdom of God to achieve anything outside of the will of God. Notice that James does not say the rich believer fades; the flower does, just as his money does. His riches will wither, his status will not elevate him before God, and his wealth brings temptations unique to prosperity. Yet his standing in Christ remains, as long as he does as the poor man must... placing his faith in Christ and Christ alone.
We shall gain a greater understanding as we look into verse 12. Both the rich and the poor face temptations unique to their condition, and both must endure them. If they do, they will be approved of God and receive the crown of life.

James 1:11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.
In truth nothing can and shall stand that is outside of Christ.

1:11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. This is the natural being spoken of for such gives us a perfect picture of what James is meaning. Grass grows green and strong, the flower that comes from it however only lasts a short time and along with the quick growing flower the grass itself fades away.

1:11... So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. is a two-fold picture; the man and his wealth, two separate identities. Money is not evil, but it can be used for evil. The rich believer is tested by his prosperity: will he lean toward self-sufficiency, pride, worldly security, and the temptation to trust in temporal wealth rather than in the eternal God? Will he use his blessings to bless others? Wealth can serve good or evil, just as poverty can.
Unlike the grass, the rich believer can choose to grow strong in the Vine (see John 15:1–2) to receive all he should receive from the Pruner. The grass simply grows and dies; it has no will, no choice, no faith. But the believer does. He can abide, he can submit, he can endure, he can be pruned, and he can bear fruit. The fading of wealth is inevitable, but the fading of the believer is not. His life is sustained by Christ, not by his possessions.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
This moves all believers together, poor, rich, Jew and Gentile (although at the writing of this James did not know the truth regarding Gentile inclusion)
1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; we move from trials to temptations, and these appear to be anything that would try and change and pervert the truth given to us through the Spirit regarding Jesus Christ. I want to name what I believe to be one of the greatest temptations the church faces today... the feeling of one has arrived, not needed to seek God for a continual inner heart change, not seeing the real enemy... self! Howbeit this is speaking about a person that does understand what the temptation is that is in their life... this is talking about the rich and the poor Jew and the Greek that are seeking the Lord with the correct hearts desire! This person is blessed as he has received the wisdom James spoke of earlier to navigate the presenting issues.
1:12... for when he has been approved, This speaks of something still to come, yet at the same time such a person is receiving an inner confidence in that which God Started He shall finish.
1:12... he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Lets start at the end of these words... to those who love Him! The ones that love the Lord are the ones that have sought his wisdom with an honest and desiring heart... They have recognised "Oh retched man that I am who will save me from this body of sin; praise God! Jesus Christ." Even after the salvation act Paul understood it was and is an on going act of sanctification. And we finish on the first part of this verse... he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised. There are indeed many crowns 'the incorruptible crown,' 'the crown of righteousness,' 'crown of glory,' and here the 'crown of life' It is this crown that the Smyrna church is encouraged to stay strong even 'unto death' by the promise of the 'crown of life' and the Church at Philadelphia is told to 'hold fast what thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'

The crown of life belongs to those who endure temptation because they love Him. I want to end this verse with a word about two other crowns; not the crowns of reward, but the crowns found around the outside of the Table of Shewbread, illuminated by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Lampstand.
These crowns speak, of course, of the Father and the Son. The loaves of bread were placed in the middle of the table, kept within the crowns, surrounded and secured by them. This is the perfect picture of the church today: the believer kept in Christ, held within the divine protection and fellowship of the Father and the Son, and illuminated by the Spirit.

Just as the consecrated bread was never outside the crowns, so the born again believer must never live outside Christ. The crown of life is promised to those who endure temptation because they love Him; and that love is expressed by remaining within the place God has appointed, abiding in Christ, and drawing life from Him alone.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

Let us not insult the Spirit of Grace!

1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, This is not guesswork or a possible outcome; it is a guarantee. The word when makes that abundantly clear. Every believer will face temptation. This brings us back to the verses we looked at regarding trials: James tells us "to count it all joy when you fall into various trials." Remember, trials are **not** temptations. Believers will face many kinds of hardships as we are still in this world, but we are not to allow those hardships to progress into acts of sin. Being tempted during trials is a very real reality.

I want to make this absolutely clear; with no room for error. Correct faith will dismiss temptation. How? By wanting what the Spirit desires. Correct faith asks, "Father, is this pleasing to You, what I am about to do, the way that I am thinking?" This is not about whether we have faith, but about where we aim it. Yet we must remember that the testing of our faith produces patience, and patience teaches us to be submissive to God (see James 4:7). Trials, when used as God desires, strengthen one's faith; but temptation seeks to corrupt it and ultimately destroy it.

1:13..."I am tempted by God"; Such words I would expect to come from a very young (immature) believer who has not yet had the right teaching, or is needing time to absorb the vital blessed truth. But if this comes from a mature believer it is both an insult to God and a snare to that believer. Trials as far as I can see, have always been a reality on earth... Adam and Eve were perfect yet a trial came their way... they were tempted through it to sin... thus; they fell! The Father did not bring that temptation onto them, in fact, He later when looking for them "where are you?" Jesus likewise had such come to Him, yet He remained sinless! As above the Father would not do this to His Son! It is a choice...

1:13... for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. God is untouched by evil; His nature has no place for it. He is Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit. Evil cannot enter His presence, influence His being, or shape His actions. Temptation is entirely foreign to who He is.

Isaiah declares that God knows the end from the beginning and that His purposes always stand (Isaiah 46:10). He announces what will happen before it comes to pass (read Isaiah 42:9). And the New Testament affirms that grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9). God's eternal plan comes to us through and in the power of His grace, holiness, and salvation truth... Christ Jesus; never temptation!

So I leave this verse with a question: God certainly knows all things, including the heart, and action that every person born will think and do... Why then would He tempt them? The answer is found in our understanding of His nature.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Lured... Enticement... Influenced by falsehood

1:14 But each one is tempted Every believer will face temptation. Trials reveal the condition of our faith, and when faith is not aimed at Christ, the desires of the flesh rise to the surface. It is at this point that temptation becomes visible. Trials do not cause temptation, but they expose the desires that temptation can seize upon. This is why James has already told us to ask God for wisdom; not to remove the temptation, but to strengthen our love for Christ so that temptation loses its appeal.

1:14... when he is drawn away James does not say '**if** he is drawn away,' but 'when.' This describes the believer whose mind is not set on things above; the double-minded person. When desire is left unchecked and Gods wisdom is not sought being drawn away is inevitable. The pull comes from within, not from the trial itself.

1:14... by his own desires and enticed. This is not speaking about a person who merely acknowledges the Christian message; this points to a believer whose heart is divided; wanting Christ, yet also wanting the world's blessing. Because the inner life is not fully surrendered to the Spirit of Holiness, their desires rise up when exposed by the trial, drawing them away, enticing them, and finally seducing them. Jesus warned of the danger of divided loyalty when He spoke of those who cry, "Lord, Lord," yet do not truly do the Father's will (see Matthew 7:21–23).

I believe this is so important to understand; James is not describing an obvious fall into outward sin. This is not someone feeling sorry for themselves and have done a silly act of sin, no... this is far from that, the danger here is far more subtle. A believer with a divided heart will become closed off within their own religious ideas. Walking according to their own desires, they will begin to teach error, and in their enticement will draw other believers toward their own views. This is the seduction James warns of. The word we live by comes from above; it is not a word that man can wield according to his own desires. As we shall read in verse 17.

James 1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Here is the fruit that comes from a bramble bush

1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, The word then tells us this outcome is inevitable. If desire is left unchecked, sin will have its way. For when desire has conceived means it has developed roots in the heart, it rules the inner life. The believer is now set upon it; this is the moment where the divided heart became a captured heart.

1:15… it gives birth to sin; This marks the beginning of a massive downward spiral in the believer's life. Sin has now been allowed to rule. In this context, sin does not first appear as obvious outward immorality; rather, it manifests as a turning away from the doctrine of Christ. The believer begins to walk according to their own desires, and those desires shape their beliefs, their teaching, and their influence. They are no longer listening to the truth of Christ, they have bought into deception and falsehood.

1:15… and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Here is the final act. Sin grows. Sin develops its own pathway. It shuts out the words of truth, removes the influence of those who walk in truth, and opens the once-divided believer to the realm of spiritual death. I write this strongly because James intends it to sound horrid; and it is.

What does death mean here? Not the death of the flesh, but the death of spiritual vitality, the life that was being renewed by the Word. The inner life becomes barren, cold, and cut off from the power of truth.

Is there a pathway back for such a person? I fully believe so. But they must desire to walk it. Without repentance, they will hear on that day: "Depart from Me, you workers of inequity."

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

I am ending our study here this week... with James's warning, and on the Spirit's prompting for us all as His children, as believers.

Do not be deceived... Stay alert. Stay in the Spirit. And remember this: the Spirit **never leaves the fellowship of the saints**...such is unscriptural!

Many today believe they can walk the Christian life alone, apart from the gathered body, apart from the shared life of believers. James warns us against deception... and that is a big part of such deception.

The divided heart drifts when it is isolated. The Spirit strengthens us in fellowship, not in solitude.

Do not think you can do this all alone.

We will begin with this verse next week and dig much deeper into its meaning and its warning.

God bless you all.

Chapter 1:16-20

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
This is not a suggestion but a command

1:16 Do not be deceived, Do not be deceived: God is not the author of our failings. Trials will come, and temptation rises when we try to overcome those trials in our own strength. But the temptation itself does not come from God. James warns us not to misjudge the character of God. He is not the source of evil, nor does He send anything that leads us toward sin.
And let us add this: we are not to blame satan, mankind, the world, or anything under the heavens for allowing a trial to tempt us beyond what we can bear. Adam did this; he blamed God for his own failure. James calls us to look honestly at where the fault lies. This is not about satan, the world, or mankind. This is about who we are as individual believers. We are the authors of our own failings when desire is allowed to rise unchecked. Jesus walked through trials without sin; who then shall we blame — self, God, or others?
We ended last week's study speaking about what can happen when a believer allows his or her heart to grow hard, when deception does its work and robs the believer of understanding. James now turns our attention upward, away from the inner deception of desire, and toward the goodness of God. He is preparing us to see that every good and perfect gift comes from above, from a God who is unchanging in His goodness.

1:16...my beloved brethren. James is reassuring the readers of their identity and his love for them: This states "I am warning you strongly, but I am not condemning you, I am bringing correction to you, for you are the beloved of Christ, I am confronting the deceptions as we are all brethren."

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.
Here is a breath of fresh air!

1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, The word gift appears twice here, and some commentators hold slightly different views on why James repeats it. I have gone with what seems right to me.
Genesis tells us that when God created the world, He looked and said, "It is good." That sets the pattern for everything that comes from Him. Whatever God gives is good because He Himself is good.
So the word good describes what is beneficial, helpful, and profitable to the believer, just as God's creation was beneficial and complete in its purpose. The word perfect means flawless, lacking nothing, complete in every way.
James is telling us that every blessing that truly helps us, and every blessing that is complete and lacking nothing, comes from above. Its source is God, not man.

1:17…and comes down from the Father of lights, This is a beautiful expression. The Father of lights can be understood as a picture pointing to God as the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, the One who brought physical light into existence and who gives spiritual light to His people.
As the ultimate source of all light, there is no darkness in Him at all. No evil. No shifting motives. No hidden shadows.
And who is the One who came down from heaven to reveal the Father? None other than the Son... Jesus Christ. Why did He come down? To make the Father known, to redeem mankind, and to show us the goodness of God in human flesh. The One who came down bears witness of the Father who gives every good and perfect gift.

1:17…with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. This separates the Holy Father from everything He has created. The natural universe is full of change, the sun rises and sets, the moon also does the same, shadows lengthen and shrink, light shifts and moves. Creation is always changing. But God is unchanging, there is no variation in Him, no shifting shadows and no

alteration in His character, His love, or His goodness. He is steadfast... He is reliable... He is eternally consistent.
The God who gives good and perfect gifts does so because His nature is good and perfect; and His nature never changes.

James 1:18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we would be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.
James now shows us the greatest gift of all, the new birth.
1:18 Of His own will Our salvation did not begin with us. It began with God. James says plainly that it was God's will that brought us into new life. He chose to save us. He desired to redeem us. He acted first. This is the goodness of God in action. Everyone born of the womb has this privilege, but not all except it.
1:18… He brought us forth This speaks of our spiritual birth. Just as a child is brought forth into the world, God has brought us forth into spiritual life. We were dead in sin, but He made us alive. We did not bring ourselves forth; God did it.
1:18… by the word of truth God uses His word to bring life. The gospel is the 'word of truth' driven by the Holy Spirit and through hearing and believing the word, God brings us into His family. This is how the new birth happens — through the truth of Christ.
1:18 that we would be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. James states that God brought us forth so that we would be a kind of first-fruits. To understand this, we need to know what first-fruits meant in Scripture. The day after the Sabbath the people were to offer to God their first-fruits, according to Leviticus 23. This was the very first portion of the harvest; the first sheaf brought to the Lord as a sign that the whole harvest belonged to God, the first part was dedicated to Him, and more was coming. First-fruits also applied to people. God called Israel's firstborn sons and the firstborn of animals His own. The firstborn were set apart, dedicated, and represented the rest of the family or flock. So in Scripture, first-fruits always means: the first part, the beginning, the portion dedicated to God, and the guarantee of more to come. This timing becomes important when we look at Christ's resurrection.
The Jewish timeline is not the same as ours; a day is from sundown to sundown. Their day begins at sundown, not sunrise.
So: Friday sundown to Saturday sundown is the Sabbath, and Saturday sundown to Sunday sundown is the first day of the week. This means that when the Sabbath ended at Saturday sundown, the next day... Sunday; had already begun.
Jesus died Friday afternoon and was buried before sundown. He remained in the tomb throughout the Sabbath. When the Sabbath ended at Saturday sundown, the first day of the week began immediately. Sometime after Sabbath ended; during the early part of the first day, Jesus rose from the dead. By early Sunday morning, the tomb was already empty. Jesus rose on the first day of the week, offering Himself as the perfect first fruits to God.

