

HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Faith Does

Full Transcript

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Welcome to James: A Year-Long Study

- 0:06 Well, this year we are kicking off our study in the letter of James, the book of James, which I am really excited for. We are going to be in James chapter 1 today, looking only at verse 1. That's right, James 1, verse 1, 33 minutes on one verse of the Bible. We're going to kind of move around throughout the New Testament this morning as we think through kind of who's this guy James, what's this letter all about. So, I'd encourage you, if you brought a Bible, you can get your Bible out to James chapter 1. If you don't have a Bible, there should be a Bible in a seat back in front of you. You can check out the table of contents and that will show you where the book of James is as well.
- 0:48 Maybe a wonderful New Year's resolution for our entire church could be this. Bring a Bible to church. In just a little bit, we're going to start flipping through the pages of God's Word. And I don't know if there is a sweeter sound than, Bible pages turning together in the church. We've heard from people who've visited Highlands from other places and they've actually said, you know what's unique about Highlands is people at Highlands bring Bibles to church.
- 1:18 Which is encouraging to us and I think is a sad reality of God's church everywhere. So, if you don't have a Bible, we would love to give you a Bible this morning. There should be, out of Info Central, we normally have a stack. So, if you have a stack of Bibles, we'd love to give you a Bible this morning. Maybe you just forgot one, this isn't a guilty thing, so don't look around like who's got a Bible, who doesn't have a Bible. He's talking to those who don't have a Bible, it's fine, chill out. Everyone chill out. Let's bring our Bibles to church because it's going to be fun as we get into James. We're going to be all over the place throughout this study.

The Power of a Formative Word: Understanding "Believe"

- 1:56 Man, sometimes there's an illustration that really sticks with you as a kid or sticks with you as a teen. Or, maybe there's a sentence that sticks with you as a teenager. that sticks with you as a teenager. Maybe there's a song you heard during some like formational moments of your faith. When it comes on the radio, you kind of remember where you were at. I know anytime like mid -thousands Hillsong United comes on the radio, I used to just blast Hillsong United driving up and down from NAU. And it puts me right back in that place. Or maybe it's a story or maybe it's a word. For me, there's a word in the Bible that every time I hear it, it kind of flashes me back to a moment when I was in high school.
- 2:31 Involved in high school ministry here at Highlands. Under the leadership of the pastor at the time. His name is Josh Rose. Josh Rose is now a pastor in, I believe, Escondido, California at Emmanuel Bible Church. Wonderful man. A couple people here in the church even know him, which is great. And he talked about this word believe. It's a word we're going to talk about momentarily here this morning. This word believe, specifically the word believe when it shows up in our Old Testament. Old Testament word for believe looks like these crazy hieroglyphic things. But sounds like immuna. The word immuna. In the mid -thousands, early thousands, there was even a Christian clothing brand, which was cool.

- 3:09 And now it's kind of back, which is fun. But this word *immuna*. And he gave a sermon on *immuna*, talking about the book of James, actually. This word *immuna*. What does the word believe mean when it shows up in the Old Testament? And what's cool is, this is kind of nerdy, but I think it's cool. There's this thing called the Greek Septuagint. So it's a Greek version of the Old Testament and the New Testament. When that word *immuna* shows up in the Old Testament, when the Septuagint was written, they actually used the same word for faith. So this word belief and this word faith are actually synonymous with one another. And what Josh talked about was what does this word believe really mean?
- 3:48 And what it boiled down to was real belief is a deep trust in God that does something. That's what real belief. Real belief is a deep trust in God that does something. That's kind of where we get this idea, as we look through the book of James, that faith does. Faith does. Faith doesn't just acknowledge something. Belief doesn't just acknowledge something. Belief does. You've probably heard the phrase, love is an action verb. You've heard that before? I think faith is an action verb, too. Faith is an action verb. Yes, it's absolutely belief. But what we see with real faith, real belief, is that faith does. He explained it like this. How many of you know?

