

**Daniel Butson**

**James 1:19-27**

**Keep The Change**

Thanks Mark. And thank you to Steve and the staff for welcoming Katie and I with such kindness. It's really cool to hear about what God is doing among you all.

This morning we continue in our sermon series **Faith That Works** – Going verse by verse thru the best selling book of James. And today, we are in **James 1:19-27**.

Today's Message I'm calling Keep The Change!

That's what we want.

We want to grow.

We want to mature.

We want to feel like we are moving towards what God has for us.

I don't think it's because we lack the desire.

I don't many of us are here today – Thinking – I can't wait to be stagnant in my walk with God.

I don't it's because we don't try.

Maybe the real problem is that we simply don't keep the change!

We start but we don't really finish.

We want to follow God but we don't know how to move forward.

What I love about this passage we are going to read is that James is going to give real, practical ways that we

can continue to change - continue to become more like Jesus – Have a Faith that actually works.

And the reason it's important to James that we have a Faith that works –

This whole book – He's

**That Hey – If Jesus is really in you – It should CHANGE something about you!**

Realizing that Jesus has moved you from death to life  
From Lost to Found

That's a big deal – And The impact of that change should be evident.

And James is writing to people who are on the run – they've been persecuted for their faith -  
And some apparently – are giving up  
Some are not really living it out -  
Some are saying they believe in Jesus – but their lives aren't matching up -

And James is fighting for these people – and giving us some real ways to continue this journey called faith!

So here's James 1:19-27

**James 1:19-27**

You can follow along as I read:

<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,<sup>20</sup> because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly **accept** the word planted in you, which can save you.

James Look- Continue moving forward in faith - to get rid of moral filth, all the garbage, that old way of life, all of those bad habits that's so prevalent – And then he tells us how – **And Humbly accept the word!**

**So this is really about how we relate to God's Word-**

**He goes on to say -**

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do** what it says.<sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror<sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.<sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.<sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:

to look after orphans and widows in their distress and  
to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

What I love about James is that I feel like this book  
wasn't written with a pen – it feels like it was written  
with a 2x4. Because every time I read this – I just get  
whacked! He doesn't water it down. He doesn't mince  
his words. He calls it like it is.

Sometimes that's exactly what we need -  
It's good for my soul.

This morning we are going to look at something really  
simple – But it change your life -

James says – If you want to Keep the Change -

If you want to keep moving forward in your faith -

Show that it's real:

We will make a Habit of:

Receiving the Word

Responding to the Word

And Reflecting the Word

That's where are going this morning -

Let's pray real quick -

Lord,

Thank you for the gift we have to come together, to  
worship you, to open up your word and hear from you.

Today, God I pray that you...Give us ears to hear the  
song of Jesus, gives us eyes to see the beauty of Jesus,  
give us a heart willing to obey Jesus. We pray these

things in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus –  
Amen.

~~James is coming on to something really, really meaningful in this passage – In a nutshell – He's saying – In order to continue moving forward - there's more to faith than just hearing what God says. Real, genuine faith is not just about hearing –~~

He's saying -

**That if you really have Jesus in you – It should change something about you!**

The book of James is so so good. And what I love about this book is that it's all about Life Change.

He's challenging us -

**If Jesus is in you – Then it should change something about you.**

You should have a Faith that Works!

James is not saying - Works saves you. But he is saying – Look, if you really are saved, a follower of Jesus – Your Faith Will Work!

The way I like to say it:

**A changed life is not the requirement for grace – But it is the Result!**

There might be some of us who live like:  
God will only love me when I clean myself up.  
God will only accept me when I get my ducks in a row.  
God will only invite me into a relationship when I earn it.

**Our assumption when it comes to God, because it's like this in so many other areas of our lives, It's like we have change ourselves up before God can change us!**

But I want you to know that's not our God- that's not good news!

I've got incredibly, good news:  
No matter where you are today.  
No matter how far you've run.  
No matter how dark it's gotten.  
No matter how low you've fallen on your search for satisfaction and meaning.

**Jesus loves you just as you are!**

**There is no mess too big for him to clean up!**

BECAUSE At the core of the Jesus message: is something called Grace.