James now applies this first-fruits imagery to us. Just as Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection, James says we are the first-fruits of God's new creation. God brought us forth into new life, by His own will, through the word of truth, so that we would be the first part of His redeemed creation. Christ rose from physical death; we rise from spiritual death. Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection harvest; we are the first-fruits of redeemed humanity. James is showing that the same God who raised Christ from the dead is the God who brings us forth into new life. We are the beginning of what God is doing in the world — the first evidence of His new creation. Amen!

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
Instead of blaming God under our trials, let us learn by the greatest of teachers.
1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, James begins again with my beloved brethren. He never stops reminding them, and us, that we are all in this together, one for all and all for one! The

word wherefore is like a gentle smack on the hand. It carries the sense of, "You have known this," or even stronger, "Have you not known?" And of course they as we have been shown the same truth. We have been brought forth by God into newness of life. We as they know God is the only source of good, the One who does not tempt any man. Therefore, since this is true, we should be ready to hear Him and obey.

1:19... let every man be swift to hear, The order here is deliberate. This speaks to us all as individuals in Christ. Let every man be swift to hear. It is your job, child of God, to make sure what you are listening to is holy, right, and true. You cannot lay blame on the words or sounds that come to your ears. Be swift to decide what is good, right, and uplifting for the soul. This demands a level of personal accountability in our walk with Christ. While many commentators focus on how we listen and such is important... I feel the greater drive here is what we allow our ears to hear. Thus the responsibility sits where it belongs: in the believer's own heart and mind.

From these seven words I have noted three points:

1/ Personal duty lays at the believer's feet.

2/ There is no room for blaming others.

3/ Active discernment by the believer is demanded.

This aligns perfectly with Paul's instruction in Philippians 4:8 to dwell only on what is true, noble, and pure. Amen!

1:19… slow to speak. James now gives us a powerful and convicting instruction: slow to speak. The temptation to let the tongue rule is with us indeed, however, this delay the believer should take is not merely biting our tongues; it is creating a deliberate space for the Holy Spirit to process what we have just heard. When we filter our thoughts through the Spirit of truth first, our response ceases to be a human reaction and becomes a divine instrument. We have the first two commands: swift to hear, slow to speak... and if these are done correctly, then the third naturally follows.

1:19... slow to wrath; I will not comment on this line here, as the next verse continues the same thought and gives us the fuller meaning.

James 1:20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

We in no way effect the righteousness of God.

1:20 for the wrath of man I feel we need to look at two words wrath and man! This is not the same as the Wrath of God, man's wrath is flawed and rather impulsive, usually coming from a reaction created thorough wounded pride, or personal offence which brings about lose of control. It quickly takes sin side and urns into malice, impatience, and a desire to be proved right, to punish or get revenge, which in the end only produces destructive results. We weld the wrong tools: Human anger tries to force a righteous outcome through human force, control, or harsh words. Which beings about a wrong focus: Commentaries point out that we cannot use a tool of the flesh (human wrath) to achieve a work of the Spirit (God's righteousness).

The second word man is self explaining! Humanity has never produced true righteousness or lasting peace. Every human attempt ultimately fails because the heart of man is fallen. The bible tells us for the heart of man (every person born of the flesh) is inherently evil.

1:20... does not produce the righteousness of God. This wording may seem unusual at first. To even imagine that any form of human anger; outside of God's own holy and corrective wrath... could reveal even the smallest portion of righteousness is impossible. Human wrath cannot produce holiness, cannot produce obedience, and cannot produce anything that reflects the character of God. Yes, it can force outward obedience or create temporary behaviour change, but it cannot touch or transform the heart. James is making this absolutely clear: man's anger does not and cannot accomplish God's righteousness.

What this tells me is that the Lord is not impressed with self-righteous anger, even when we try to use it to win someone over to the truth. This sort of human anger always carries the marks of the flesh; pride, offence, self-defence, and the desire to be proved right. It is reactive, unstable, and self-centred. God's righteousness is a work of the Spirit; man's wrath is a work of the flesh. One cannot

create the other. Scripture is consistent on this: “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”
I feel it important to also state that James is not saying a believer can never feel anger. There are times when anger is appropriate, Scripture shows this. What James is saying is that self-righteous human anger cannot produce, reveal, or bring about the blessed truth of God’s character. It cannot accomplish the righteousness of God.

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
We shall continue our next study from this verse... therefore...

May God bless you all, and keep you in His word and power. Amen!

Chapter 1:21-27

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.
We ended on this verse last study...

1:21… Therefore The word therefore connects everything James has written thus far. Gods children were and are are scattered abroad; trials are part of this world. Do not allow such trials to turn into sin, for you have a God who is willing to give you all the wisdom needed to see through such a time. And not if, but when you fall, do not blame the Lord, for He tempts no person. In such a moment do not allow anger to rule, for man's wrath does not bring about the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are a new creation; therefore…

1:21… lay aside The term lay aside speaks of dying to the inner desires, taking captive every thought (want-to-be action) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. The Greek word used here, 'apothemenoi' means to remove something as one would remove clothing. It is a deliberate stripping away of what does not belong to the believer.

1:21… all filthiness and overflow of wickedness. Here is the truth: if one allows the lust of the flesh to rule, it will overflow. Justification for evil acts becomes easy when unchecked by the Word. The Greek word 'perisseia' means to 'overflow/abundance' it implies a weed growing wildly out of bounds... something left unattended until it overtakes over the garden. Sin, when not resisted, spreads in such away.

1:21… and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. This goes beyond simply reading the Word of God. Many read the Word and do not change. We must receive it as it truly is... the blessed Holy Spirit working through the Word, changing the heart's desires of anyone willing to receive Him. This is not an overnight change, but a constant driving in the right direction. Sin becomes intolerable for such a believer.
The term implanted word comes from the Greek 'emphytos' such is not passive information; it is a living seed placed within the believer. It alters the believer's spiritual DNA. It grows, it transforms, and it produces the life of Christ within us.
Jeremiah 31:33 tells us God declares, "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people" Amen!

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
We just had the word therefore, now we have the word but.

1:22 But be doers of the word, The word therefore gathered up everything James has said so far. Now the word but introduces a necessary halt. It is as if James is saying, "stop and take hold of this. Do not stop at just receiving the Word… but go further." True faith never ends with hearing; it moves into obedience. The implanted Word must produce action. The implanted Word must produce action. And this action is always a turning towards God, a pushing into the blessed Holy Spirit for greater insight of Christ and what He has done. It is never an action driven by a believers will, desire or power.

1:22...and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. When one only hears and goes no further, the heart cannot desire what the Word intended. Hearing without obedience leaves the Word sitting on the surface of the mind, never entering the heart. It often turns into a form of self-righteous religious nonsense that promotes self-effort and outward performance. This is the deception James warns of... a form of spirituality built on listening, agreeing, and talking, but not on correct Spirit-enabled obedience. And James is about to illustrate this using the mirror effect.

James 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;
James is restating what he has already pressed in verse 22.

1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer… Those that will read this would naturally think of the Law of God, yet James presents it as the perfect law, the law of liberty. For his hearers, this word comes from two excepted truths...The oral gospel of Christ; the spoken message of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and teachings circulating among early believers, and the O.T. Scriptures; the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, the only formal Scriptures they possessed.
At this early stage, no doctrinal letters from Paul, John, Peter, or Jude were yet circulating. James is addressing believers whose entire spiritual diet was Christ's spoken gospel and the Scriptures of Israel.

1:23… he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror Every person who turns toward the Lord must look into this mirror. No one will have an excuse on the Day of Judgment. But this man misreads the reflection. He sees only the surface, his natural face and refuses to discern the deeper spiritual reality God is revealing. He has no intention of discovering the truth about his inner condition, the unholy things God is calling him to confront. His vision is worldly, dimmed, natural. He remains blind to the spiritual reality beneath the reflection.

James 1:24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.
He is but a mirror-gazer.

1:24 for he observes himself, His interest is not transformation but self-confirmation. He looks only long enough to see what he wants to see. Even if he began with a careful look, the moment he realises that obedience will require change, his gaze collapses into a brief glance. He cuts the connection short because the cost of obedience is too high.

1:24… goes away James uses the Greek 'apēlthen' meaning 'to depart, desert, withdraw.' He returns to the comfort of his old environment, the world where his actions are not measured by God's standards. He leaves the mirror because the mirror demands truth.

1:24... and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. Ignorance feels painless. The forgetting is instant, revealing his intent. He was never going to change, regardless of what the mirror showed him. He has heard the words of Jesus and possesses the OT Scriptures, yet he discards them for self-belief. This is self-deception in its purest form: hearing without obeying, seeing without submitting, knowing without yielding. Such ugliness is indeed visible in the mirror; but unless one is honest before God, it becomes nothing more than, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" A man sees only what he wants to see.

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.
The perfect law of liberty is when the reflection of the mirror one looks into throws back at them Christ and His righteousness.
It is at this point that I want to take a little biblical licence here... What I am about write I feel is very important in the understanding of the full context that shaped James's character. And I fell it gives us a picture of what Jesus was like as a Child through to His Manhood! Before His ministry.
This is a slight detour regarding the verse we are looking at but it fits perfectly...
James lived what he saw, and what he saw was Jesus. And because Scripture is almost silent about Jesus' early years, James becomes one of the only windows we have into Christ's life before His public ministry.
James life was being shaped by watching Jesus long before he understood who Jesus truly was. Scripture is almost silent about the early years of Christ's life, apart from one moment when He was twelve years old in the Temple, yet James provides for us a tellable story of what Christ was like before His public ministry began.
It is important to remember this is all before the cross. Before the resurrection opened James's eyes, as none of Jesus' brothers believed He was the Messiah, in fact they made fun of Him, as seen in John 7:3–5.
But after the Resurrection this would all change! James lived beside Jesus. He saw Him grow. He saw Him work. He saw Him pray. He saw Him respond to family, to neighbours, to hardship, to joy.

He saw righteousness lived out in the ordinary cycle of daily life. And though he did not understand that Jesus was the Messiah until after the resurrection, he could not escape the perfect example Jesus presented.
Once James understood who he had been living with over all those years, he would most certainly have looked back at how Jesus lived... and would without a doubt live as best as he could to the example left by the Only Begotten Son of God!
James's epistle is not just theory. One would have to think much would be from memory. It came from the shaping of the Truth, the reward of decades spent watching the Living Word who had become perfect flesh... walking and living within his home!
Therefore I believe fully that James's character gives us a glimpse into Jesus's early life before public ministry happened.
Hegesippus, the second-century Jewish-Christian historian, tells us that James was known as James the Righteous because of his strict devotion to God. He lived a strict religious life; no wine, no meat, no haircuts, and spent so many hours kneeling in prayer that his knees became skin hardened.
This devotion did not appear out of nowhere. It was shaped by the One he lived beside.
James's holiness was not merely Jewish discipline; it was Christ-shaped discipline. His prayer life was Christ-shaped. His devotion was Christ-shaped. His integrity was Christ-shaped.
James learnt to listen carefully and speak only when it was right to.
He learnt so much from the child Jesus!
He learnt to wait for things to happen, rather than to try and force them.
He learnt to pray... in his case, mainly for Israel; because he had watched Jesus pray.
He learnt endurance, because he had watched Jesus endure.
He learnt meekness, because he had watched Jesus be meek.
He learnt purity, because he had watched purity lived out daily.
He learnt mercy, because he had seen mercy embodied.
He learnt obedience, because he had seen obedience in every ordinary moment.
He learnt long-suffering, because he had watched Jesus bear the unbelief and provocation which came from both himself and his brothers mouths and taunts without anger or retaliation.
And he learnt how to resist the devil, because he had watched Jesus resist every temptation with perfect holiness.
His epistle carries the truths of Christ's earthly life before the cross.
Why this matters? This takes us back to the verse we are studying...

1:25... But he who looks James is describing the very thing he himself did, after he realised who his half brother was! James looked hard at Christ. James saw His perfect righteousness and he continued in that example. James lived a life promoted by the Word that was made flesh. And James is calling us through the Holy Spirit to do the same.
The term but he who looks comes from the Greek word 'parakupsas' and it means, 'to stoop down near by anything; to bend forward near, so as to look at anything more closely.'

1:25.. into the perfect law of liberty This is, in fact, the rule of Christian living. James is not presenting a new law, nor is he returning us to the old. He is showing us the law as it truly is when seen through Christ; perfect, liberating, and Spirit-fulfilled.
Christians are called to a higher standard of holiness than was generally understood under the law. Under the old dispensation, they were law-breakers; the law exposed sin but could not empower obedience. But under the new dispensation, believers become law-keepers; not by human effort, but by the indwelling Spirit who writes the law upon the heart.
The natural law of love takes the place of the letter of the law. The Spirit replaces external fixations with internal desire. The yoke of sin is broken, and the believer becomes free; free to obey, free to desire holiness, free to walk in righteousness by spontaneous instinct.
Thus the law is not made void. It is fully fulfilled. It teaches you that you are a sinner, in need of "the Saviour...daily"
This is why James uses the word liberty. He is not speaking of freedom from obedience, but the freedom to obey. The freedom that releases the believer from the dictatorship of sin, freedom from

the bondage of self-effort, freedom from the condemnation of the law; and freedom to walk in the righteousness of Christ. The freedom to say "Continue to change my heart O God."
The perfect law of liberty is the law seen through Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and embraced by the believer whose heart has been made new.

1:25... and continues in it Here is our part. We are to remain in the faith with active perseverance. To continue is not passive. It is the believer's ongoing commitment to stay in the light, to remain where Christ is reflected, and to keep himself in the environment where obedience is shaped and strengthened.

