

James: Where Faith Gets Real: In Action
Roger Blumenthal - September 24, 2017

Series Big Idea: James is one of the most practical books in the Bible, tackling the real life issues and struggles that all of us face: temptation, self-control, work, anger, poverty, our words, prejudice and more. The book challenges our consumeristic and complacent nature as Americans and challenges us to live out a faith that is active and makes a difference. It is a book that combines the teachings of Jesus with the wisdom of the Proverbs to show us the perfect law that gives freedom. James' whole purpose is to help us make sure our faith gets real in everyday life.

Message Big Idea: Faith cannot stop at just believing something to be true. Faith must change us and motivate us to act in ways that serve and benefit others. Faith or belief about something is not real faith and in fact is pointless, useless and can even be dangerous. But real living faith always expresses itself in action.

One liner: Words may be heard, but actions change the world.

Main Idea: Faith that's real is alive on the inside and outside. Real faith is felt on the inside(internally) and expressed on the outside(externally)

Main Text: James 2:14-26

Supporting texts: 1 Peter 4:10-11

1 Peter 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. **11** If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Describe your faith in Jesus to one another. Talk about how Jesus is to you and the depth of your trust in him. (Words)
2. Using examples from your life this last week, describe a situation how others saw the depth of your faith lived out in those circumstances of your week. (Deeds)
3. Discuss how you have been encouraged by the stories of your deeds...faith lived out in action.

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Franciscan Blessing to close service with.

May God bless you with discomfort

At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,

So that we may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger

At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,

So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears

To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,

So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness

To believe that you can make a difference in this world,

So that you can do what others claim cannot be done,

To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

Amen.