**Christ died for us while we were yet sinners!**

**This is GRACE – Unmerited Favor!**

**We didn't earn it – We don't deserve it –**

God knows the truth about your mess.  
God knows the truth about your struggles.  
He knows the truth about what's inside you.  
He knows all the hard truth -  
**And he still loves you!**

**And there's nothing you can do to make him love you more and nothing you can do to make him love you less.**

**God loves you.**

**God meets us right where we are!**

**So NO – you're not saved by what you do – you're saved by what Jesus has done**

**And really the only requirement to accept grace- Is knowing you need it!**

**AND SO WHAT - James argues this whole book -  
Look, if you've been saved, if you've received the grace of God – If you've accepted this truth – That He who knew no sin became sin that you might become the righteousness of God -  
And you went from Lost to Found  
From death to Life –**

**That if you really have Jesus in you – It should change something about you!**

James is saying in this whole book – A Changed Life in  
Not the Requirement for Grace – (JESUS MEETS YOU

WHERE YOU ARE) But – **A changed life should be the result!**

**Here he gives us practical ways to live into that change!**

**Keep the change...**

**Let's dive back in to today's passage –**

**The first thing James encourages us to do – Receive the Word -**

**#1 James saying – Keeping the Change begins with Receiving the Word.**

<sup>21</sup> **Therefore**, (I think that therefore refers back to what Pastor Steve spoke on last week – that we have these desires and they go out of control, they can mess up, and if we give in to them it's going to lead us to death – That's what he's connecting back to) **Therefore** - get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and **humbly accept** the word planted in you, which can save you.

James starts out by saying look, if you want to live a changed life – you want to leave behind that old way of life -

Leave behind the moral filth, all of that mess and garbage that we've been carrying for so long – and move forward in faith –

Then – Get this – We need to Receive God's Word.

Now, there's a difference between just hearing the word and really receiving it.

Just like – Men, There's a difference between hearing your wife and really receiving what's she's saying -

Have you ever been guilty of your wife ever saying:

Are you even listening to me?

Right – Because – There's a difference between hearing and receiving!

Hey you want to move forward -

James says – If you want live a changed life – It starts with Receiving this word that's been planted in you.

That word humbly accept is a big deal – It could also be Receive or even Welcome.

**James is saying there's a big difference between the person who merely hears God's word and the one who receives or welcomes God's word into their lives.**

This reminds me of The Parable of the Sower.

You might remember. Jesus tells this story of a farmer and he is sowing seed – He's sowing the word of God! So this farmer is throwing it out indiscriminately – It's for everyone to receive!

And Jesus says- When the word goes out – There are **4 groups** of people in this world.

**Group 1:** Jesus says – The word hits the **Hard Path** –

THEY HEAR THE WORD- And The Word is snatched up from them by the birds!

Immediately for whatever reason there's a group of people that HEAR THE WORD – but their hearts are so hard – They don't want anything to do with it!

It's like Jesus is knocking on their door and rather than opening it and welcoming him in – they hear the door bell, turn off the lights, close all the blinds, tell the kids to be quiet, act like no one is home!

We don't want to be bothered!

There are some who are so hard – That when they hear the gospel, or they hear a sermon, or read the Bible –

For whatever reason – These people are so hardened – There's no way for the good news to get to them. They can hear time and time again and it doesn't affect them!

Jesus You're Not Welcome Here. They put up the NO SOLICITING SIGN. They don't want to be bothered with Jesus!

**Group 2:** Jesus then talks about the **Rocky Soil People**. He says there's people who HEAR THE WORD and they get really excited about it. But then something bad happens and they give up on Jesus.

Maybe that first group isn't you. But maybe this is your group.

Maybe there was a time you heard about Jesus and you want to change, you wanted to follow Him - You get excited – But then trouble comes!

Maybe you get sick.

you lose someone you love.

Someone comes along and tempts you.

Maybe people make fun of your faith in Jesus.

Maybe you lose a job.

**Because Jesus really hasn't gotten in your heart- it's not taken root –**

**You open the door with Joy but as soon as things get bad you close the door. And send Jesus away!**

**Group 3:** Then there's this 3<sup>rd</sup> group – **The Thorny Soil –**  
HEAR THE WORD - Get choked out by the world – So here's a group - They too open the door to Jesus – But Jesus says - The worries of this life, wealth, and desires for others things come in and choke out the word, making them unfruitful!

**What looks to have promise – Is swallowed up by all of these other things!**

**Your love of money.**

**Or your Job.**

**Or your hobbies.  
Or your weekends.  
Or your Lifestyle.**

**Maybe you're climbing up the ladder but you don't  
realize it's propped up on the wrong house!  
And so you won't let go of in your life – It chokes it all  
out  
You may really really like Jesus.**

**For this 3<sup>rd</sup> group:  
It's like open the door – but you only invite him to stay  
on your front porch because you don't really want him  
messing with the other rooms in your life!**

**But instead, there are those who may really like Jesus  
– but not enough to give up something.**

**This is the sad story of the Rich Young Ruler later on in  
Mark 10 who was excited to meet Jesus – had a good  
conversation. But then Jesus, knowing what this dude  
really loves – Says – so you can follow me – one thing  
I'm going to ask: Sell everything!**

**Because Jesus knew – this guy's money is his life.**

**And Mark says – He walks away sad.**

**He left Jesus hanging on the front porch!**

**Listen me now - All 3 groups HEARD JESUS – HEARD  
THE GOOD NEWS -**

**But then there's this one last group: It's the good soil...**

**<sup>20</sup>Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."**

In this story – Everyone had a chance to **hear the gospel**. But there's this verb in here that is crucial: Because it's one thing to HEAR the good news, this person **WELCOMES or ACCEPTS** it.