1:25... and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, This is a believer who takes the Word seriously. He lets it confront him, correct him, and shape him. His decisions, his speech, his conduct, and his relationships are directed by the truth.

1:25... this one will be blessed in what he does. This person is blessed not because he has heard, but because he has obeyed.

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
Thinking is not enough!

1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, James speaks of the person who does all the outward religious things very well... as James himself once did; but whose inner man has never been challenged or changed. When only the outer is evidenced, and the inner remains untouched, such religion is a false stand.

1:26… and does not bridle his tongue This person speaks much of their own effort, suffering, and religious activity. Self-praise, self-effort, self-importance. A tongue that boasts of its own devotion reveals a heart untouched by grace.

1:26… but deceives his own heart This is the outcome: a deceived heart. His religion is built on vanity; it is useless and unprofitable to himself and to others. All his outward works (and that is all they are) cannot help him, nor can they help anyone else. In fact, the tongue that speaks such folly tears down what should be lifted up... the truth, the church, and the witness of Christ.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.
The translation from the Greek for God and the Father is 'pa-ra tō theh-oh kai pa-tree'. It is best read as 'before God, who is the Father.' The Greek does use the word and, but here it does not mean two Persons. It is simply describing one Person...God; presenting also His title 'the Father.'

1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: 1/ pure... Speaks of acts done unto others, the outward compassion toward the vulnerable. 2/ undefiled... Speaks of an inward holiness before God, one who is unspotted by the world.
These are **not** two isolated acts, but the two concepts of one true religion flowing from a heart transformed by the Word; 1/ love toward others and 2/ holiness toward God.
And such religion is only possible through Jesus Christ. He alone places us before the Father. It is His blood, His sacrifice, His purity, and His undefiled virtue that produce these realities in us.

1:27... to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, James chooses these two examples because they were the most urgent and visible needs of his time. They serve as demonstrative pictures of how Pure and undefiled religion should be seen; practical mercy toward those who cannot repay, expressed in a world marked by suffering, pressure, and persecution. James, in fact has already unbundled so much more regarding what pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is, such as:
Doing the Word, not hearing only (1:22–24)
Continuing in the perfect law of liberty (1:25)
Bridling the tongue (1:26)
Rejecting empty outward religion (1:26)

And he will go on and continue to show what pure and undefiled religion is as we turn the pages of this Epistle, such as:
Rejecting partiality (2:1–9)
Faith shown by works (2:14–26)
Controlling the tongue (3:1–12)
Heavenly wisdom expressed outwardly (3:13–18)
Peaceable, gentle conduct (3:17) Patience in suffering (5:7–11)
Restoring the wandering brother (5:19–20)

1:27... and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. This is a believer who keeps themselves in Christ, resting in His truth. Inwardly holiness before God is not about perfection but the understanding that we need Jesus, that He alone is holy and perfect. James's call to keep oneself unspotted from the world flows directly from the mirror passage. The Word reveals the stains, Christ cleanses them, and the believer continues in the truth. Undefiled religion is not perfection, but a life that refuses to forget what the mirror shows and continually turns to Christ for cleansing.

Let us all be honest before God and seek an even greater relationship with the Saviour. Amen.

Chapter 2:1-7 **THE**
EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.
He again repeats the truth... we are family.
2:1... do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, This tells us we can hold a divided faith! Often faith can be expressed in both Christ and self! The faith one holds in Jesus must pass into faith in Christ, what I mean by that is Jesus speaks of the Manhood: The name Jesus (Yeshua) refers to the historical, human figure of the Lord. Faith merely directed at Jesus as a human being treats Him only as a teacher, prophet, a man of high moral conduct. Christ stands for His spiritual title, it is not a last name; it presents the meaning... The Anointed One, the Messiah, the Chosen One. It promotes His official, which was and is a divinely appointed office... He is the Saviour, High Priest, and King, the living God!
2:1... the Lord of glory, It is important that we remember to whom James was writing, to the twelve tribes... hence a Jewish audience. They understood what the Shekinah was and is, the light that used to shine between the Cherubim, as the manifest symbol of the divine presence, but which had long been absent from, the Temple? James makes it clear to them that Jesus Christ is that Glory... the lord of glory!
2:1... with partiality. We must keep the Lord's own example at the centre of our study, for without a doubt James writes from what he observed over the lifetime of his half-Brother... that is, what he saw before Jesus left home for His public ministry. James witnessed how Jesus dealt with people throughout his early life: how Jesus never attacked the lost or the weak, nor the sincere; yet he also saw how the Lord corrected them and revealed painful truth when needed, because His correction always led them to safety, even when they did not feel like such. His rebukes were never destructive; they were, as James would later understand, the loving interventions of a Shepherd guarding His own, even before He became known as the Shepherd!
After the resurrection, James understood ever so more clearly why the Lord confronted the religious leaders of His day with severity, because partiality comes from man-made religion which exalts oneself status, crushing the weak, and killing true faith. This is in fact "Do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality" a commandment that forbids a divided faith... faith in Christ mixed with faith in self, or shaped by man-made religion destroys the soul. Partiality reveals a heart that professes trust in Christ while judging others by their appearance, status, or the benefit they may offer. Such judgment is the very thing Jesus exposed and rejected.
His glory leaves no room for favouritism, because glory belongs to Him alone. Therefore to show partiality is to divide Christ's glory to men, contradicting the nature of Christ and destroying the unity of His people. To show favouritism is to deny the glory of the One who humbled Himself for all. And because His Spirit now dwells within '**every**' believer, how can we show partiality when He clearly does not? Answer that oh religious soul!

James 2:2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,
James 2:3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"
Many Romans displayed their wealth through gold rings, which were legal markers of status and freedom. Their bright clothing also signalled high social rank, while filthy clothing revealed severe poverty. James sets these extremes side by side to expose whether the congregation judges by outward appearance rather than spiritual reality. The church must welcome all who enter... wealthy or poor; because the outside coverings never reveals the heart. When James describes someone saying, Sit here at my footstool he is exposing pride. Christ lowered Himself to wash His disciples' feet, but prideful leaders use their position to push others down to elevate themselves. Even when a host offers a seat near their feet, it may not be true honour but a calculated display of their own

status. James's picture is sharper than many realise: the one told, "Sit here at my footstool," is actually the wealthy man. This shows that the problem is not the visitor's wealth or poverty, but a level of pride within the believer's heart that even outshines the rich man's status. Even the wealthy, who are honoured everywhere else; are pushed down by a self-important believer who uses his position to elevate himself. This stands in stark contrast to Christ, who lowered Himself to wash His disciples' feet. Partiality is not merely favouring the rich over the poor; it is any behaviour that judges by outward appearance and uses people to boost one's own status.

James 2:4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?
This is a stark warning of sloppy church behaviour!

2:4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, James is speaking to believers who have begun treating one another in ways that Christ never intended. They have created different levels of importance inside the church; a kind of ranking system that Christ does not recognise. And this behaviour is not hidden; James's words show that it is visible and happening out in the open. His question reaches beyond a few individuals and speaks to the whole congregation. The church as a group is heading down a wrong path, judging people by outward things and, even worse, making quick assumptions about the heart. But the heart of a person is something only God truly sees. We are never to take that place. Our calling is to welcome, to love and receive people as Christ receives them, without trying to read what only God knows.

2:4... and become judges There is a right kind of judgment that helps others grow. It is right to notice when a believer is struggling and, in private, ask how we can support them. It is right to recognise sins that may be holding someone down and to talk lovingly with them, praying for them and, if permitted, with them. It is right to reject wrong doctrine and to correct it when needed. These kinds of judgments build people up and keep the church safe. Right judgment always protects, restores, guards, directs, and heals the struggling believer.

But it is not right to judge someone by comparing them to our own level of righteousness. I have met believers... and I was once one myself; who would pridefully say, "God told me…" and then deliver a harsh, condemning message as if it came from the Lord. When we judge others by outward things or by our own sense of spiritual importance, we step into a place that belongs only to the Holy Spirit. Only He knows the heart. Only He sees the depth of a person's struggle. Only He knows the way forward for them. We must not claim God's authority to speak judgments He has not given. For if we do, we are no longer helping, we are harming.

2:4... with evil thoughts? James is not speaking about small mistakes or harmless opinions. He is exposing the root of the wrong judgment. When believers judge others in a way that does not come from God, righteousness has already been pushed aside. Man's ideas, man's standards, and man's pride have taken the place of God's truth. James calls this evil because the human mind, left to itself, cannot produce the righteousness of God. It knows only what is natural to it; pride, assumption, comparison, and self-importance.

This kind of judgment does not lift anyone toward Christ; it pulls them away. It does not heal; it harms. Rather than building unity within the church it divides. Any judgment that does not point a believer toward Christ, toward truth, and toward restoration is not neutral... James says it is straight-out evil, because it comes from the wrong place in the heart and leads to the wrong outcome in the church.

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
Take note James cries! Literal poverty vs. spiritual poverty

2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: James again reminds them they are beloved, they are family, they should therefore listen! James is focusing on the social and economic injustice that has started to shape the church.

2:5... Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom
James uses the word 'ptōchos' here for the word poor. In classical Greek, this did not mean a working-class person who struggled to pay bills. That would be a penēs. A ptōchos was a beggar...

someone completely destitute, stripped of all resources, forced to bow or hide their face in shame while begging for scraps. James is making it clear: this person has nothing. When they walked into the church assembly, their absolute dependence on others was immediately obvious.
And yet the church was treating people poorly based purely on outward appearance. James is saying, "Look how upside-down your logic is. You are insulting the very people whom God has chosen to be rich in faith." God's choice overturns human thinking, our eyes see poverty whilst Gods sees faith.

2:5... which He promised to those who love Him? Scripture repeats this truth often. For example, Deuteronomy 7:9 says "...that God keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments..." But this love and obedience can only come through faith in Christ and what He has done. No one enters the kingdom by wealth, status, or outward appearance. One enters by faith, and that faith is in Christ Jesus and what He has done.
And through faith, the spiritually poor become spiritually rich. Christ changes the inner life... and that inner life begins to change the outward one. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:9 Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.
Our richness comes from Christ. Not money or human approval.
It comes from the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit. This richness is undeniable. It is transforming. It is visible. And it is something the church must embrace... because no one can deny the reality of a life changed by Christ.

James 2:6 But you have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?
James does not soften his words here.

2:6 But you have dishonoured the poor man. This is not a warning about what might happen. This is what has already happened in their assembly.
We need to understand the synagogue setting. The early believers gathered in a place called a synagogue... simply what we would call a church. But the seating was arranged according to status. The most prestigious seats (the protokathedria) were benches along the front wall, facing the congregation. These places were reserved for elders, wealthy patrons, and religious scholars. Everyone else; the lower-class attendees... stood at the back or sat on the floor, far from the place of honour.
Jesus Himself warned against this vanity in Matthew 23:6, speaking of those who "love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues." James sees the same danger creeping back in. The church was drifting back into old habits This is the danger of religion without Christ. The church was slipping back into the old systems they once knew... the very systems Christ freed them from. They were abandoning Christ's truth and embracing the old patterns of social ranking, right inside the worship space. This was a visual disgrace, seen by all. And James calls it what it is: a betrayal of the gospel.
By copying the class seating of the synagogue, they were setting themselves up as judges with evil motives — deciding who mattered and who didn't based on outward appearance.

2:6... Do not the rich oppress you James now draws a line in the sand. He is saying, "Think about what you are doing. The poor come to you clearly needing help, and you push them aside. Yet the wealthy, the very ones who have mistreated you... you honour."
James is reminding them of what they already know. The wealthy had lorded their power over believers, pressured them, ruled harshly, and treated them with pride. And yet the church was giving them the best seats.
They were honouring those who harm them and dishonouring those whom God honours. James goes further.

2:6... and drag you into the courts? This is force, humiliation, destruction. When the wealthy no longer get what they want, they do not simply pressure believers they they drag them into court to crush them. James is exposing the full contradiction:

1/ The poor come with nothing but need.

2/ The rich come with power and the ability to harm.
3/ And the church was honouring the wrong group.

James's point is simple "You are copying the world's way of valuing people. You are honouring those who harm you and humiliating those whom God has chosen."

It is important to understand that James is not condemning all wealthy people, nor is he claiming that every poor person is godly. Scripture shows that many wealthy believers sold their properties and gave generously to the poor. And Scripture also shows that not all poor people were honest or righteous. James is addressing a particular group of wealthy people who were using their power to mistreat believers, and a particular situation where the church was honouring the wrong people. His warning is about believers behaviour, rich or poor. This is not about bank accounts or ones social class, rather it is about the heart, about the truth.

James 2:7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

We need to apply all that we have read here!

2:7 Do they not blaspheme James now brings everything to its highest point. He asks a question that demands an honest answer. Who is James talking about? Not those outside the church. James has already shown that these people are inside the assembly:

1/ They are seated in the places of honour.
2/ They are treated with favour by the congregation.
3/ They rise up in pride.
4/ They oppress believers.
5/ They drag believers into court.

These are not outsiders attacking the church. These are insiders whose behaviour is attacking the name of Christ.

James is saying: "Look at what they are doing. Their mouths and their actions are blaspheming the Lord." Blasphemy here is not merely speaking evil. It is bringing shame to Christ's name through behaviour that contradicts His character.

2:7… that noble name by which you are called? What name? The name of the Lord Jesus Christ. To be "called" by His name means:

1/ You belong to Him.
2/ You represent Him.
3/ You carry His identity.
4/ You bear His reputation.

So when people inside the church behave in ways that contradict Christ; when they show favouritism, pride, oppression, and cruelty then they drag Christ's name through the courts, through the assembly, and through the community.

James is saying "Christ's name is being dishonoured right in the place where it should be exalted."