True Belief Demands Obedience: The Speed Limit Illustration

- 4:29 And many of you don't. It's a senior drive. How many of you know the speed limit of Pima right here?
- 4:38 No one is raising their hand because you're like, well, I know how fast I was driving. Who knows it? 45. 40. You're why everyone's late to church. You were going 40.
- 4:54 Everyone else going 70 because they're trying to be late to church like Todd was this morning, which was fun to watch.
- 5:02 Sometimes just let go, let Todd. That's our little phrase around the office. Let go, let Todd. 45 miles per hour right here. Now, let's say you're running late to church this morning, and God is a God of grace, so you were going 60 to try to get to church this morning. And you got pulled over by one of our wonderful police officers here in Scottsdale. And he asked you, what do you believe the speed limit was? Now, you're going 60. If you say, well, I believe the speed limit was 45. The biblical definition of belief would say that you're actually wrong.
- 5:37 If you believe the speed limit was 45, then you would go 45. If you believed it, you'd actually do it. That is what the biblical word in the Old Testament, *immuna*, means. That's what faith is. If we believe it, we do it. This is the concept we see fleshed out all over the book of James. Our belief, our faith in Christ does. Now, let's be clear here. The things we do do not produce faith. The things that we do do not lead us unto salvation. Salvation in Christ should, though, produce faith and works. Our faith does.

James the Skeptic: The Brother Who Didn't Believe

6:28 This is a principle we see all over the book of James. And I'm excited this morning to kind of just set it up together. Even in the life of James. What did faith doing look like in the life of James? We don't know a lot about James. James isn't like the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul, we get like the whole story. The Apostle Paul, who's a primary author of the New Testament, the right half of the book, he wrote a lot of it. Well, we know before he came to Christ, he was a Pharisee. He was a leader of the law. He was a Jewish leader. He was the guy that all of the little Jewish boys and girls wanted to be like.

7:03 He had everything figured out. He was a persecutor of the church. What does that mean? It means Paul, Saul at the time, hated Jesus. And he hated Jesus' people. We know Paul's story. Until one day, on the road to go persecute more Christians, Jesus showed up and he said, Paul, why are you persecuting me? And Paul responds, who are you, Lord? And we see the Apostle Paul meet Jesus, know Jesus, come to faith in Jesus, and his life is radically transformed. We see his testimony. Even throughout the New Testament, we see the Apostle Paul talking about his testimony. You know who I used to be, but now you see who I am now by the grace of God and God alone.

7:45 We don't get that story a whole lot with James. But we do see some little snippets of it. We see some little scenes of it. We see an idea of who James was. We get an idea of what happened when he met Jesus and came to really know who he was. And then we get to see through the book of Acts and also early Christian history, kind of who James became because of his relationship with Christ. And what we see through the life and teaching of James is that faith does.

8:17

James 1:1

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

8:41 God, What a voice that's been heard?? We know this morning it's your word that's been spoken. And this morning we come before you trusting your word in humility as the authority for our life. God, yes, even one verse bears your authority.

8:57 God, I pray in this verse today, again, we wouldn't just see, what you want from us, God, but the life that you really have for us. What it might look like for us to live a life pleasing to you. God, thank you that our faith is not up to us, our salvation is not up to us.

9:13 Father, thank you that you sent your son to live, to die, to raise again. That we could place our faith in him and thus live with you forever. Holy Spirit, I pray today that you'd open our eyes, that we could see clearly the things we study today. Would you open our ears that we might hear you speaking? Would you open our minds to know who you really are? Open our hearts to respond in love. And not just know about you, but know you.

9:40 And God, I pray by your spirit you'd open our mouths that we go out into the world and live on mission for your glory and your glory alone. God, everything we do, we say, we sing, we think, we pray, we study, we read in this place this morning, we pray that you would use it ultimately for your glory and you'd also use it for our good. God, we love you, we thank you. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, greetings. I know it's just one verse. There's three things that really jump out to me as I've been studying this.

10:15 Not just the last week, really over the last bunch of months to get ready for our time in James together. And what I want to do today is really just set things up. Set things up to kind of give us a good direction, a good starting place, a good foundation to know who's this guy James, what's his story, and what might we come to expect in this book of James. We'll start with the first verse with the first word.

