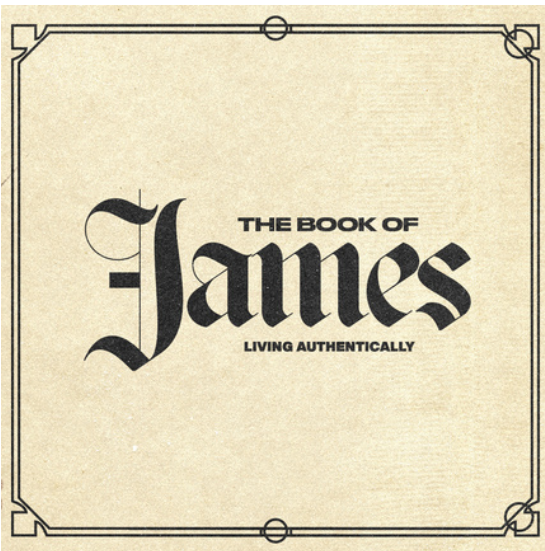


# SERMON STUDY GUIDE



04.28.24 // Week 3 // “Prove It!”



The world's landscape rapidly changed after the resurrection of Jesus. As God's work of redeeming people continued, communities were formed. But the truth is we are still messy even while we are redeemed. James writes with a bluntness and candor that is unique in the New Testament. But amidst the direct, proverbial nature, he speaks truths that still land with us 2,000 years later. Here we learn how to put feet to our faith and live lives congruent with our beliefs!

## ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- When was the last time you felt directed by God to help fill a need, serve a community, or provide support to those who are suffering? What did you do?
  
- In your opinion, what does an active faith look like?

# GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

## Let's read James 2:14-19

*14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can such faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder.*

### Point 1 – Living faith is active faith.

Once you put your faith in Jesus, it's not enough to just say you love Jesus. Our faith compels us to love other people. It's love in action. It's the deep love of God on display. Living faith is not just lip service, but life service (vs.14). Works do not get us saved. They are a natural byproduct of us being saved. Jesus modeled for us how He wanted us to live out our faith in this world and He wanted that to look like taking care of those around us. He wants us to take care of the practical needs of the widows, the orphans, the homeless, the hurting, the sick, the weary, and the people in society who are thought of as "less than."

Anyone can say they believe there is a God or they believe in Jesus. As James pointed out in this section, even the demons believe in Jesus (vs.19). What James is saying in these verses is that people will know you belong to Jesus when you do the things for people that Jesus did (vs.18-19). There is no divorcing faith from works. Once we have true faith in Jesus and His work on the cross, our lives should reflect this by the works that we do out of our incredible gratitude and love for all He has done for us. When the Spirit is at work in us, He opens our eyes to see people as He sees them, to love them with the love He has for them, and to want to comfort them with the comfort we ourselves have received from Him.

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does knowledge about God help create in us a love for God and others? How do we avoid becoming more knowledgeable about God without becoming more loving?
- What do you think James meant when he referred to faith that is “dead” in verse 17? What can breathe new life into our faith?
- Who can benefit from your active faith this week? What opportunity has Jesus provided for you to be His hands and feet in your home, your neighborhood, your job, etc?

## Let’s read Luke 4:16–21

*16 He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written:*

*18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me  
to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free the oppressed,  
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.*

*20 He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled.”*

## Point 2 – Active faith is living on mission with Jesus.

Early on in the ministry of Jesus, He visited the place where He was raised (Nazareth), and amazed everyone. On the Sabbath, Jesus entered the synagogue, picked up a scroll, and read from Isaiah 61. This passage, known as a messianic text, spoke of the Spirit-empowered Servant of the Lord. In that moment, Jesus wanted everyone to understand that not only was He declaring to be this promised Messiah but He also spoke to the type of ministry He would have.

His was a Spirit-empowered ministry of preaching the good news to the poor, setting captives free, recovering sight for the blind, and freeing the oppressed. Jesus showed compassion to the suffering and the lowliest in society. The Gospels are filled with numerous examples of Jesus caring for those in need. As followers of Jesus, He invites us to show compassion to those in need and live our lives on mission with Jesus.

The world is God's mission field, and the church is His method. We have missions in life. We have a mission at work, at home, in our marriages, to get married or not, where to live. These are all great missions to have. But our ultimate mission, the one for which we were created, is to do the work of the Father. *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* **Ephesians 2:10, NIV**

The more we live out the work God prepared in advance for us to do, the more our faith is strengthened. We see bodies healed, minds cleared, marriages restored, jobs gained, and people's hearts made new in Christ. The more we follow Christ's example, the more like Christ we become. He changes our hearts and minds as we step out in faith to help those around us.

*"And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts. Whoever speaks should do so as those who speak God's word. Whoever serves should do so from the strength that God furnishes. Do this so that in everything God may be honored through Jesus Christ. To him be honor and power forever and always. Amen."* **1 Peter 4:10-11, CEB**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If someone watched your life, what evidence would show the activeness of your faith? What changes would you like to see in your life to be more on mission with Jesus?
- Which outreach partner spoke to you the most this weekend? How can you get involved in this ministry?
- What gift do you think God has given you and how can you use it for others? What gift do you see in those around you in your group and how could you share it with them?