

James 5

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Date: 26 July 2026

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[0:00] Well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to James 5. And I've entitled it Faith That Finishes Well. So we're going to start this morning with reading the chapter, verses 1-20.

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming to you. Your wealth has rotted and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

Look, the wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

So you have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the innocent.

[1:00] Be patient then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.

You too be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged.

The judge is standing at the door. Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered.

You've heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, not by heaven or by earth or by anything else.

All you need to say is a simple yes or no. Otherwise, you will be condemned. Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy?

[2:06] Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for others so that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

Again, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain and the earth produced its crops. My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this.

Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins. May the Lord add his blessing to his word.

[3:11] Living in the light of the Lord's return. Verse 7. Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. So this morning we come to the final chapter of James, a letter that has challenged us, encouraged us, corrected us, and at times made us feel rather uncomfortable.

James has never been interested in producing people who merely know the Bible. He wants believers whose lives have been transformed by the Bible.

As someone once said, the greatest distance in the world is the 18 inches between the head and the heart. Now James has spent five chapters helping us bridge that distance.

Let's think back over our journey together. In chapter 1, faith is tested. And it's tested by trials. In chapter 2, faith is demonstrated by works.

In chapter 3, faith is revealed by the tongue. In chapter 4, faith is humbled before God. And now in chapter 5, James shows us how faith perseveres until Jesus comes again.

[4:28] Over the past few weeks we have walked together through one of the most practical books in the Bible. Also one of the most challenging. James has repeatedly asked difficult questions.

Do you really trust God in trials? Do you merely hear God's word or do you actually obey it? Does your faith show itself in your actions? Can people hear Christ in the way you speak?

Are you humble or proud? Who is really in charge of your plans? God or you? James doesn't leave much room for comfortable Christianity.

As I said at the start of James, this book can be described as the Proverbs of the New Testament. Every chapter is intensely practical. James is basically saying that if truth hasn't changed us, then it probably hasn't reached our hearts.

If Christ is truly our treasure, it will affect our speech. It will affect our decisions, our money, our patience, and our prayers.

[5:32] And it will also affect how we treat one another. In other words, real faith always becomes visible. James gathers together several themes he's already introduced.

He speaks about wealth, suffering, patience, prayer. And he speaks also about restoring those who wander from the faith. It's almost as though James says, now that you've seen what genuine Christianity is like, this is how you keep it, living it until Jesus comes.

How do believers finish well? That is really the theme of the chapter. And as we said last week, the Christian life isn't a sprint. It's a marathon.

It's not how loudly we begin. It's how faithfully we finish. I once heard someone say, many people start the Christian life like a firework.

Lots of noise and excitement. But God is looking for believers who burn steadily like a lighthouse. And that's James. Steady faith, patient faith, praying faith, working faith, and persevering faith.

[6:43] This chapter is not a random collection of topics. At first glance, it probably appears to you, James is jumping from money to patience, from patience to prayer, from prayer to wandering believers.

But there is a golden thread running through every verse. And that thread is this. How should Christians live because Jesus Christ is coming again?

Everything in James 5 hangs on that glorious truth. I don't know how you feel, but I get rather excited the fact that Jesus is coming back.

It could be today. Am I ready? Yes, I am. Are you ready? The wealthy are warned because judgment is coming. The suffering are told to be patient because the Lord is coming.

Prayer is encouraged because God still reigns. The wandering are restored because eternity matters. Everything is viewed through the lens of Christ's return.

[7:46] And perhaps there has never been a generation, as Ray said earlier, that needs this message more than ours. We live in uncertain days. Technology advances at breathtaking speed.

Morality changes almost weekly. Nations rise against nation. People are anxious about the future. Financial uncertainty seems to dominate the news.

Wars. Rumors of wars. Natural disasters. increasing hostility towards biblical Christianity. It can all seem overwhelming.

But, as you probably know, our Lord told us these things would happen. Not so that we would become frightened. Not so that we would spend all our time trying to decode newspaper headlines. But so that we would remain faithful. The purpose of biblical prophecy is never merely to satisfy our curiosity. It is to strengthen our confidence.

[8:45] In God's sovereign plan. James is not saying, work out the timetable. He is saying, strengthen your hearts. And that's the difference.

I heard about a little boy who was asked in Sunday school, what does it mean to be ready for Jesus to come? He thought for a moment and then replied, it means keeping your room tidy in case he visits.

Well, there is something rather charming about that answer. Perhaps he understood more than he realised. Now, there is a poem which I love and I think it was written by Lewis Blanchard Eads.