So this final group – Hear Jesus Knocking – They answer it – They hear the news of grace, forgiveness, and it doesn't stop there!

**THEY WELCOME JESUS IN!**

It's like they heard Jesus knocking and they welcome Him into every area of their lives – **AND THEY WERE CHANGED and THAT PRODUCES IN THEM NEW LIFE!**

In the same way – James is saying – When it comes to the Word of God – Let's not JUST HEAR IT – LET'S ACCEPT IT!

RECEIVE IT

WELCOME IT IN!

WHEN YOU LET GOD IN -

to speak to how you spend your money -

Speak to how you lead your family -

Speak to how you make your plans and your future

**Speak into those hidden rooms that no one ever sees –**

**God will begin to change your life -**

**You're not just hearing the word – You're RECEIVING THE WORD.**

James goes on to say -**After we receive – James challenges us to Do something about it**

**#2 James says if you want to keep the change We gotta Respond to the Word**

I want you to say **Respond** with me!

James says: <sup>22</sup> **Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.**

**He's saying: Put what you just received into Practice!**

**Here's the bottom line:** what James is saying is those who really follow God will actually **DO** what God says. And if there is no action, then there has been no acceptance of the Word.

You can tell the Word is **in you** by what's happening **outside of you**. And if there's nothing happening outside of us that resembles Jesus, then it's right to ask the question: is Jesus really inside?

**Here's the scary thing:**

We can do all the bible studies  
Hear all the sermons  
Do all the church things  
Even read the Bible

And we can still be Far from God.

Claiming to have something that we don't really have.

One of the scariest realities as a pastor is this passage from Matthew 7 when Jesus says – There's going to a lot of people who say:  
Lord Lord, Here I am!  
Jesus is going to say – Dude, I never knew you.

What do you mean – We went to church, we did service projects, we tithed, we preached, we did it!

Yeah, but you didn't follow me!

We don't need to overcomplicate it – Following Jesus is really simple – It's welcoming His Word into your life – And then Following Him – Doing what it says!

Back at Fishhawk a guy who was born and raised in Buddhism just came to Christ 3 weeks ago. He read the Great Commission – Go – make disciples – He's been leading all kinds of people to Jesus.  
He read how we should pray for the sick for their healing- So every sick person he comes around – He

says –Jesus told me to pray for you!  
And people are getting better!

And he said: Daniel, Am I doing this right?

Yes – MR Chau – You’re doing it right!

The dude is reading His Bible – And then He’s doing  
what it says!

What a novel idea.

Receive Gods’ Word and Do What it says!

How many people do we know:

Quote Scripture on Marriage – But treat their wife like  
trash

Quote Scripture on Parenting – But are jerks to their  
kids.

Quote on Generosity – But we don’t tip our servers -

**Here’s what I know:**

Some may disagree with me – But the Bible can’t  
change your life –

James says – This Bible is a mirror – It reveals stuff – it  
doesn’t fix stuff!

This mirror can tell me what’s going on -

This mirror can’t fix what’s wrong.

God’s word is like a mirror – I heard a sermon – why am  
I not changed.

I did my quiet time – why am I not happy

I listened to a podcast -

I did a bible study –

Or read all kinds of Christian books and it not do a thing!

**And it won't actually change you – until you APPLY it!  
Put it into practice!**

This is why in his ministry Jesus says -

2 People can go through the same storm -

Maybe they lose a job, or lose someone they love, or get sick, something horrible happens...

Same storm - And One person does fine – isn't beaten down by it, immovable – Jesus says that person's life is built on rock –

Other – is on sand – destroyed by it – What's the difference – Matthew 7:24- Jesus says-

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Hearing God's word does not put rock under your feet – that only happens when you take what you know about God and you learn to walk it out yourself!

**That's when your life is built on a rock!**

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So church, if want to keep the change - we need to **receive** the Word. We need to **respond** to the Word with action. And finally, James says we need to **Reflect** the Word.

**#3 - Reflect the Word.**

**James 1:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.<sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James is saying – If Jesus has really made a difference in your life -

Moved you from death to life -

From lost to found

That Change within – Should BE reflected in how we live!

So No Matter whatever you say, whatever you do -

Your life should be a reflection of Jesus!