This is the deepest wound of the passage. Not just social injustice. Not just pride. Not just mistreatment of the poor but that the name of Christ is being blasphemed by the very people who claim to belong to Him.

This is not to say that everyone within the church was or even today is a true believer. James is writing to a mixed assembly. Some genuinely belonged to Christ; others were present in name only. When such people gain influence, Christ's name is easily dishonoured.

How is this possible? James has already hinted at the cause. The desire to be seen as important had begun to shape the assembly. Wrong teaching through weak leadership was being tolerated, which in turn allowed pride to rise.

We must therefore be constant in prayer for the Lord's directives. Only then can we discern truth from deception as we should. A church that stops seeking the Lord's guidance will inevitably follow human wisdom, pride, and influence. Discernment is not natural to us it is Holy Spirit given. Amen!

Chapter 2:8-26

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 2:8 If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well;

James could have written "If, however, you are fulfilling the law — '**as you imagine and profess you are doing'** — you do well."

I mention this because the believers James is addressing were fooling themselves. Their actions had already shown that they had fallen short of the truth they claimed to uphold. They professed to fulfil the royal law, but their treatment of the poor and their honouring of the proud proved otherwise. James is exposing the gap between their profession and their practice, reminding them that the royal law is not fulfilled by words or claims, but by the way one treats the neighbour God places before them. Note; the law of love must be according to Scripture! Because love must be defined by God, not by us. The believer... and especially the one who desires to teach; must not operate from a self-made definition of love. Scripture alone defines how we are to love one another, and only Scripture-governed love can prevent the contradictions James is exposing.

The irony is that their behaviour revealed they did not even understand how one should love self. True love for your neighbour flows from a heart that has died to the world and lives unto Christ. But their actions showed the opposite; they desired the glamour and height of the front seats, measuring people by status, appearance, and advantage. This reveals a deeper blindness: they did not understand the royal law because they did not understand the greatest law.

James uses the word βασιλικός being 'royal, kingly, belonging to the King' because this law comes from 'The King Himself' and reflects His heart. It is the law of His kingdom, the law that expresses His character, the law by which His people are known.

A person who still loves the world's values cannot truly love their neighbour, because they have not yet learned to love God rightly, to love self rightly, or to love as Christ loves. They have not learned how to see and live in the Spirit. The royal law is fulfilled only by those who walk in the Spirit, for it is the Spirit who teaches us to die to the world, to crucify self-interest, and to love with the love of the King Himself.

James 2:9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

James now speaks with unmistakable clarity: in that partiality is sin. It is not a small flaw, not a social misjudgment, not an unfortunate habit, it is a direct violation of God's law. And over the next verses James will show that all sin and fall short of God's holiness, and that no one is perfect 'outside of Christ'. I use the words 'outside of Christ' deliberately, because it is only by being in Him that we overcome the obstacles the law presents. Only in Christ do we learn the truth of man's fallen nature and the impossibility of self-righteousness.

This is where we must remember James's earlier image of the mirror. The law acts as a mirror to reveal our flaws, not a ladder we can climb to save ourselves. When we look honestly into the mirror of God's law, we see the truth about our condition, and that truth is meant to drive us to Christ, not to ourselves.

Partiality exposes the heart. It reveals that the person is still influenced by the world's values, still drawn to status, still measuring worth by appearance. Such a heart has not yet learned to love God rightly, to love self rightly, or to love neighbour rightly. It proves that the person is still living outside of Christ, where the law condemns rather than transforms.

The contrast between being 'outside of Christ' vs 'within Christ' reveals the danger of legalism. Those outside of Christ use the law to measure themselves, to justify themselves, or to elevate themselves. But James uses the strictness of the law to crush self-reliance, so that believers recognise their absolute, daily need for Jesus. The truth is the law convicts; Christ cleanses. The law exposes; Christ restores. The law declares us transgressors; Christ declares us righteous.

A person who still loves the world's values cannot truly love their neighbour, because they have not yet learned to love God rightly, to love self rightly, or to love as Christ loves. They have not learned

how to see and live in the Spirit. And only those who walk in the Spirit fulfil the royal law, for it is He who teaches us to die to the world, to crucify self-interest, and to love with the love of Christ.

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.
James 2:11 For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
James now brings home what he has been building toward: the law is a single, unified expression of God’s will, not a collection of isolated commands. Think about that!
To break one command is to break the unity of the whole. The person who stumbles at one point is guilty of all, not because they committed every sin, but because they have violated the authority of the One who gave the law.
This is where James’s argument becomes devastating for self-reliance. There is no such thing as partial obedience. There is no such thing as “mostly righteous.” There is no such thing as “I keep the important parts.” If one breaks any law, they stand guilty of breaking the entire law.
And this is precisely where mercy cannot be found in the law itself, because the law can only do one thing: declare guilt.
The law cannot soften its verdict, nor will it overlook a failure. One cannot negotiate with it, as the law cannot, will not bend, the law cannot and will not save anyone. Why? Because the law reflects the holiness of God... and holiness cannot be diluted. Mercy does not come through the law. Mercy comes through Christ, and Christ alone! James is deliberately driving the reader to that conclusion.
James’s wording is deliberate. By saying you have become a transgressor of the law, he shows that Breaking the law is not merely breaking a rule. It is an offence against the Father Himself. It is an assault on His holiness. James is not simply talking about the breaking of a command, He is talking about relational rebellion. This is why mercy cannot be found in the law, for the law can only rightly condemn. Praise God for Jesus, as He is the One that has restored what sin has offended... fellowship with the Father.

James 2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.
Voice and actions.

2:12 So speak and so do Be careful with what one says and does. There is no getting off the hook, we are responsible for our words and actions, what we speak over others must be practised in our own lives. Commentators call this ‘moral consistency’.

2:12... as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. These words present a very strong warning so speak and so do believers must learn to speak and act in accordance with the Lords teachings. But this verse presents the greatest reward for all sinners! We will **not** be judged under the old dispensation but under the new. We see here both the believers responsibility and the grace of Christ working together. We surrender and admit our sinfulness and He forgives!
This is a core theme of the entire Book of James. We are not saved **by** our good deeds, but we are saved **for** good deeds. Hence: James is not teaching salvation by works rather he is teaching salvation that produces works. Amen!

James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
Two separate things going on here.

2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Remember what we have read thus far? How the church was treating weaker or less able believers! We all want to be judged by the law of liberty but to receive this great privileged we need to be surrendered to the ways of the Spirit of Life. No mercy shall be given to those that give none as they are not living unto God! They are known by their fruit. Living under the law of liberty means our hearts have been changed by grace. We no longer obey God out of fear, but out of love. A heart truly transformed by God’s mercy cannot help but overflow with mercy toward weaker brothers and sisters.

2:13... Mercy triumphs over judgment. And here is the grand news, we are not perfect, sinless in the flesh but under the new dispensation we are not guilty purely by and through grace. This speaks of a heart that is being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus.

James 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?
What gain is there if faith produces nothing? Paul wrote to the Ephesians 2:8–9 saying For by grace you have been saved through faith... Faith therefore must reveal something, and it does grace! That which changes the inner person which produces compassion, mercy, and love, that which allows the inner working of the Spirit of Life to be seen in the outer.

James 2:15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
James 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?
James takes us back to what he exposed in verse 5: there were believers in the assembly who were completely needy; stripped of all resources, bowed in shame, begging for scraps. Their need was immediate and undeniable. James is making it clear: this person has nothing. Their absolute dependence on others was visible the moment they entered the gathering.
And yet some responded with empty spiritual words: "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled." Such a person may well believe their blessing is true and correct but they are words without mercy, offered blessings without a spiritual backbone, faith without works. James's question cuts through the hypocrisy: "What does it profit?" What good are empty words? What good is a faith that speaks but does not act?
This takes us to the deeper truth: the destitute believer is the test of genuine faith. They cannot repay, elevate, or benefit us. They expose whether our hearts are being transformed by grace or hardened by partiality. If we show partiality, we cannot help those in need.

James 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
As stated above in verse 14, true faith always has grace and grace changes the inner man, allowing the Spirit of life to work through him/her.

James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
James introduces an objector who tries to separate faith and works: "You have faith, and I have works." James rejects this. He also exposes that not all "belief" is the same. Some belief is nothing more than mental agreement... the kind of belief demons have. James challenges the objector: Show me your faith without works. It cannot be done. Faith is invisible; works make it visible. Faith is the root; works are the fruit. We are not saved by works, but the faith that saves always produces works.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!
Imagine going to a doctor who prescribes you a life-saving medication. You look at the bottle, you believe 100% that the chemical formula works, and you tell everyone the doctor is amazing; but you never actually take the pill. Do you have faith in the medicine? No. True faith is the act of swallowing the pill. James is telling us that real saving faith is more than just agreeing with a set of facts. Even the demons agree that God is real, and they tremble! Real faith moves your hands, your feet, your wallet, and your tongue. If your faith hasn't changed your life, it hasn't saved your life. Real faith always produces real change whether in a moment or over a lifetime.
We see this in the thief on the cross. Moments before, he was mocking Jesus. Then suddenly his heart changed. He confessed his guilt, defended Christ's innocence, called Him Lord, and asked for mercy. He had no time to live out years of obedience, but his faith still produced immediate repentance and a transformed heart. His faith was alive, not dead.
James's point stands: Real faith always moves the heart. Dead faith never does.

James 2:20 But do you want to know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?
James now speaks directly to the empty-minded man 'kenos' meaning 'hollow, void of truth'. His faith is like the foolish builder's house on sand: no foundation, no strength, unable to stand. It is also like the whitewashed tomb Jesus described... clean on the outside, but filled with dead men's bones within. Outward religion, inward death.
James asks, "Do you really want to know the truth?" Because the truth is this: a faith without works is dead; lifeless, powerless, void of saving reality. Nothing can come from a dead faith except decay and ruin. And tragically, one man's dead faith can harm many, for lovelessness always spreads. Thank God He can raise the dead, for without His grace this man's faith remains exactly what James calls it: empty and dead.

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?
James now turns to Abraham, the one every Jewish believer honoured as the father of faith. By asking, Was not Abraham our father…?" James makes the point personal. They all claimed Abraham; now James shows what Abraham actually did.

2:21... Justified by works does not mean Abraham earned salvation. It means his faith was proven genuine by what he did. And what was the work?

2:21...He offered Isaac his son on the altar That act revealed the reality of his faith. Abraham's obedience did not create his righteousness; it displayed it. His works were the visible evidence of the faith he already possessed.

James 2:22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?
James now explains what Abraham's obedience revealed. Faith and works were not competing; they were cooperating. Abraham's act of offering Isaac did not create his faith; it completed it, bringing his faith to full expression. His works made his faith visible.

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.
Abraham was declared righteous long before Isaac was placed on the altar. But his obedience fulfilled the Scripture by showing that his earlier faith was genuine. His works confirmed what God had already declared. This is why he was called the friend of God, his faith was real, living, and obedient. James delivers a sharp blow to his Jewish audience: You claim Abraham as your father, but you do not share Abraham's faith. You do not obey as he obeyed. You do not walk with God as he walked. Abraham knew God. He had a sure relationship with Him. But these Jewish believers did not.

James 2:24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.
James now states the conclusion: a person is justified, shown to be righteous, by works of faith, not by a faith that exists only in words. Works do not replace faith; they reveal faith. Works do not save; they demonstrate salvation. True faith is never alone.

James 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?
James now turns from Abraham...the honoured father of faith; to Rahab, a Gentile woman with a sinful past. This contrast is intentional. Abraham was the Jewish ideal; Rahab was everything they were tempted to despise. Yet both were justified by works, meaning their actions proved their faith to be genuine.
Rahab trusted God. Her faith was seen when she received the Israelite spies and protected them at the risk of her own life. Her works revealed the reality of her belief.
James uses Rahab precisely because she was a Gentile, and a harlot, yet she became famous in

Israel for her faith. This would strike the Jewish believers with a measure of shame. A Gentile woman, once far from God, displayed more faith, courage, and obedience than they were showing in their own assembly.
James is forcing them to consider the grace and mercy of God: If Rahab believed and obeyed, what excuse do you have? If Rahab's faith produced works, why does yours not?
Rahab stands as a living rebuke to empty religion and a living testimony to the power of true faith.

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
Here is James's final blow... the decisive conclusion to everything he has argued. When the spirit leaves the body, the man becomes what all flesh is without breath: a corpse. It may still look human, but it is lifeless, powerless, and unable to act. It is useful for nothing.
James says there is no difference with faith. A faith without works is a faith without life. It is shaped with what we think faith looks, and it still sounds like faith, but dead, the outcome: the inner man does not change.
If we were to illustrate it, such a person is like a shop mannequin: standing upright, dressed in religion, looking the part, but without breath, movement, or life. A lookalike — not the real thing.
And here is the reminder we must hold: the works James speaks of are not dramatic miracles such as saving the world, raising the dead, or healing multitudes. Rather, they are the quiet, Spirit-born evidences of an inner transformation. Works are the outward movements of a heart changed by grace — mercy, compassion, obedience, love.
Godly works are evidence of salvation, and because they flow from the Spirit's transforming work, they are rightly called the works of salvation — not as the cause of salvation, but as the living fruit that perfects faith.

Where the Spirit is, there is breath. Where breath is, there is life. Where life is, works follow.
May you walk daily in that place.

Chapter 3:1-18

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

This verse is the hinge that swings open the entire discussion on the tongue. James now looks towards those that want to be teachers.