But it is copyrighted and so I can't use it. But I came across something very similar by an unknown author. And it's entitled, If Christ Sat at My Table.

If Christ sat at my table and shared my cup of tea, would I be glad to greet him or wish he could not see? Would every word I utter be gentle, kind and true?

[9:47] Or would I stop and wonder, is this what Christians do? If Jesus walked beside me through every passing day, would I be proud to show him the places that I stray?

Would he hear songs of worship flow softly through my home or voices filled with grumbling where discontent has grown? If he looked through my diary, my calendar, my phone, would he find time devoted to worship him alone?

Would he see acts of kindness that no one else has known? A quiet hand of mercy with seeds of love will sown. Would I introduce him gladly to every friend I meet or hesitate, embarrassed, to walk beside his feet?

Yet here is grace to comfort, for this is truth indeed. He does not come to judge us before he meets our need. He comes with nailed, scarred hands outstretched, with mercy from above.

He calls us not to earn his smile, but simply trust his love. And as we walk together, his spirit lights the way. He changes hearts that yield to him, one faithful step each day.

[11:01] So let us live remembering, wherever we may roam, the Saviour is not visiting. Our hearts have become his home. And when the world around us asks why our lives are new, may every word and action say, Christ lives in all I do.

Our hearts are his home, until he takes us home or comes again. I remember when Leonie and I were courting, we used to pray that the Lord wouldn't return until we'd had the chance of getting married.

Well, nearly 56 years later, our prayer has changed. Now we find ourselves saying, come Lord Jesus, come. When we look at how much our world has changed since our wedding day, we sometimes shake our heads and wonder, how did we get here?

But then we remember the words of Jesus. When you see these things begin to take place, look up because your redemption is drawing nigh or near.

Readiness isn't about prediction, it's about preparation. Jesus repeatedly said, be ready, not because we know when he's coming, but because we don't.

[12:16] And that is James' message. Now the healthiest Christians have always been those who live expecting the Lord's return while faithfully carrying out today's responsibilities.

The balance is exactly what James teaches. He doesn't encourage idleness, he encourages faithfulness. He doesn't promote fear, he inspires hope.

Living with the finish line in view. Many years ago during the London Marathon, a television camera focused on a runner. A runner who had suffered severe cramp only a few hundred yards from the finish line.

His legs were shaking, his face showed exhaustion, medical staff came towards him. People shouted for him to stop, but he refused. Slowly, painfully, almost one step at a time, he crossed the finish line.

He wasn't the first, he wasn't the fastest, but the crowd gave him one of the loudest cheers of the day. Why? Because people admire those who finish.

[13:21] And the Christian life is much like that. God is not looking for people who make an impressive start, but never finish the race. He delights in men and women who keep trusting him, keep serving him, keep loving him, and keep following all the way home.

Paul could say at the end of his life, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. What a testimony. If the Lord tarries and each of us comes to the end of our earthly journey, surely there can be no greater ambition than that.

Not to be famous, not to be wealthy, not even to be successful in the world's eyes, but simply to finish well. That's the theme of James 5.

Now, these 20 verses are broken down to 10 parts. So number one, beware the deception of earthly wealth.

That's verses one to three. It says, Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. James certainly doesn't ease us into the chapter.

[14:27] Once again, there is no gentle introduction, no soft landing. He begins like one of the Old Testament prophets, and you can almost hear echoes of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Micah.

This is prophetic language, strong language, urgent language. But before we misunderstand what James is teaching, we must notice something very important.

James is not condemning wealth. The Bible never teaches that it is sinful to possess money. In fact, as we have seen in previous chapters, many godly men and women in the Bible were wealthy. Money itself is neutral. It can build hospitals. It can support missionaries. It can feed hungry families. It can print Bibles. A but in the Bible.

But it can also become an idol. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 6 verse 10, The love of money is a root of all kind of evil. Notice carefully, not money, but the love of money.

[15 : 30] Money makes a wonderful servant, but it makes a dreadful master. Money promises security. Money promises happiness. Money promises satisfaction.

But money makes promises it cannot keep. Someone joked, Money talks. Mine seems to have learnt to sprint away. Most of us smile because we know how quickly money disappears.

A bill arrives. The car needs repairing. The washing machine decides retirement is overdue.

Children discover another hobby. And before long, the bank balance has developed spiritual gifts.

It's vanished. Humour aside, James is asking a profound question. Where does your security really lie? Is it in your pension or income?