From Cynic to Believer: The Resurrection Changed Everything

10:39 James, who is this guy? We know Paul, we know him from the New Testament, we know many of his apostles, we know Peter, we know Timothy, there's a lot of characters we know a lot about in the New Testament. And James is one of those guys we can actually get to know quite a bit through the gospel, and then also through the book of Acts. I'd invite you in your Bible, turn to Mark chapter 6. Mark chapter 6, we get an idea of who this guy James is.

11:10

Mark 6:1-6

He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household." And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

11:28 Mark chapter 6, verse 1. Jesus went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Now you've got to remember, Jesus returns to his hometown where a lot of people know him. And now Jesus is starting to say and do some things that they had previously not seen him do or heard him say.

11:59 They even say this in verse 3. Is not this the carpenter? Isn't this Jesus that we've lived alongside for 30 years? He's just a carpenter. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James? And Joseph and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. Interesting. You catch verse 3. Who is James? The James who wrote the letter of James is the brother of Jesus.

12:32 It's the brother of Jesus. There's other relatives of Jesus we really know nothing about listed here. Joseph, Judas, Simon. Apparently Jesus had sisters and we really don't know much at all about any of them. But we get a glimpse and a snapshot of who this guy James was. And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household. The prophet is not without honor. In other words, as Jesus traveled all over the place teaching and preaching and healing and performing miracles, and people were flocking from all over the place to come listen to him. And they gave him honor. They gave him respect.

13:09 Except for when he went home. A prophet's not without honor except in his own time, even amongst his own relatives. There was no honor when he came home. Now probably from his mom. Remember an angel showed up to Mary and told Mary what her son would accomplish. Probably from his earthly father Joseph, who we don't know much about either. Probably honored him. Probably honored his son. Knowing who his son would someday be the Messiah, the Christ.

13:38

John 7:5

For not even his brothers believed in him.

14:06 How many of you are second siblings? Third siblings, fourth siblings. You've got siblings out in front of you. The siblings out in front of you automatically become the sibling that you're meant to measure up to. You've got some shoes to fill. Can you imagine if your older sibling was God in the flesh?

14:33 Tough shoes. James. Why can't you be more like your brother Jesus? It'd be rough.

14:46 It's interesting. We don't just see James as skeptical. But we actually see James early on as a cynical person when it comes to who Jesus was. And who Jesus claimed to be. Especially once he started this ministry. Professing repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Professing himself to be God. To be the Christ. The anointed one. The Messiah. People didn't take kindly to it. Mark chapter 3. Just a couple pages earlier. Beginning in verse 13. We see Jesus pick his team. 12 apostles. These are the guys he's going to choose to send out and preach and teach and perform miracles. Cast out demons and change the world. 12 guys. Rag tag group of dudes that you and I probably wouldn't pick if we were picking a dream team.

15:34

Mark 3:13-21

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

16:08 Verse 18. Andrew. Philip. And Bartholomew. And Matthew. And Thomas. And James. Another different James. The son of Alphaeus. And Thaddeus. And Simon the zealot. [text intentionally skipped in original]. And Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. Then he went home and the crowd gathered again so they could not even eat. So Jesus returns home. People press in. They want to hear him teach. They want to see miracles. They want to see what's going on. There's so much going on around him. They don't even get time for a lunch break. This is the reality of his ministry.

16:40 Verse 21. And when his family heard it they went out to seize him for they were saying he is out of his mind.

- 16:50 We don't just get a picture of James that's skeptical. We get a picture of James that James is completely cynical of who his brother is. He's lost it. He's lost it mom. I know he was a good kid and all but now he's claiming to be God.
- 17:11 Entirely unsupportive. Doesn't believe in who he is. Not a follower. Not a supporter. Not even skeptical. Just straight cynical. Remember the movie Rudy? Rudy. Rudy. It's a classic. We watched it with our boys for the first time this last year. If you haven't seen Rudy I'm going to ruin the whole thing for you. It's your own fault at this point. It's been out for quite a while.