3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, James continues to show we are family: let not many of you become teachers. We all in some way teach... by how we live, how we speak, how we act, and how we react. Scripture calls this our witness. Our behaviour communicates truth; our conduct instructs; our responses reveal what we believe. In this sense, every believer teaches daily, whether intentionally or not. But James is not speaking about witness here. He is speaking about deedaskahloy which means; teachers of the word, doctrinal sense. His warning is directed at those who desire to step into the position of doctrinal instruction, because such teachers will receive a stricter judgment. In this verse James does not discuss 'a calling or gifting' but the wider New Testament makes it clear that the role of teacher is one called of God Romans 12:6–7 "...teaching is a God-given gift" and Ephesians 4:11 "... a Christ-appointed role within the church" and again 1 Corinthians 12:28 "...a Spirit-established function in the body". Therefore, although James does not state it directly, it is appropriate to note that those who teach Scripture should do so as those gifted, shaped, and entrusted by God, this must never be taken casually or presumptuously.

3:1... knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. How a teacher lives outside of the pulpit is greatly important. Anyone can stand behind a pulpit and spit words from the mouth, but the called of God must practice the words they preach. What happens behind the closed doors of the home is where the test is. The word knowing means: this is a truth the community has already been taught. James is appealing to instructions already given: teachers will face a more serious judgment. He is not introducing a new doctrine; he is reminding them of what they already understand. A teacher's life outside the pulpit is indeed a part of the judgment, even though James does not explicitly state that; the logic of the verse certainly demands the private conduct, reactions, and habits of the teacher to be righteous and holy. If a teacher's private life contradicts his public teaching, he becomes an unqualified guide, one who has not yet understood the inner demands of being a teacher of Christ. James's caution reminds us that teaching is not merely a public role; it is a life of accountability before God.

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

We all stumble, but the true test is how we respond in that moment. Will we become double-minded, or will we promote a mature heart? Trials, as James has already pointed out, will still come. James has already taught us these truths; that every good gift comes from the Lord, that He is faithful to His word, and that He gives wisdom to those who ask. These earlier lessons now shape our understanding of James 3:2. Wisdom received from God enables the believer to exercise faith in the midst of testing, and this exercised faith produces the maturity James calls perfect. This is the man who does not stumble in word... the mature believer who is able to bridle the whole body. It is this maturity, shaped by trials, strengthened by patience, and guided by divine wisdom, that gives the believer power to control the tongue and the whole body. James is not saying that the man himself bridles his tongue. At first glance it appears that the man is the one who bridles his tongue, but this is absolutely not James's meaning. Man cannot produce any good work by himself. The perfect man is the one who desires the will of God to be done within them, not the one who trusts in his own strength. Glory can only go to the One who deserves it; Jesus Christ. Only when a person understands the weakness of his own nature and the perfection of Christ's nature can he begin to speak without stumbling. It is Christ's perfection, not man's effort, that governs the tongue and shapes the whole body.

James 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.
James's picture of the ship presents a picture of the inner man. The rudder represents the tongue, small yet powerful, and the ship represents the body that follows its direction. The pilot in the illustration points to the controlling nature within... the very nature we were saved from still seeks to regain the helm whenever opportunity is given. James proves this in the verses that follow, showing that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, and something no man can tame. Only Christ can govern the tongue, and only His Spirit can keep the believer from being driven by the fierce winds of temptation.

James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!
James is stating "make no mistake even though it is small the boasting has no end" Jesus Himself said it like this Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man
This in fact speaks about the great harm that comes from moving away from speaking God's word, this is something that teachers need to be aware of. A teacher who drifts from God's truth can kindle a fire that spreads quickly, harming both himself and those who hear him.

James 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.
James has shown throughout this letter the reasons the tongue operates in such an evil way. He has exposed the church's wrong judgment (2:1–4), believers' desire for church power (3:1), believers' pride (1:19–20), believers' double-mindedness (1:6–8), and believers' wrong motives in worship (2:5–7). He has shown that believers who do not accept the leading of the Spirit cannot control themselves or their tongue, and sadly, in many cases this outward behaviour still looks like correct religion (3:2). With this foundation laid, James can now declare that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, set among our members in such a way that it defiles the whole body, sets on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. This is alarming but true. The human tongue, that is, what we say, when outside of Christ's truth, is driven by hell. James is not exaggerating; he is revealing the true condition of the inner man apart from Christ.

James 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.
James 3:8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.
James now shows the contrast between what mankind can control and what mankind cannot. All the above has been tamed by mankind. Human history proves this: we have mastered animals, subdued environments, shaped cultures, and even ruled civilisations. When it comes to taking power, mankind excels. But when we are required to take control over our words... when humility and silence are needed; we become shipwrecked. James declares that no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. This again reveals the danger and power of a tongue that is not yielded to the Holy Spirit. James uses the muscle... the tongue, but the fact is it is the pilot that directs the ship. The tongue is the muscle which speaks what the pilot being the heart desires.

James 3:9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.
James now exposes a contradiction that reaches far beyond the teachers; it is found in the whole church. With the tongue many bless our God and Father, speaking well of Him, worshipping, praying, and seeking the Lord as they should. Their outward devotion appears genuine. But with that same tongue they curse men who are made in the similitude of God. This is the tragedy James is revealing: believers bless God publicly, yet harm fellow church members through careless, self-driven speech. Their words are shaped, as James has already shown in the past chapters, by a

divided heart, double-mindedness, lacking God's wisdom, because their faith rests in self and not in Jesus.

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.
This entire section flows from James 3:1, which holds a warning to any believer who desires to teach doctrine, but the principles he unfolds applies directly to the whole church. In 3:2–6 he exposes the danger of the tongue. In 3:7–8 he shows that man cannot even tame his own tongue. In 3:9–10 he reveals that even though the believer blesses God, he curses men. And now in 3:11–12 James exposes the real issue: the heart is the problem.
Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing, and James says, My brethren, these things ought not to be so. He is exposing the inner contradiction found in the believer; especially those who want to teach... but ultimately in anyone who is not governed by the Spirit. These things should not be, because James has already shown that the Lord gives wisdom to all who ask correctly by faith; asking how to live unto Him, which in turn enables us to love one another as Christ loves us. James has mentioned this as the royal law.

James 3:11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?
James 3:12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.
These principles applies to the entire church, but I also feel those that want to teach doctrine should really consider them, I shall repeat this truth a few times during these verses. Why? Because the teacher's tongue influences many. What is true for the teacher is true for all: a divided tongue reveals a divided heart. The simple truth is that the church relies on the teacher; they trust and follow these people in most cases. And this is the danger James is exposing, one becomes lie the one they follow.

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.
It is important to remember that in those days not many could read or write. Teachers were of great value, and the church relied heavily on them. This makes James's warning even more serious: the one who claims wisdom must prove it through conduct shaped by meekness and governed by Scripture-defined love.
This is for all believers obviously but it is also strongly directed to the one who desires to teach doctrine. This is a general question to the church but an even more so challenging one to those who believe they possess the wisdom needed to instruct others. All believers are expected to be both wise and understanding, not divided in thought, action, or deed. True wisdom understands the reason that has brought wisdom; it is consistent, whole, and governed by the royal law of love according to the Scripture (James 2:8).
3:13... Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.
This is the demand of works that challenge, change, and are buried deep into the foundation of Christ's truth. The three leading words here works, meekness, and wisdom form the test of the true believer. Works are the outward revelation of God's wisdom within the believer and must be present in all especially a teacher of doctrine. Meekness is the mirror reflecting Scripture's truth, the visible likeness of Christ Jesus. Wisdom is the inward power that produces transformation in both the teacher and those who listen to the truth.
These works carry no weight regarding the believer's salvation. Let no man boast. The conduct James requires is not the believers achievement, nor is it a display of personal strength. It is the work of the Holy Spirit seen through a transformed life. The meekness James demands is not natural meekness but Spirit-born meekness. The wisdom he describes is not human insight but the wisdom that comes from above. The believers works are simply the outward evidence of an inward grace; the Holy Spirit shaping the believer into the likeness of Christ. Meekness is that which

allows the works of the Spirit to be seen outwardly; such is wisdom.

James 3:14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.
The cause of great pain!

3:14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, James asks a question that demands one to act on their integrity! Bitter envy and self-seeking are destructive forces that, if left unchecked, will wound the congregation. Yet this warning is not hopeless. If teachers of doctrine... and believers recognise these sins and turn to the Lord in honest, repentant prayer the doorway to restoration is opened. But if these motives are allowed to take root and drive the believers and teacher's actions, they will eventually surface in attitudes, decisions, and words that injure the whole church.

3:14…do not boast and lie against the truth. Boasting here carries the sense of self-glory; the subtle desire to be admired. This is the believer and teacher who asks, "Did you like my word?" or "They really needed by correction, aye?" Their speech reveals a heart twisting away from truth, resisting conviction, and refusing to acknowledge what God is exposing within. In boasting, they lie against the truth because they will not let the truth confront their conscience.

James 3:15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.
James now names the place from where this false wisdom comes from. The teacher, along with all believers who operate from bitter envy and self-seeking is not drawing from the wisdom of God. James says plainly: this wisdom does not descend from above. It is not Spirit-given, it's not Christ-formed, nor is it in anyway heaven-born. Instead, James describes a three-fold corruption:
Earthly: This is wisdom shaped by the world, this is what was born from the beginning of human ambition, human pride, human methods, human goals. It is wisdom that begins and ends with man. It is horizontal, not vertical.
Sensual: The Greek meaning of this word (psychikos) refers to the soulish, this dances with that which was from the beginning of the fall, the natural life of man apart from the Spirit. It is wisdom driven by emotion, impulse, insecurity, ego, and desire. It is the believer relying on his/her own personality, own charisma, own strength, own understanding.

James 3:16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.
James states that envy and self-seeking exist in your hearts, meaning these drives have moved beyond temptation and have taken root. Once rooted, they produce confusion; and confusion becomes the platform through which every evil thing finds a way to minister to that believer, who in turn delivers such confusion to others. James is addressing all believers but with this is an overriding meaning to those that want to be teachers is carried, because the teacher's inner disorder becomes the church's outer disorder.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.
The word but presents a deliberate and sharp differing contrast between the fruit.

3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is This is speaking about what wisdom really is! This tells us that true intellect or guidance isn't measured by how sharp or clever a person 'may' seem but rather through the level of one's practical behaviour and character.

3:17... first pure wisdom from above is heavenly in origin, and it is first pure because purity is the foundation of all true wisdom. Purity confronts the heart before it comforts it. It is hard to accept, hard to yield to, because purity demands honesty, surrender, and the removal of hidden motives.

3:17... peaceable inner peace arrives. Purity prepares the way for peace to work, and peace becomes the atmosphere in which the remaining qualities of wisdom flourish. Purity is the first mark because everything else flows from it. Peace allows such to be recognised. True wisdom does

not stir conflict; it calms it. It seeks harmony, not victory. It allows one to rest in the truth even when everything else walks away from it.

3:17... gentle Gentleness is patient, considerate, not harsh or forceful. The struggle the believer goes through is fully understood by the Lord; He knows the way through for you and me.

3:17... willing to yield The Lord will not accept sin, but He will lead us through the minefields of the heart. He does not rush into judgment but rather wise correction. The believer shaped by His wisdom becomes open to reason, teachable, not stubborn or defensive.

3:17... full of mercy and good fruits Overflowing with compassion that produces visible acts of kindness. This again speaks... as all these qualities do of the nature of the Holy Spirit. He is merciful, so we become merciful. He bears good fruit, so we develop good fruit.

3:17... without partiality The Lord is totally consistent, not swayed by personal preference or advantage. He has one goal: our salvation from doom. As purity presents peace, which creates a gently inner atmosphere we can yield to the Devine wisdom and live without partiality, which means we live

3:17... without hypocrisy The Lord is utterly sincere. He does not wear masks. His way is completely without double-mindedness. As we grasp the nature and person of God, we fall to our knees in awe — for these qualities are what we become by His grace.

James 3:18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.
James is saying: “If you want righteousness to grow in your church, the teacher must sow God’s wisdom. Peace is the product of that wisdom. And when peace is present, everyone begins to judge themselves rather than their neighbour.

I have used these verse to highlight the need for all believers to take note of what teachers say and teach. We are all in this together and need to listen to the Holy Spirit, fellowship is of the greatest need here, as the masses that seek God will get it right... even if a little discord is needed to do so.

Let us therefore seek the wisdom of the Lord. Amen!?

Chapter 4:1-8

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 4:1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?

Confusion spreads, feeding all that will eat from it. What possibly began in the teacher's heart has now become a great conflict among the believers.

4:1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? This is a heavy and loaded question. The answer reaches all the way back to the beginning: when man fell, he received a nature opposed to God. All born of the flesh carry this polluted nature, and all are driven by it.

This is why James just spent a few words on teachers. We need correct fellowship. We need to gather and learn what Jesus has done. And to do this correctly, we must gather with a surrendered spirit... one that is being taught about our fallen nature, one that desires the new.

4:1... Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? James now states the direct truth: this is where sin comes from... from within ones self. The wars and fights among believers do not come directly from circumstances or misunderstandings. They come firstly from the desires inside the heart. These desires are not neutral; they are at war. They fight for dominance. They fight for expression. They fight for satisfaction. In fact James is telling them "The conflict among you is the outward expression of the conflict within you." This is the same truth Jesus taught: "Out of the heart come evil thoughts…" And the same truth Paul taught: "The flesh lusts against the Spirit…" James is now applying it to the whole assembly.

James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

James is about to expose a raft of sins, and yes, we must see them as they are. He is not softening his language. He is showing the full progression of inward desire becoming outward destruction.

4:2 You lust and do not have. What is it they do not have? Satisfaction. They lust, but the craving never ends. Their desire is a hunger that grows by feeding on itself. This aligns with the broader commentary... unfulfilled desire produces frustration and spiritual poverty. James is showing that lust never gives what it promises.