Your investment? Your savings? Or is it in Christ? Are we trying to be self-sufficient? We begin believing we don't really need God because everything seems comfortable.

[16 : 33] And that's a dangerous place to be. The Christian's confidence has never been in the size of the bank account. It has always been in the greatness of his God. James says, Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.

Your gold and silver have corroded. Of course, gold doesn't literally rust. And James knows that.

But he's painting a picture. Everything this world treasures is temporary.

Food rots. Clothes wear out. Metal corrodes. Houses decay. Cars depreciate. You know, I bought an iPhone in 2022.

And Apple has already told me it probably won't receive updates after 2027. As far as I'm concerned, it's barely out of Nappius and it's already heading for retirement. We spend so much of our lives collecting things that time quietly takes away.

Jesus asked, What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? That question echoes through history. Alexander the Great conquered nations and yet he died at just 32.

[17 : 42] The ancient saying about him is powerful. When Alexander died, they carried his hands outside the coffin to show that he left this world with nothing. Whether or not every detail of that story is historically accurate, the point certainly is.

You and I enter this world with empty hands and we shall leave with empty hands. Only what has been done for Christ will last. John Wesley famously said, Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.

And that is biblical stewardship. Excuse me a minute. I'm croaking. God does not condemn prosperity.

He condemns the prosperity that has replaced him. The issue is never merely what we possess.

The issue is what possesses us. Part two.

God hears the cries of the oppressed. Verses four to six. James now moves from warning about wealth in general to exposing how wealth can be abused.

[18 : 49] Verse four it says, Behold the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields which you kept back by fraud are crying out against you. This is strong language again.

Prophetic language. James is not speaking about theoretical injustice. He is speaking about real people being wronged. Day labourers in that ancient world lived hand to mouth.

If they were not paid at the end of the day, they and their families did not eat that night. To withhold wages was not just poor business practice.

It was oppression. James says something striking. The cries have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. The Lord of hosts. That title matters.

What does Lord of hosts mean? The Lord of angel armies. The God who rules heaven's armies is not indifferent to earth's injustice.

[19 : 48] And that, I suppose, is quite comforting for us in a world that often feels unfair. The point is that although justice is fast disappearing here on earth, it is and never will be absent in heaven.

And that is the point James is making. No injustice goes unnoticed. No exploitation is forgotten. No cry of the oppressed falls unheard.

We may not always see justice quickly, but we will never see it forgotten. A word to the heart. This passage is not only about ancient landowners. It speaks in every generation.

It speaks into business ethics. It speaks into employment practices. It speaks into how we treat people who depend on us. It speaks into honesty when no one is watching.

Christianity is not Sunday-only religion. James refuses to allow that separation. Faith that is real on Sunday must be real on Monday morning.

[20:49] And that includes how we treat employees, how we complete contracts, how we handle money, how we speak when no one is listening. Jesus said, He who is faithful in little is faithful also in much.

Luke 16 verse 10. Verse 5. The danger of self-indulgence. You lived on the earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened your heart in a day of slaughter.

James now uses one of the most sobering images in the New Testament. Fattened in a day of slaughter. It is the picture of animals being fed and cared for, unaware that judgment is approaching.

Everything feels normal. Everything feels secure. Everything feels permanent. But it's not. There is a frightening danger in comfort. And it can make us spiritually sleepy.

It can lull us into thinking that this world is all there is. James is warning us that prosperity without gratitude is spiritually dangerous. Because when life is comfortable, it's easy to forget God.

[22:02] Suffering tends to make us pray. Comfort tends to make us drift. And drifting is always, almost always silent. No one wakes up one morning and says, I think I'll abandon my faith today.

No, it happens gradually, quietly, almost unnoticed. A missed prayer. A skipped scripture reading. A Sunday service that becomes optional.

A heart that grows less sensitive to God. And long and before long, the drift has happened. And that is why Hebrews says, We must pay much closer attention lest we drift away.

Hebrews 2.1. Someone once said, I decided to start exercising. I bought some running shoes, but I'm still deciding where to put them.

Most people laugh because they recognize intention without action. But spiritually, James is saying something serious. Don't just intend to follow Christ.

[23:05] Actually follow him. Don't just admire the truth. Live in it. Verse 6. The certain justice of God. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person.

He does not resist you. James now exposes the final stage of injustice. The abuse of power that leads to harm against the innocent. Now whether this is literal murder or legal oppression, the point is clear.

The righteous suffer at the hands of the powerful. And they do not always have the means to defend themselves. But James assures us, God sees. God knows.