Servant: From Family Member to Spiritual Leader

- 17:37 It's the story of this like guy who by all means should not be a football player who just wants to be a football player and his dream is to play for who. Notre Dame. Wants to play for the Irish. That's the whole movie. Literally the whole movie is this guy wants to play for the Irish.
- 17:58 And he has a brother, an older brother. Does his older brother believe in Rudy? Not at all. Not even skeptical. Just straight cynical. The whole entire time. That's kind of the picture I get here. James is just straight cynical. No, Jesus, you're not. You're not him. You're not him.
- 18:20 You're not the main character. You're not. That's what he gets to grow up with. That's what Jesus' support looks like from this brother James who does not believe in him. But at some point, at some time, we know that everything changed for James. Flip to the right in your Bible, 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We're not entirely sure when everything changes for James. But we know that it does. He goes from knowing his brother to really knowing his brother.

18:54

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

- 19:35 The Bible says there's penalties for our sin, namely death. So throughout the Old Testament, we see death after death after death. All of these sacrifices being made. But the scriptures teach that one is to come from the Old Testament to the New Testament who will pay the penalty of every single person's sin. That he will be the sacrifice.
- 19:58 That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. That he was buried. That he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. That's the gospel. That Christ came and lived and died for us but he didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead defeating death. That you and I could live with him forever. Abundant life now. Eternal life with him later.

- 20:20 That's the good news of Jesus. Jesus paid it all. He paid the penalty for our sin. That after this he appeared to Cephas. That's Peter. Then the 12. The 12 guys we read earlier. Then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at once. Most of whom are still alive. Though some have fallen asleep. What Paul is essentially saying is like, hey, after Jesus came back from the dead, he went and talked to more than 500 people at one time. Okay. The world's greatest Ted talker. Dies tomorrow. Comes back to life. And then does more Ted talks. You'd be like, no, that guy's alive. This is what happens.
- 20:55 He dies. Comes back to life. And appears to more than 500 people at once. Then he appeared to who? To James. Then to all the apostles. Last of all is the one untimely born. He appeared also to me. Oh, to be a fly on the wall. Of that conversation between Jesus. And his younger brother, James.
- 21:20 You know, in my flesh, I have a couple of younger brothers. I would probably come back to life and be like, told you so.
- 21:30 Probably rub it in a little bit. What do you think of me now? Man, I can't imagine Jesus doing that. I can imagine Jesus walking to his younger brother. Throwing his arm around him. Probably a younger brother who at this moment is just wrecked. He's just wrecked. He's watched his brother die. Which in his mind, that's the end of the story. Because that's what he believed Jesus to be. Just a carpenter. Just his older brother.

James's Rise in the Early Church

- 21:59 But then to see in a moment your brother actually be everything he claimed to be. To realize you got it wrong. Must have been filled with so much guilt. So much shame. So much sorrow.
- 22:12 And I imagine our Lord just throwing his arms around him and being like, man, I love you.
- 22:18 We don't know anything about this situation. We don't know anything about this conversation. All we know is that the conversation happened. And from this point on, the picture we get of James is completely different. That's the second word. I told you we're going slow through this. James, that was the first word. Second word, servant.
- 22:39 James, a servant. Somehow, someway, at some time, James went from cynic of his brother to servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. How beautiful is that? How does that happen? By the power of grace in our life. By the power of the Holy Spirit in our life. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, anyone in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone. Behold, new things have come. When you place your faith in Christ, faith does. God changes you.
- 23:10 God changes you. It's not just about white knuckling it and trying the best we can. It's about faithfully submitting our life to Christ, surrendering to him, and allowing him to do things and move through us. This is the story of James. James, servant. Now again, I am not a good brother like James is a good brother. And I would probably start this letter a little different if I were him. If I wanted people to listen up to what I had to say, I would think James, brother of the almighty God, has a pretty good ring to it.