4:2... You murder and covet and cannot obtain. Commentaries differ on whether James means literal murder or spiritual murder. The Greek word 'phoneuete' does indeed mean 'to murder, to kill' but the context of the next verse and the teaching of Jesus strongly indicate spiritual murder... hatred, malice, destructive speech, and the inner violence of envy. Jesus taught the same truth in Matthew 5:21–22 "Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of judgment." And John echoes it in 1 John 3:15"He that hates his brother is a murderer." So one would more than likely lean towards James not describing literal homicide among believers; but rather describing the spiritual violence that springs from envy, rivalry, and covetousness. This is confirmed by multiple commentators who note that James uses strong language to expose the moral weight of hatred. Why do they spiritually murder and covet? Simply because they cannot obtain what they crave. They are spiritually restless, spiritually empty, lost!!!

4:2... You fight and war. This is exactly what happens when inner desires are left unchecked. The inward war becomes outward war. James's language paints a battlefield inside the church, believers fighting each other, resisting truth, and opposing the Holy Spirit. This matches the broader New Testament witness: fleshly desires wage war against the soul and produce strife, jealousy, and conflict. This gets even worse.. as they not only oppose each other but they are fighting against the truth. They are at war with the Holy Spirit. This is what happens when earthly wisdom rules instead of wisdom from above.

4:2... Yet you do not have because you do not ask. The word yet is important. It shows the tragic irony: they fight, they covet, they strip each others spiritual faith in vain... but they never turn to God. They do not ask Him. They do not seek Him. They do not depend on Him. Their desires drive them horizontally (against each other) instead of vertically (toward God).

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.
This is not in conflict with verse 2 which exposes that they do not ask God at all. This verse exposes that when they finally do ask, they ask wrongly; from the flesh, not from the Spirit. Why is this, I shall answer that in a moment.
Together, the two verses show a complete breakdown in their relationship with God. They may pray, but not as one who truly knows the Lord. Their prayers are not born of surrender, purity, or fellowship. They pray from the flesh, not from the Spirit — and so they do not receive.

4:3... because you ask amiss, This is the why! Chapters 1 through to the end of 3 have being telling the teachers that they are not doing their job correctly, the people suffer due to wrong teaching, they do not know how to seek the living God. As we shall soon see they still held the old dispensation method of seeking. They have not been taught: the fallen nature, the war within, the need for wisdom from above, the need for purity first, the need for peace born of wisdom, the need for self-judgment rather than neighbour-judgment. So when they finally do pray, they pray from the flesh, not from the Spirit.

4:3... that you may spend it on your pleasures. This reveals the motive behind their prayers. Jesus warned the leaders of His day about self-indulgence (Matthew 23:27–28). He exposed their desire for honour, recognition, and position (Matthew 23:5–7). He rebuked them for neglecting the core of God's word while being content with their own power and comfort (Matthew 23:23).
James is applying the same truth: Their prayers are not for God's will, they are for their own pleasure. They pray for: fleshly satisfaction, personal gain, recognition, position, comfort, advantage. Their prayers are not born of purity, peace, or wisdom from above. They are born of envy, covetousness, and self-seeking, the very things James condemned in chapter 3.
The Lord is gracious above all, quick to forgive and to lift a sinking soul. The Holy Spirit is giving them an answer to prayer through James, He shows them why their prayers fail. They do not receive what they want because God will not answer fleshly prayers in the way the flesh demands.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
James does not mess about with small talk!

4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! James is not accusing them of physical adultery, though some may have felt convicted by the sharpness of the words. He is speaking of spiritual disloyalty; covenant betrayal. They have been unfaithful to their relationship with the Father. They are lying in a bed made by the world, giving their affections, loyalties, and desires to the world's system instead of to God. Receiving from the world worldly rewards.

4:4... Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? This phrase has been badly misused, so we must be careful to explain it correctly.
James is not condemning: enjoying nature, eating good food, or participating in everyday life. The Greek word for friendship is 'philia' meaning 'a deep, conforming alliance; a shared value system, a shared ambition, a shared mindset'. It means adopting the world's standards of success, its competitive spirit, its self-exalting goals, and its self-preserving instincts.
James is saying: Their alignment is wrong. They are enjoying the world's fruit and letting the world shape them. This is why he will soon expose boasting, envy, pride, and self-seeking; the sickness produced by worldly alignment.

4:4... Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. This is about direction, loyalty, and the governing influence behind a person's choices. When the world's standards of success, power, recognition, self-preservation become the driving force behind a person's decisions, that person is standing in direct opposition to God. They have chosen a different master, a different value system, a different loyalty. They have left the safety of His protection, this is a self willed drive.

Spiritual adultery if left unchecked will eventually lead to outward harm. Once a person aligns with the world's values, their actions follow. They steal, they reject the poor, they oppress the weak, they boast, they envy, and they spiritually murder one another, they seek ways of looking after themselves outside of the protection of God. Worldly friendship produces outward harm. This is why James calls it adultery; it is covenant betrayal that damages everyone.

James 4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?
A straight question that demands an honest answer!

4:5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, James could be referring to more than just one particular passage of Scripture as we read in the OT many times where the word tells us of His desire and feelings, such as Hosea 2:19-20; Ezekiel 16:38: Isaiah 54:5.

4:5... "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? This is of course the first known writing done before the gospels and the other Epistles, so James is not speaking of anything that the other believers had penned. Remember he is speaking to believers within the twelve tribes, such had been baptised into the Holy Spirit. Paul would latter write believers not to grieve the Holy Spirit Ephesians 4:30. The Blessed Holy Spirit yearns deeply and jealously within us, pulling us back to exclusive devotion to the Father through the sacrifice of the Son!
It is important we understand that this jealousy is protective, not destructive. It is the jealousy of a covenant Husband who refuses to abandon His bride to the world's corruption. It is the jealousy of a Father who will not allow His children to be shaped by values that destroy them. It is the jealousy of the Holy Spirit who pulls us back from spiritual adultery and back into exclusive devotion to the Father through the Son.
This jealousy is not insecurity or unpredictability, it is not a weakness driven by selfish ambition. It is holy protection; the fierce love of God guarding you and I from the world's deadly poison.

James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
This comes from the OT... Proverbs 3:34. Peter would also quote this verse, others that line up with it are Psalms 138:6 and Proverbs 16:5.
James uses the word therefore which connects the past verses perfectly, you ask and do not receive because you ask amiss! Because their prayers have failed, because their desires have corrupted them, because their alignment has drifted, and because the Spirit yearns jealously for their return, God gives more grace, but note 'He will continue to resists the proud'. This is the turning point of the chapter: the cure for spiritual adultery is humility, and the provision for humility is grace, more grace than their failures, wanderings, more grace than their worldliness.
James is not simply saying that God just freely pours grace out to all! He is saying that God gives grace to a particular kind of person, the humble. And humility is not automatic. It begins when a person sees the need. They must recognise their sickness. They must acknowledge their drift. They must bow under the Spirit's jealous yearning. Only then does grace flow.

James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
Who rules the unsaved world? satan. James is dealing with people who have drifted into the world's value system, they have become proud and made the world their friend and therefore fallen into satan's influence. Now James shows such a believer the way back.

4:7 Therefore submit to God. James uses therefore again, tying this verse to everything he has just said: their prayers have failed, their desires have corrupted them, their alignment has drifted towards the worlds way of reward causing the Spirit to present a warning that God gives more grace but only to the humble. Submitting to God is where grace is found. This is where true restoration begins. So, what does correct submission look like? Submission is not an unclear or vague action, nor is it an emotional outburst or a mystical event. Submission simply is the agreement of God's truth. It is agreeing that: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, He was born of a virgin, He walked the

earth as our perfect, sinless representative, He was nailed to the cross for our sins, He satisfied the Father's justice, He rose again on the third day, He alone is Lord, Saviour, and King. Submission is bowing to this truth, not merely knowing it, but yielding to it. And here is the beauty: The second half of the verse marries perfectly to the first.

4:7... Resist the devil and he will flee from you. This is where many Christians misunderstand James. He is not teaching: a daily ritual of "rebuking the devil," a constant battle of shouting at satan, a cycle of "reject the devil, then submit" a formula of spiritual warfare...
No. James is teaching something far deeper: **Submission to God is resistance to the devil**.
When a believer bows to God: they are automatically resisting satan, they are automatically rejecting his lies, they are automatically refusing his values, they are automatically stepping out of his influence. There is no need for a separate ritual. There is no need for a daily confrontation. There is no need for another formula. Why? Because Jesus already defeated satan at the cross. The believer does not fight for victory; the believer stands in the victory Christ already won. So James's meaning is simple and profound: Submit to God... and in doing so, you resist the devil. And when you resist him, he flees. Not because of your strength. Not because of our effort. Not because of our so called warfare ability. But because he cannot stand before a believer who is bowed to God, the believers who have humbled themselves are now by correct faith drawing near to God Himself.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
This tells us clearly why satan does not stick around!

4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. These people had walked in the truth, but incorrect or false teachings had been permitted to enter into their services. They now needed to be re-directed, shown how to draw near to God. Jesus spoke of this in Luke 15:11 regarding the son who had been with the Father, but even in His presence somehow the son lost sight of the truth. Lost sight of what he had through his title, lost his grip on the eternal reality. He left, and after spending all his resources on a sinful life, and becoming completely broken he remembered the truth, his Father love… at that very moment grace took hold before he had even started the walk home to the Father. It is the remembrance of the Lord's great mercy and grace that allows us to return. This was true of Adam, Israel and is true today regarding the church.
The Father does not, will not, be held back. He willingly accepts anyone back who comes in the name of the Son.

4:8… Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James is not calling all the church such... but those that walk in sinful desires, holding a double mined out-look. He tells them off by proclaiming the truth. Calling them what they are, as there is no hiding from the word; and it is the truth that sets us free. Two sets of sins are exposed here: unclean, dirty hands and double-mindedness. James is addressing both the outward actions and the inward loyalties, the outward behaviour and inner devotion.
We end this weeks study with James calling the church back to nearness with God; a nearness that cleanses both the hands and the heart. We shall continue on with this great exposition of James next week.

Chapter 4:9-17

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Last week we paused in the middle of James's call to lay aside the sin that so easily ensnares us; today we follow him into the next steps of repentance. Just a quick reminder we ended on being told to draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. A command telling us to clean our outside life style and inner self, so that we shall be seen as people of the light!

James 4:9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

The word let is important here as this is an act of the will. We touched briefly on the prodigal son last week, and again the comparison is helpful. He attached himself to the citizens of a foreign land; he willingly entered into darkness and sinfulness. But his joy, laughter, and hopes were stripped away through the realisation of truth. The horror of his situation became clear, and he saw that the only way back was the accepting of truth. He had to acknowledge he had sinned, that in his own strength he was far from what a child of the Father truly is.

Allowing one's laughter and joy to be turned into mourning and gloom is an oxymoron, yet it is one of the greatest revelations of truth a struggling believer can receive. It is a massive blessing, because from this deep mourning comes the greatest joy, freedom, and true laughter. And the next verse tells us why such mourning is in fact a blessing.

The moment the realisation of truth hits home and we call out to God, at that moment we have begun to humble ourselves.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

This is greatly important as we have covered over the past verses the heart of man, what happens when one holds the wrong heart conditions... Here James is telling believers we need to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. What does that mean? We need to turn to Him, seek Him for what is right, what is of real value... His direction, His truth, His eternal blessing! He knows the how weak the heart of man is. He gets no pleasure from seeing a child grovelling and begging... He wants us to see the condition of our hearts so that He can further change and than challenge us to continue to develop Christ likeness.

We are His children and already stand in His presence by being in Christ, however in this case very weakly. We are in His presence due to our Savour, but if the reader does not harken to these warnings then super hard times are looming in the future. James does not speak of losing salvation, but a wise person would consider every possibility, because a divided heart always leads to spiritual instability; and instability gives the picture of a believer being tossed by the winds in every direction.

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

It may appear that James takes a sharp turn here, but this is not the case. Over the past chapters he has exposed the governing issues of the heart; divided loyalties, worldly desires, pride, instability, and self-elevation. Now he addresses another manifestation of the same problem: believers words... The speaking evil of one another.

4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. Such behaviour divides the church and opens the door to worldly thinking and satanic influence. A divided heart always produces divided speech. When believers judge one another by outward appearance, or speak behind another's back, they bring hardship upon all who participate. We are not to curse anyone; rather, let our conversation be simple, honest, and clean. If we have nothing good to say, then silence is the wiser path.

The last commandment Jesus gave us was, "Love one another as I have loved you." So the question must be asked: Are the words we speak born from the Lord's commandment? If not, then our words fail the test of love. And when our words fail the test of love, we show that we are not living under the meaning of His command, and continued misapplication could eventually become rejection of it.

4:11... He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. Many believers confuse speaking evil with Spirit-led correction. Some may even claim that speaking out about another believer is an act of love. It is true that the Lord uses us to help one another; through prayer, encouragement, intercession, and laying on of hands, but we must be very careful here. We often assume we know how to deal with a believer who is seemingly acting out, yet we certainly do not know their full history, their private battles, or the hidden work God is doing in their heart.

When we go to prayer regarding another person's actions, be they deemed by us as right or wrong, we must first look into the mirror James spoke of earlier. We must check the reason why we are looking into the heart of another believer. Let us be wise in how we approach another person's heart condition, knowing that we cannot change another person's heart; the mirror tells us we cannot even fully manage our own. Only the Lord can work within the heart; our role is to walk in love, humility, and carefulness.

Spirit-led correction is always born from love, guided by the Spirit, and shaped by humility. Speaking evil, however, cuts down, wounds, and elevates self. Love always protects, shelters, lifts, and encourages. Let others see your holy lifestyle; let them feel the Spirit in you; let them enjoy truth that comes from such mercy and grace, for such encourages the weaker and less able believer. Such love helps to guide and change them toward that which the Spirit desires. In contrast, speaking evil is pride disguised as discernment. It rewrites the law of love according to one's own emotions.