He's uses that word - **religion**. That word gets a bad rap.

So bad that we like to say: Christianity is not a religion it's a relationship.

I get that.

**But, here's all this word means: It means "the outward practice."<sup>1</sup>**

**Pure religion means actually putting God's word to work.**

From how we love the least of these to how we talk to our family members- what's inside of us – should come out in the way we live!

**The impact of Jesus should be evident!**

Katie and I have 2 kids – Bellamy and Magnolia.

Belle is 4.

Maggie is 18 months.

Belle is the princess.

Maggie is our wild child.

**She's an unstoppable force.**

**And lately, more often than not she's meets immovable objects- It's not good!**

Have you ever heard of Murphy's Law: It's basically – If anything can go wrong, will go wrong!

She'll stick her fingers and jam in car doors, toilet seats.

She fall off the front steps of our porch.

There was a moment she looked like an angel as a

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 349). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

wedding, and she tripped over her dress somehow-  
slow motion - went head first into brick building. That  
ended her night.

A little while ago – I was swinging Bellamy on the back  
porch trying to keep Maggie from stepping into the path  
of the swing. I take my eyes off for one second – And it  
was the greatest dad fail – Bellamy Swings into Maggie-  
Square in the face and then goes straight back and hits  
her head on the back.

She's holding both sides!

Katie runs out – What Happened- It was bad!

My heart breaks every time.

Well since her string of unfortunate events- we've baby  
proofed the house as best we can.

It's on Lockdown.

We watch her like a hawk.

And then it happened - just a week ago – I'm cooking  
breakfast – Maggie is in the high chair – And she has  
this way of wiggling out of the seat and trying to  
balance on the edge. I knew this. So I'm on it. I turn – To  
cook the eggs- And next thing I know I see her out of  
her seat – Balancing and lunging for a Strawberry she  
lost.

And she fell – She could have fallen safely on the rug –  
Low Impact.

No she hits the corner of a table then just lands straight  
on our wood floor.

Just a mess.

Big goose egg.

A black eye.

Looks like she just got out of an MMA cage match.

I promise we love her.

We pay attention.

With this kid it's Murphy's Law!

Katie comes home – **There's no hiding what's happened. The impact was evident!**

**She's like: Why does our kid have black Eyes – I tell her the story.**

**So here's what we've decided- 24 x 7 – When this kid's in the house – She's rocking a Helmet (SHOW PICTURE).**

Just like there's no hiding what happened to Maggie last week – The impact of the fall was evident!

When you and I really, truly, welcome Jesus into our lives- The result will be life change. It will be transformation.

It's hard to go from death to life and not notice!

We should reflect Jesus – In our marriage, with our kids, with the least of these – James says – Reflect God to them!

**Let's let the impact of Jesus in our lives be evident to those around us!**

What if hundreds of us in the church - started reading the Word and doing what God said?

Just imagine what would happen in this community.

This community doesn't need a good arguments for god- they need to see living witnesses- living proof of a loving god!

**Church, Let's do what God says.**

**Let's practice what we preach.**

**Let's see how God can use that to change the world!**

**We are going to stumble, we will fall – in those moments- Remember -**

**A changed life is not the requirement for grace -**

**Jesus he loves you just as you are**

**But He doesn't want to you stay where you are -**

**Let's move forward – Let's Keep the Change!**

# KEEP THE CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you in this week's message?
2. Share about an area in your life that you have worked to try and change. What's the journey been like? What have the results been to this point? Have other people noticed the change?
3. What has changed in your life since you started believing and trusting in Jesus? Share about your journey so far. Why is it important that our lives match up to our faith?
4. Read James 1:19 - 27. What is the difference between hearing and listening? Why is the distinction important when it comes to our faith walk with Jesus? Is James arguing that works save you? Why or why not?
5. Daniel said, "A changed life is not the requirement for grace, but it is the result". What are some assumptions people have about coming to God? What assumptions did you have? What would you say to someone who felt unworthy about coming to God?
6. According to James 1:21, to accept God's Word means to *receive* it and welcome it in to our lives. In what areas could that bring about change? In what area do you need to receive God's Word and help you change?
7. Read James 1:22. What message is James trying to get across? How does God's Word in you help you as you *respond* to your: Spouse? Kids? Friends? Family? Boss? Co-workers? Neighbors? Parents? Teachers? Why would it matter how we respond?
8. Read James 1:26 - 27. The word religion in this context means "the outward practice". Who do you know that consistently reflects the love of Jesus to those around them? Do you consistently reflect that same love? In what area(s) do you need God's strength and help to be more consistent?
9. Close in prayer. Ask God to give you the strength to be a living witness; to be living proof to others of our loving God.