- 23:45 Doesn't it? If you wanted someone's attention and you wanted them to really listen up to what you had to say. Isn't this? This is kind of what we do when we have public speakers, right? Let me introduce to you so and so. They've written all of these books. And they've done this. And that's all wonderful things. But we're trying to give honor and then also give credibility to, hey, here's why you should probably listen to what they have to say.
- 24:11 Right? If you go see a doctor, there better be some letters after that name. Otherwise, not a doctor. I want to know there's credibility there. James needs no credibility.
- 24:25 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes in the dispersion. Greetings. People knew James was the brother of God. Galatians chapter 1 talks about James, the brother of our Lord. So it's not like people didn't affirm this. People knew it. Now, somewhere between the resurrection of Jesus and the letter of James and really even earlier on than that. We see James' life. Completely transformed. Acts chapter 1. We get this picture. Jesus standing before his disciples right before he ascends back to heaven. And he says, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be my witnesses in all Jerusalem, Judea, even to the ends of the earth.
- 25:07 Shortly after that, Jesus ascends back to the right hand of the Father. And we see this snapshot of all of the apostles in the upper room praying. And it talks about all 12 of them are there. And also gathered with them is Mary, mother of Jesus, and his brothers.
- 25:23 James has gone from cynic of the Lord to servant of the Lord. He's all in. We can go throughout the book of Acts. Later on in Acts. I think it's Acts chapter 12 maybe. The apostle Peter is arrested, thrown in prison. God breaks him out of jail miraculously. The first person Peter wants to go talk to, James. I got to go tell James what just happened. James has become a leader in the early church. The apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 1. Talks about his conversion experience. His testimony. How he was breathing threats of death against God's people. He hated God. He hated God's people. But God in his grace and his kindness revealed Jesus to him.

James the Just: A Life of Devoted Action

- 26:06 It's his testimony. And he says he didn't just get right to ministry right away. He actually went and spent three years like out in the desert in silence and solitude. We read during our study in Corinthians. Paul's talking about in 2 Corinthians. I know a man who was caught up to the third heavens. He had this vision. Which we said that might be Paul.
- 26:28 Paul might have had this vision of the Lord. Where he was disciplined by Jesus himself out in the desert for a few years. What a discipleship program that must have been. But Galatians 1 says after Paul had this experience. He went and spent 15 days with the apostle Peter. But saw no one else other than his brother James.
- 26:51 Galatians chapter 2 verse 9. Refers to James as a pillar in the church of Jerusalem.

- 26:59 So we see James as this vitally important character in the early church. Throughout the book of Acts. In the church in Jerusalem. Even played a significant role in the apostle Paul's life. The apostle Paul sought some input. So who did he go to? He went to the people who were closest to Jesus.
- 27:20 Went and hung out with Peter. Remember Peter's story. Peter surely this night you will betray me. All of them will fall away Lord. But never me. We know Peter's story three times. He betrays him. Betrays him. Betrays him. Jesus after his resurrection comes to Peter. And says Peter do you love me? Yes Lord I love you. Peter do you love me? Yes Lord I love you. Peter do you love me? Lord you know that I love you.
- 27:46 It's one of the closest relationships. It's Peter, James and John. So Paul wants to spend time with Peter. To hear about personally. What was Jesus like? He wants to go spend time with Jesus' brother James. To know what was your brother like? I've got three brothers and a cousin who's like a brother. We've just officially become like the five Slagerman. Which has been wonderful. And I can tell you this. If you want to get to know any of my brothers. Get to know me.
- 28:14 You'll get to know a little bit of my brothers just through me. If you want to get to know me. Get to know any one of my brothers. And all of the good things they represent. Also represent me. You want to get to know Jesus. Get to know the people who are closest to Jesus. They're going to give you a really good picture of who Jesus is. That's James. And James had the privilege. He may have been 10 years younger than Jesus. James had the privilege for 20 years watching his brother grow up. Living with his brother. So see what does it look like to be a good follower of God.
- 28:50 Even though to still not believe in who he was and what he came to do. But to see him on the other side of his resurrection. And not just know his brother. But really know his brother. And I wonder how true that might be of any of us here in this place this morning. We know about Jesus.
- 29:10 We know some songs. We know some verses. We know some facts. We know some theology. We can hang in small group. We know about him. But how much do we know him? How much do we know Jesus?
- 29:27 I mean the life of James just tells that story. He's gone from knowing about him. To really knowing who Christ really is. Early church history tradition tells us more about James. James had a few really cool nicknames. The first one not so much. Sons of Thunder from Jesus. Sounds awesome. A nickname James got from his friends was James the Less. Because he was shorter and younger than the other Jameses. So we see in church history James the Less. Which is kind of a bummer of a nickname. A better one though. People called him James the Just.