4:11... But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. Immaturity belongs to new believers, and within a healthy church environment such immaturity is safely contained and gently guided. But when a believer who has been long established in the faith behaves in this way, it reveals something far deeper; a heart that has never settled into the royal law.

The royal law is not "love your neighbour as yourself," but "love one another as Christ has loved you." This law reveals Christ's life, His character, His humility, His mercy, and His ongoing work within us. James is dealing with the heart, not a time-line. To lift oneself above the law is to step into a place that belongs only to God. A divided heart always leads to spiritual instability, and instability gives the picture of a believer being tossed by the winds in every direction.

James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Jesus is the Lawgiver, the law did not come from the Church, the pastor or any other person.

4:12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. This is not a threat, rather it is a revelation of Christ's power. These words must be taken seriously. James is not threatening the believer; he is revealing Christ's power. Most commentaries treat destroy as judgement only, but James is showing us something far deeper: Jesus destroys what destroys us, destroys the church. This is the heart of salvation. He does not merely forgive sin; He breaks it, undoes it, dismantles it, destroys its power. He does not merely rescue the person; He destroys the forces that held that person captive. This is why James places save and destroy side by side; they are not opposites, but two sides of Christ's saving work.

Jesus saves any who will listen and believe, and He destroys everything within that person that opposes His life. He destroys sin, humanistic beliefs, wrong desires, wrong thinking, divided loyalties, self-elevation, worldly patterns, false motives, the works of the devil, the lies of the flesh, the patterns of sin, and the power of death. True salvation is not only rescue, it is destruction. Christ destroys the old nature, the old desires, the old thinking, the old loyalties, the old habits, the old wounds, the old identity, and the old bondages of darkness. Paul in Romans 6:6 states it like this Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. Destroyed... not

managed, not improved, not disciplined. But destroyed.
Who is the Lawgiver? God. Who is able to save and destroy? God. Christ is so much more than the Lawgiver; He is the fulfiller of the law, the keeper and embodiment of the law, the One judged righteous through it. The law was given for two reasons: first, to show man he cannot keep it and therefore needs a Saviour; and second, to reveal the One who could keep it... Jesus. He kept it perfectly, satisfying the Father's requirement, so He could destroy everything in us that breaks it. He saves by giving His life to us; He destroys by removing everything in us that is not His life.

4:12... Who are you to judge another? Why do believers judge one another so readily? The leading factor is pride, the heart elevates itself and assumes it sees clearly. Discernment is often confused with condemnation, but the deeper issue is spiritual pride. Scripture shows two kinds of judgment: moral discernment: which protects the church and restores the fallen (1 Corinthians 5:12; Galatians 6:1), and condemnation: which James forbids, the self-righteous judgement that passes sentence on a person's heart, motives, or spiritual worth. Many begin with a desire to help, but pride crosses the line into condemnation without realising it.
Often judging others is rooted in pride and self-elevation. It comes from a heart that assumes it sees clearly when it does not. Sometimes it is the desire to feel spiritually secure, sometimes the desire to appear discerning, sometimes from frustration or fear, and commonly from humanistic religion taking the lead. Whatever the reason, judging another believer always begins with a heart that has stepped outside the royal law.
Pharisaism; the focus on external rules without mercy... is always waiting at the door. Judging becomes a shield that keeps us from looking into the mirror James spoke of earlier. Self-righteousness demands control; it builds rigid boundaries and then condemns anyone who steps outside them. This is humanistic religion, not Christlike love.
James warns that the urge to judge is deeply ingrained in human nature. It requires humility, careful self-examination, and a constant return to the mirror of the Word. Only then can we resist the temptation to judge another believer.

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"
James is still speaking about man's inability to judge safely. He has shown that believers cannot judge another person's heart, and now he shows that they cannot even gauge accurately the events that may unfold in a single day of their own lives.

4:13 Come now, you who say, is James's way of saying, "Be realistic." He is speaking to a particular portion of the group of believers who have moved into a place governed by self-confidence, which is a foolish and dangerous state of mind. As surely as they have judged others wrongly, they arrogantly speak as though tomorrow belongs to them, as though their plans are guaranteed, as though the future is theirs to command. But the ability to judge the events of a normal day is beyond our human ability. A person may presume that all will unfold as one desires, but the day brings many differing possibilities. James is exposing the haughtiness of speaking as though we control what only God controls. If we cannot determine what a single day will bring, how can we proclaim that we understand the heart condition of another believer.

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.
James now reveals the depth of arrogance that flows from presuming upon tomorrow. He is not belittling one's life, rather he is revealing how important it is we get right all we can during it.

4:14... What is your life? It is as a vapour! Here for a moment, then gone. The life of any person is of the greatest importance; it is so important that Jesus Christ suffered and died on a cross. Human life can never be repeated. It is the single moment that carries us into eternity, and eternity is timeless. This moment we have is like a vapour; it disappears incredibly quickly.
Because life is so brief, James shows the foolishness of speaking as though tomorrow belongs to us. We cannot judge the events of a single day, yet we speak as though we command the future. And

this same arrogance leads us to judge the hearts of other believers. What we do in this vapour moment matters greatly, and the judging of others, along with the presumption of daily events... can rob us of the blessed outcome the Holy Spirit desires us to have.

James 4:15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."
Here is the simple truth. Our faith and our daily desires should be attached to the Spirit of life. We should live according to the desires of the Lord. So what is it that the Lord wills? He wills that we live in obedience to Him. That we learn of Jesus, of what Jesus did, He wills that our plans, our movements, and our actions be governed by His Spirit, not by self-confidence.

4:15..."We shall live and do this or that." This is subject to obedience. To live is to die to self-desires and walk as the Spirit walks. To live is to remain close to that which Jesus did. Therefore to do this or that means to live as Christ lived; to listen to the Spirit, to obey the Word, and to allow every action to bring about the truth of Christ. The believer's plans must be held lightly, submitted to the Lord's will, and carried out only as He directs. He wills that we allow the Spirit to work, that we continue to look into the mirror of life, and allow Him to judge all that needs to be judged, for all godly judgment brings life... and life in abundance.

James 4:16 But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.
James 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
James now ties everything together. He exposes the root behind wrongful judgment, presumption, and self-confidence: arrogance. To boast in one's own certainty; whether about another believer's heart or about tomorrow's events... is evil. It is the posture of a heart that has stepped outside the will of God.
And then James brings the entire argument to its conclusion: knowing the truth and refusing to walk in it is sin. When a believer understands that judgment belongs to God, that tomorrow belongs to God, that life itself belongs to God, and yet continues to speak and act as though these things belong to themselves, they sin. James is dismantling every form of human certainty.

Let us judge with the wisdom of Christ; not from our own certainty, but through seeking Him so that we may do only as He directs. Before we speak or act, let us question ourselves: How will this affect another believer? Can they bear it? Is this the right time? Will it increase their faith, or will it wound them? These questions guard our hearts and keep us close to the mirror of the Word.
There is so much we must see regarding our own lives, so much the Spirit desires to shape within us. May we allow Him to work, to correct, to guide, and to judge all that needs to be judged within us.

And may we all be blessed by the best... Our Lord... Jesus Christ.
Amen and amen.

Chapter 5:1-9

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!
Some commentators felt this was a word regarding the returning of the Lord. Obviously we must reject that thought for that particular group of people, because we have moved on 2,000 years since this letter was written, and clearly the Lord has not returned yet. This sort of thought removes the power and timelessness of the word.
We can in fact celebrate as this is the living word, and today it counts for us, because the Holy Spirit wrote beyond James' own understanding.
Other commentaries believed this is speaking of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD... and it may well have been, for such happened within their lifetime. Yes, this word was directly written for the Jews of that day, but James had not fully grasp the full scope of Calvary or the church age. Meaning, he did not know this word is for all generations, because the Spirit's message is timeless even when the writer's understanding is limited.
This certainly is about the "there and then" timeline, the immediate spiritual condition of the believers James was addressing. Equally, it is about all generations of believers that have followed.

5:1 Come now, you rich, We read of what the rich were doing in chapter 2 verse 2-8.

5:1... weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! James brings us all back to 4:8–10 Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn, and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up. This is a calling for all believers to live unto the Lord as well as one can. Many in the early church sold their properties and gave unto the Lord all they had. I feel the next verses prove this point. James is not condemning wealth itself, but the spiritual danger of trusting in it, boasting in it, or using it to elevate oneself above others. Both sides of the coin can be seen happening today, some treat their money as god whilst other believers giving time, money, and self into the service of the living God.

James 5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.
This seems a strange statement. They are rich, yet their wealth is corrupting them. Their garments reveal wealth,(see Chapter 4:2-8), but the spiritual truth is that they are wearing the rags of a beggar. This is a metaphor. Outwardly they shine, but inwardly their riches were decaying their soul.
James is exposing the spiritual reality behind the physical appearance. Their wealth is not blessing them; it is betraying them. Their garments are not covering them in glory rather they are exposing them as to what they are inwardly, and what they have placed their weak faith in is already dying.

James 5:3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.
Here is the deeper meaning. They own their wealth; it is theirs; they could do whatever they wished with it, in that there is no sin. But they chose to allow the gold and silver to corrode them. Their treasure owned their souls. It was eating them up on the inside.
Gold and silver do not corrode easily. James is not describing chemistry... he is describing spiritual corrosion. Their wealth is testifying against them. Their possessions are condemning them. Their treasure has become their judge. On that final day of judgment, this will not gain them honour. It will stand as evidence: of misplaced trust, pride, spiritual blindness, and of a heart that chose gold over God.
James is not condemning wealth itself, but the spiritual danger of trusting in it, boasting in it, or using it to elevate oneself above others.

James 5:4 Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
I am going to take this past the point that most others commentators have. The opening words for

this verse are clear cut,

5:4 Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, The work was completed, the hours laid out through labour and sweat.

5:4...which you kept back by fraud, cry out; This is where I go a little further than others. This is a deliberate holding back, and the act itself is so sinful it cries out to God. This is something the Lord looks at how believing bosses treat their workers! This is the ministry field, a place which has the power to bring praise to God or the opposite! I cannot so much comment on the events of the days of James but today, many bosses pay their workers basic or minimum wages continually, this is an act of abuse. The bible is clear the worker is worth his due!

5:4... and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. This should be throw fear into anyone that is doing such. The workers have cried out and their cries have been heard by the Lord of the Sabaoth. This appears also in Isaiah 5:9 where the Lord makes it clear what will happen: "Truly, many houses shall be desolate, great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant." This happened because they withheld... not merely money, but justice, mercy, and care for the worker, the poor. Their wealth became their god, and in the end it became their downfall.

James 5:5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

The people James is talking about have lived lives full of self-indulgence. You have lived in pleasure exposes a lifestyle driven by satisfying every earthly desire and luxury rather than honouring God as they may have, or helping others. They have indulged in every whim that has come their way. James compares some within the church to arrogant, self-satisfied rich people... to animals eating greedily, unaware that they are being fattened for the butcher's block of God's judgment. **The next verse reveals the horrid outcome of such actions.**

James 5:6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

This takes us back over much of the ground James has covered. The rich exploit the poor, drag them into court, and show no mercy. They withhold wages, pay less than what is right, and the poor simply accept it because they must feed their families. I write this believing James is talking to believers. If he was indeed speaking of those of the world then murder would mean murder. Because of this, it is clear James is not speaking of literal murder, but of the destruction of a life through injustice. The righteous man cannot resist; he has no power, no voice, and no protection. This is the spiritual violence James is condemning. Such behaviour should never be found in the church; it is a disgrace, and if left unchallenged and unchanged it will eventually taint the whole fellowship.

James 5:7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

I want to be careful here, so as not to cause any confusion. In verse 5:1 the idea that James was speaking of the Second Coming for that particular group of people was discussed and rejected. James was not giving them God's timeline. He was addressing their immediate spiritual condition. But in this verse, James shifts his tone. He is no longer rebuking the wealthy oppressors; although this is indeed a powerful warning to them. Rather, he is comforting the faithful believers who have suffered under them. This coming of the Lord is not James predicting a date or a generation regarding the Lord's return. Rather, it is James building their faith, lifting them back up: the Lord is coming back; do not be deceived. This truth applies to all believers of every generation. Justice will be done. The oppressor will not have the final word. James is not saying, "Jesus will return in your lifetime." He is saying, "Live with patience, because the Lord's return is certain." You will stand before His throne!

5:7... See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. I want to go beyond what most commentaries have stated, because I feel there is room here to do so without changing the meaning. The arrival of the Lord is

imminent, but is there a deeper meaning being placed on the table here? I believe that to be the case.
James is not only telling believers to wait; he is telling them to work while they wait. The farmer does not sit in a chair staring at the sky. He ploughs, sows, tends, watches, and trusts that all his labour will be rewarded. His waiting is active, not passive.
This speaks of the believer's faith being lifted up. James has begun telling them to wait for the certain arrival of the Lord, but these words also carry an order to work toward that which is promised in the Word. Through the work of Jesus on the cross... proven by His resurrection; we have the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
So James is asking: What is the Spirit doing in your life? How is He working? What is He saying? What is He directing you onto or towards?
The answer of course is always the same: towards Jesus Christ-likeness. And within that journey there are great promises, fruit that only grows through patient endurance and faithful obedience, the fruit that leaves you wanting Jesus even more so.
We are not to simply wait for the Lord. We must give ourselves to those things that build and cement knowledge; such as fellowship, which is massive blessing and must be observed by all believers so that we can feed one another; Bible study groups; worship and praise; and so on. James will touch on some of these later in this chapter. These practices take us back to what James wrote earlier: they allow the wisdom he says you can have to inspire you and others. Such faithful working allows growth, and such growth causes one to become "like" our Lord.

James 5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.
He once again James seemingly repeats his words, but note carefully how he begins: You also be patient. Who are the you also people James is referring to? As he has just spoken in the last verse these word to the broken, beaten trodden etc... These words are for the very ones he has just given a a good old-fashioned telling off. These are the believers who have been:

1/ rich and self-indulgent
2/ blamers of God
3/ double-minded
4/ easily enticed
5/ unstable in all their ways
6/ speakers of evil against their brothers
7/ judges of the law rather than doers of it

We could go on with this list. They have read, or had read to them this letter. They have heard the rebuke. Now James tells them what must happen next.
They must act out that which the law of liberty demands. They must present their hearts to the heart-changer. They must allow the work of faith to do its thing.
This is why James told them earlier:
1:22 "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."
5:8... Establish your hearts means set your heart firmly before the Lord, allow Him to stabilise and strengthen it, let the truth of life enlighten it. They may drift and wobble slightly as truth opens up arenas they did not know was within them. They shall see the power of the double-mindedness that was stationed with their being... but this time they will hopefully desire Christ.
James is saying:
5:8... for the coming of the Lord is at hand. You have been corrected. Now be patient. Now stand firm. Now let your heart be established in the truth, because the Lord is near. Not near in the sense of a date on a calendar... but near in presence, near in involvement, near in justice, near in vindication.

James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!
James now turns his attention back onto every member of the church. Once again, he reminds them

of matters he has already covered. The Greek word for grumble ‘stenazō’ speaks of an inward sigh, a groaning, or harbouring secret resentment against fellow believers under pressure. It is not loud complaining; it is the quiet, internal frustration that begins to poison relationships.
When people suffer or feel stressed, they often snap at those closest to them. Their frustration over a trial they are going through becomes unfair criticism of family, friends, or fellow believers.

5:9… lest you be condemned. How often does this happen? When things are not going to plan, pressure rises, and instead of seeking the Lord, instead of recognising what is happening inside the heart... the finger of blame comes out. We hurt the ones closest to us.
This does two things: it creates a temporary division in the home or the church and it condemns both parties, the accuser and accused are hurt. James is warning them: Do not allow inward frustration to become outward sin. Talk to one another without malice.

5:9… Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! Again, James reminds them: The Spirit of truth is here, He is present, watching, involved, and ready to act. This is not a negative, fearful threat it is rather a call for one to act correctly, a call to holiness.
Let us be quick to hear and slow to respond. Let us be careful with our words, careful with our emotions, and careful with our hearts. The Judge ‘**is**’ at the door. James is saying: “Do not let pressure turn you against one another. The Lord is near, in fact He is in you and you are in Him... so act like it.”

We have all been asked by the Lord... the Holy Spirit through James; to examine our hearts, to spend time with the Lord seeking change. No one is perfect, no one is sinless; we all need to work the works of truth by calling on His name. May the Lord bless us and keep us strong in His mighty power and Word.

Amen and amen.

Chapter 5:10-20

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

As we start the last part of this study, I hope we do so with hearts that desire to be searched, stretched, and encouraged by the blessed Holy Spirit. The Lord has spoken to us over these past weeks through His Word, and the Holy Spirit has been faithful to shine His light upon our lives. Now we enter the last study night, but it is important we realise this does not mean the end of our personal study. Take this book home and read it every night from beginning to end; make this a task you will do with the Lord. Amen.

James 5:10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

This takes us to a very real time and place. These people were real, and they suffered such things for God and for man. Men like Daniel, who stood by his faith and "stopped the mouths of lions"; like Jeremiah and Elijah, "who escaped the edge of the sword"; those who "out of weakness were made strong"; those who "were stoned," like Zechariah; "sawn asunder," like Isaiah; "slain with the sword," like Urijah. James is reminding them of the great prices that have been paid in the name of the Lord.

He does not mention Christ here, because he wants them to see that those who lived according to the law, who followed the life and work of Jesus before His incarnation, often suffered deeply. Consider these men and women; what they went through, why they allowed such suffering to come upon themselves, and Who gave them the will and power to find such bravery.

This is not to say that such things shall come upon you or me, but we should always have the faith to see whatever comes through. The prophets endured because they trusted the One who called them. Their suffering was not a sign of failure, it was a sign of faithfulness.

James is saying: "Look at them. Learn from them. They suffered, yet they stood. They were pressed, yet they remained faithful. They were weak, yet God made them strong."

And so must we.

James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

James had just stated remember the prophets, and here he places on the table the name of a man that was not a prophet. Job... Why Job?

Job faced trials that I can only call the heaviest of heavy. He maintained a heart of prayer through them. He persevered (James 1:2–4). He cried for wisdom, but often received foolishness from those around him (1:5). He did not doubt, but they held double-mindedness (1:6–8). His wife said, "Curse God and be done with it," yet he refused to blame God... for God does not tempt anyone (1:12–16). He understood that every good and perfect gift is from above (1:17–18). He refused to be quick to speak or quick to blame; rather, he continued looking into the perfect law that gives freedom (1:19–25).

His friends failed to keep a tight rein on their tongues and caused great pain and frustration for Job. Hence their religion was worthless (1:26). Religion that God our Father accepts helps to keep people from being polluted by the world (1:27).

They judged Job wrongly. They showed favouritism. They called him the sinner without seeing who they themselves were (2:1–13). They offered a help that in fact destroys. If someone claims to have faith but has no deeds, can such faith save them? (2:14–19) Job was doing his best to remain in his faith. His deed at that moment was sitting, in pain, in anguish, crying out to God for help. He was right; his friends were wrong (2:24–26).

They tried to teach a man of wisdom, but they spoke folly (3:1–12). Not many should become teachers (3:1). Wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere (3:17). Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness (3:18). What they were saying was not coming from a spirit of peace. They fought between themselves, trying to be heard as the man with the answers; pride

(4:1–3). They were killing and coveting the very person of Job (4:2). They did not ask God, they did not seek God (4:3), and when they used the Almighty's name it was used wrongly (4:4). They did not submit to God (4:7); rather, they yielded to the devil's game (4:7). They did not wash their hands of their sins or offer their hearts to be purified (4:8). They remained double-minded (4:8). There was no grieving, mourning, or wailing for Job or for their own state (4:9). They did not humble themselves before the Lord (4:10). Instead, they boasted in their arrogant schemes; and all such boasting is evil (4:16). All these blue-highlighted points point directly to James' commentary. I have done this to show why he chose Job. This can happen... and has happened throughout the ages to countless people, families, and churches. This is called life. It can be very hard, very unforgiving, but that does not diminish God in any way.
James is asking us to consider Job, to see how he went through all that he went through. Was he perfect? No. But even in imperfection he continued to seek the Lord. And the outcome was that the Lord was very compassionate and merciful.

James 5:12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.
The Greek word used here is omnýō It means: to swear an oath.

5:12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. Obviously James is not stating we are no longer to take marriage vows or legal oaths etc. This is speaking of the use of thoughtless, self-uplifting, unattainable promises being made, the kind of speech people use when they want to convince others they are telling the truth, such builds layer upon layer of sinful pride. This fits perfectly with everything James has already said about: the tongue, pride, judging, double- mindedness, false teaching etc. Above all does not mean this is the worst thing you can do rather it means ...."this is a common on going issues among you all" They argue, grumble, boast, make foolish promises etc. James is saying "stop it."

5:12... But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," When we fall into the place where we want to prove what we are saying is right pride takes over... I have done this and I believe everyone has at some time in their lives. Jesus tells us to "not swear at all… Let your yes be yes and your no be no." (Matthew 5:34–37) James is simply repeating the Lord's
So what type of swearing is James talking about here? Swearing to prove sincerity "By heaven I swear…" "By God I promise…" "By my life…" "By the earth…" "By the temple…" "By the altar…" This was common in Jewish culture. Also the swearing to manipulate others, by using spiritual language and terms to pressure others. People under stress say things they don't mean. Endurance includes your speech. Trials test your words. So let your yes be yes and your no be no." Even though James is not talking about foul language here I am taking this as a prime opportunity to also add foul language is not expectable, it is sin, it is horrid, so lets add to this and say "lets stop all wrong swearing! Amen?

5:12... lest you fall into judgment. When a person continually speaks in ways that are rash, exaggerated, or self-promoting, trust towards them will eventually begin to erode. Others start to see that what they are saying does not stack up with how they are living. Integrity weakens. Through the natural process of sin's direction, such a person may find themselves pushed away... not by God, but by the breakdown of trust their own speech has created.
And this can very well be one of the ways God teaches them the way of truth, for the Lord shall never abandon His own. Their words and their speech have created this slow collapse, and the pain of it can become the very tool the Spirit uses to open their eyes. Over time, they may end up outside the circle of relationships they were once deeply bound in. Such an experience has a profound effect on the soul. If they are open to the Lord, they shall return stronger, humbled, and better equipped to help others.

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.
James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

These verses tie directly back to verse 12, which in fact is just the continual flow of the whole letter. James has just told them that their idle talk, dramatic oaths, and self-edifying speech brings no good to the church. So now he turns their attention to what actually matters: the real condition of the people sitting among them.
"Stop the foolish promises. Stop the prideful talk. Stop trying to sound spiritual. Instead; look around you."
James is calling the church to honesty. Honesty about pain. Honesty about joy. Honesty about sickness. Honesty about need.
Instead of empty words, let there be true prayer. Instead of dramatic speech, let there be true praise. Instead of self-talk, let there be true fellowship. Instead of prideful promises, let there be true ministry...The laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and seeking the Lord together is the natural order of the church. This appeared in the first part of the letter. James is writing a very deliberate and organised letter. From the beginning he has told them to seek God with faith, without double-mindedness, so that they may gain wisdom to deal rightly with the poor, the hurting, the sick, the lonely, and all who are in need. So we can praise and make merry. Amen.
James is saying: "Deal with reality, aid each other, seek the Lord. This is the speech that builds the church."

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.
Again this covers the past writing, but please note this does not mean every person you pray for shall be healed. The faith spoken of here is that which James has been talking about throughout this letter, thus comes from the Spirit, the outcome of the raising up is entirely the Lords business. I have seen people healed from all sorts of ailments equally I have seen others go through live carrying their pain, and yet praise the Lord through it. This is all about the inner man, ones own personal faith, some ask amiss and never receive others walk in the joy of the Spirit.
When prayer is offered in true faith the Lord Himself acts. He may raise up the sick physically, or He may strengthen them spiritually, but when sin is confessed and brought before Him, He always forgives. The "raising up" and the timing of healing belong to Him; the forgiveness of sin is His sure promise.

James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
This verse needs to be looked at very carefully. Many believers think James is telling them to confess shameful things; addictions, past sins, sexual failures, anger issues, dark thoughts, and private struggles... openly to others. This is '**not**' what James is talking about. Such confessions often become church talking points, whispered conversations, and what I call "prayer gossip." The naming of the sin is not necessary; God already knows.
True confession sounds like this: "I am struggling… I feel broken… I need the Lord to help me… I am weak… I cannot seem to win…" What one quite often gains from this is not necessarily an instant victory over the given weakness, desire, or drive, but an inner understanding of what Jesus has done. This is the road toward true victory, the Spirit teaching the inner man, strengthening the heart, and forming Christ within him/her.
That is enough. The heart is before God. If the confession is false, God knows. If it is sincere, it will be blessed.
James is teaching that healing comes when believers stop pretending, stop performing, stop hiding behind spiritual language, and simply admit: "I need help." Then the church prays, not with gossip, not with curiosity, not with drama... but with righteousness, sincerity, and love.
And James says: The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Not because the righteous man is powerful, but because God hears the humble.

James 5:17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.
James 5:18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.
Elijah was a man with a nature like ours... human, pressured, and imperfect. He knew fear, he knew discouragement, and he even got things wrong. After the victory on Mount Carmel he ran for his life, overwhelmed and afraid. He sat under a broom tree and asked God to take his life, believing he was the only faithful one left, though he was not. Elijah felt exhaustion, loneliness, and the pull of despair, yet he prayed earnestly and God acted. He was honest towards the Lord regarding how he felt, where his faith was. James uses Elijah to show that powerful prayer does not come from perfect people, but from weak people who trust a strong God.

James 5:19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,
Here we read the deep concern James carries. James feels for all the peoples within the twelve tribes... believer or not; just as we should feel for the people of the world. But as all off the bible it speaks directly to the church, to those who gather in the assembly, to those who have heard the gospel and know the truth.
And this is important: One cannot wander from the truth unless one knows the truth. This is what the entire letter has been addressing. James has been warning them that believers were drifting away from the fullness of the truth... not abandoning Christ entirely, but wandering into: partiality, pride, double- mindedness, prayerlessness, worldly thinking etc.
This is the climax of the whole letter... a call to restore the wandering believer, to pull them back from the edges, to bring them again into the fullness of Christ's truth.

James 5:20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.
I do not wish to make light of this, nor reduce it to the idea that once a person is saved they are free to live as they please. James is speaking with great seriousness. He is not addressing casual mistakes; he is addressing a believer who is wandering from the truth, drifting from the fullness of the gospel, and stepping into spiritual danger.
I am fully aware many do not believe one can lose their salvation, and I agree... salvation cannot be lost, full stop. However I believe it can be given away, cast aside by the believer. That is a choice, an action of the will. God does not hold anyone against their own desire. James knows this, and this is why he writes with such urgency.
Yet it is entirely possible... and deeply necessary for us all to aid one another in upholding the truth. To pray for one another. To teach one another. To encourage one another. To turn one another back from wandering paths. This is the ministry of the church: to keep the perfect law of liberty, to share the word without malice, to uphold one another in truth, to strengthen the weak, to steady the wavering, to turn back the wanderer, and on and on it goes as we walk together in the grace of Christ.
James more than knows the church can help one another. We can pray, teach, encourage, and restore. We can turn one another back from wandering paths. We can uphold the truth together.
And to show how serious this wandering is, James has built his entire letter around it.

May the Lord bless us all and keep us on the path of righteousness.

Amen.