Faith Unto Death: James's Martyrdom

- 30:00 James the Just. Why? Because faith does. James was all about putting his faith in action. James was all about being a doer of what he believed. Not just a hearer of what he believed. We see some of this throughout the book of James. Be a doer of the word. Not just a hearer of the word. Do it. Our faith should do. He was called James the Just. He was also known to have the knees of a camel.

- 30:27 Not sure if they had nail spas back in the day. To fix that up or what not. But these just thick nasty callouses on his knees. From being so devoted in prayer.
- 30:44 Now I can do about five minutes on my knees in prayer. And then I got to get up because my knees hurt.
- 30:51 James spent so much time in devotion. Unto his brother, unto his Lord. Just praying. Praying. Praying. I mean that's the kind of guy I want to learn from. Not just the kind of guy I want to learn from. The kind of guy I want to be like. Yeah I want to do the thing. I want my faith to have action. I want my faith to do. But also man that type of devotion unto the Lord. That's the type of devotion that I want to be true of my life.
- 31:24 It's the type of devotion I hope and pray we all want to be true of our own lives. That maybe we wouldn't have the callouses of a camel on our knees. But we could say man I've been found faithful. Devoted unto the Lord. And I've placed my faith in Christ. And now my faith does. What a blessing that would be. For our families. For our community. For our church. Church history goes on. Talks about the death of James. James died the death of a martyr. Between the years of 62 and 69. The brother of Jesus James was brought up to the temple mount. The highest part of the temple. The same part in Matthew chapter 4 where Jesus was taken to.
- 32:01 Where the devil tempted him and said throw yourself down. Your angels will come. Throw yourself down. James was given kind of an ultimatum here. He was brought to the top of the temple. The same place where his brother Jesus once stood and said recant your faith. Go back on it. Say it's all not true. Or be thrown down from the temple. And James just said I can't do it. Faith does. Faith does. So even in the last moments of his life he spent professing who his brother really was. He was thrown down from the temple mount. And then stoned to death by religious priests. By religious leaders. By a bunch of doers.

To the Scattered Tribes: God's Dispersed People

- 32:44 People who were so stuck on doing the right thing. And saying the right thing. And being perfect all the time. But on the inside had no real devoted faith and hope. And who God is and what God has done for us. See the book of James is not just about do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. The people who believe do this. Do this. Do this. Are the very people who executed James for the faith he had in Christ. Friends the book of James is about love Jesus.
- 33:11 Place your faith in Christ and your faith will do. Our faith does. James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes in the dispersion. Greetings. 12 tribes you get echoes of the Old Testament. The 12 tribes of Israel. God's chosen people who have now been dispersed. What does that mean? Man even all throughout the Old Testament God's people are getting beat up. Pushed around. Dispersed from their homes. Left and right. Right and left. All the time. Early church the same things happen.
- 33:45 God's people because of their faith face tremendous persecution. And they get pushed out of their homes. And a little thing James says even right here from the beginning. He recognizes their moment of need. He recognizes their turmoil. He recognizes the trials and the tragedies they face. But he also does not just recognize he reminds them who they are. You are the 12 tribes. You are God's people.

- 34:12 Friends we are God's people. Even amidst the trials. Even amidst the tragedies. Even amidst opposition. Even amidst persecution. Would we as a church. Would we remember who we are? We are God's children. Not because of anything we've done. Only because of what Christ and Christ alone has done.
- 34:34 Would it be true of our church. Would it be true of this church that we place our faith in Christ. Even amidst hard circumstances. That the world around us might see real faith in action. Real belief in action. Amen. Let me leave you with three things just very briefly. Three things I think we can take away from just one verse in God's word. The first is this. Would servant hearted humility be a hallmark of our faith?
- 35:04 Would it be true of us? Would our faith do in this way? Would our lives echo servant hearted humility? You wonder where James got it from. He got it from his brother Jesus. Philippians chapter 2 said Jesus emptied himself. He came to earth as a servant. And now that mind of Christ can be ours as well. That we would live humble servant filled lives.
- 35:32 Second thing is this. Man this morning I don't know where you're at in your faith. But today would you place your faith in Christ? Would today be the day we stop just knowing about Jesus. And the day that we make a commitment to really know who he is and what he did.
- 35:48 Not just belief that we believe God is real. And we have faith that Jesus existed. But belief that actually leads to action. Belief that's true. Trust. Deep trust in who God is that produces something in our life. Would you come to faith in Christ today? Would you recognize the sin in your life? Would you see it for what it is? There's penalties for our sin. Our sin separates us from God. But thanks be to God that Jesus lived a perfect life. Became the sacrifice for us. The Bible says if we confess with our mouth Jesus is Lord. And believe in our heart God raised him from the dead. Believe in our heart. Faith. If we believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead.
- 36:29 Then we would be saved. Would we no longer just believe he existed. But this morning friend would you believe in Christ?
- 36:39 Third thing we're going to do as a church this morning. We're going to take a communion. If you didn't receive a communion cup on your way in. You can slip your hand up. And we will. One of our communion team will make sure you have some communion to take.

Three Takeaways: Living Faith in Action

- 36:57 The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. Teaching the church in Corinth how to take communion properly. Because they had obviously been abusing it. In ways that were just not right. He tells them to look three ways. He tells them to first look back. Look back at what Christ has done. Friends could we just for a moment bow our heads. Close our eyes. And look back and remember what Christ has done for us. That he lived for us. That he died for us. That he rose again.
- 37:30 Would we thank him? Would we even look back to this last year. And thank him seeing his footsteps everywhere with us.

- 37:50 Communion also gives us a chance to look in. To just search our own hearts. And find out man where am I at. What's going on. Man do you find yourself this morning. Knowing some things about Jesus. Or really believing and knowing Jesus.
- 38:13 Do you find yourself in this beginning of the new year. Walking with the Lord.
- 38:19 Is your faith doing? Is it producing the fruit of righteousness? Communion also gives a chance to look forward. Recognizing friends we're still in a season of advent. Awaiting the arrival of our Lord. Someday he will come back. Until then with one voice. And one spirit. We cry out Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus come.
- 38:45 On the night Jesus was betrayed. He was enjoying a meal with his disciples. And during the meal he took a piece of bread. And he broke it. And he said this is my body. Which is broken for you. Church we do this in remembrance of Christ.
- 39:02 In the same way he took a cup. And he said this cup represents my blood. A new covenant. My blood that's poured out for you. Church we do this in remembrance of him.
- 39:22 Jesus we come before you this morning. Not just recognizing that you hold a place in history.
- 39:30 We come before you not just knowing that once upon a time you existed. We come before you not believing you to just be a rabbi or a good teacher. We come before you not just believing you to be some prophet. But God we come before your son this morning. Professing him to be the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 39:50 Father our heart and our desire through this study in James. And throughout this next year is to know him more. God not just know about him. But truly know him.
- 40:03 So Father we pray during this year. During this season. During this study in James. Lord would you help us know you.

Invitation to Belief and Communion

- 40:11 Would you help us believe. When we're in seasons of doubt. Would you help us overcome that unbelief. And Father we pray by the power of your spirit. You would come and dwell within us. That you would help our faith do. That we might bring you glory in everything our life produces.
- 40:31 Father God we love you. We thank you for this time. We thank you mostly for your son Jesus. To him be all the glory. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.