And God will act. And this is where the title Lord of Hosts becomes so important again. The God of angel armies is not passive. He is not indifferent. He is not absent.

He is ruling. And one day every wrong will be put right. No one injustice will remain unresolved. That is not wishful thinking. That is biblical certainty.

[24:06] Paul writes in Romans 12, 19. Do not take revenge. For it is written, Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

So that frees the Christian from bitterness. We do not carry the burden of justice. We entrust it to God. Part three. Patient endurance until the Lord comes.

Verses seven to eight. Now James turns sharply from warning the ungodly rich. He now comforts suffering believers. He says, Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.

This is one of the key verses in the whole chapter. Notice the foundation. Until the coming of the Lord. Christian patience is not passive resignation.

It is active hope anchored in Christ's return. And James gives an illustration. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. The farmer does not control the rain.

[25:07] He does not control the seasons. He does not control growth. But he trusts the process. He plants. He waters. He waits. And he waits with patience.

And the word implies endurance under pressure. Not giving up. Not quitting. Not abandoning hope. And a farmer does not dig up the seed every week to check progress.

If he did that, it would destroy the crop. Yet spiritually, many believers do exactly that. We pray once. Then check daily to see if God has answered it yet.

We grow impatient with God's timing. But James says, be patient. God is at work even when you cannot see it. Verse eight. Strengthen your hearts. You also be patient.

Establish your hearts. For the coming of the Lord is at hand. This is the command behind the patience. Establish your heart means to strengthen, to steady, to make firm.

[26:05] In other words, don't be emotionally shaken loose by circumstances. Don't interpret God's silence as God's absence. Don't measure God's faithfulness by your feelings.

Anchor your heart in the promise that Christ is coming. Spurgeon once said, it is not how much faith you have, but where you place it matters.

And that is exactly James' point. Part four. Don't grumble against one another. Verse nine. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, that you may not be judged.

Suffering often leads to frustration. And frustration often gets redirected at the people closest to us. Well, it certainly does in our family.

I get frustrated when I'm hungry or tired and things are not quite going the way I planned, especially when my iPad decides to erase the last 10 minutes of my work.

[27:01] My dear wife gets frustrated when I leave the toilet seat up, which is not often, but it did take 56 years of training not to.

The point is that frustration has a habit of turning little things into much bigger things than they really are. James says, don't grumble against one another. James is realistic.

Church life is not always easy. Families are not always easy. Relationships are not always easy. But grumbling is dangerous because it spreads quickly.

It corrodes unity. It damages trust. It weakens love. Someone once said, if you ever find a perfect choice, sorry, a perfect church, don't join it because you'll ruin it.

That is the truth. Because every church is made up of imperfect people learning to love one another. Part five. The prophet and Job examples of endurance.

[28:01] Verses 10 to 11. James now gives two examples. The prophet spoke in the name of the Lord. They suffered. They were rejected. They were persecuted. Yet they endured.

And then we have Job. You've heard of the endurance of Job. Job is the classic example of suffering without explanation. He lost possessions. He lost family.

His health. His understanding. Another but. But he did not lose God. And in the end, the Lord is compassionate and merciful. And that is the conclusion James wants us to reach.

Not that suffering is easy. But that God is good. Even when life is not. Part six. Let your yes be yes. Verse 12.

James briefly adds, let your yes be yes and your no be no. In other words, be truthful. Be reliable. Be people of integrity. A Christian's word should be enough.

[29:02] Many years ago, I was a partner in a firm of jobbers on the London Stock Exchange. We dealt in very large sums of money. And although there were contracts and paperwork, your word was everything.

And as a saying in the Stock Exchange, even today, my word is my bond. The people I worked with weren't necessarily Christians. But if your word couldn't be trusted, you simply wouldn't last long.

I've certainly not done it perfectly. But with God's help, I've tried to live by that principle ever since. How much more should that be true of God's people? Is your word your bond?

If anyone's word ought to be trusted, it should be the Christian's. Our yes should mean yes, and our no should mean no. Because when we speak truthfully and keep our word, we reflect the character of God, who always keeps his.

There should be no manipulation, no exaggeration, no double meaning, just honesty. Because truthfulness reflects the character of Christ, who after all, is the truth.

[30:09] James is building a vision of Christian life that is steady, truthful, patient, and anchored in eternity. Because Jesus is coming. We endure injustice without bitterness.

We resist the pull of comfort. We strengthen our hearts in suffering. We speak truthfully in everyday life. We refuse to grumble against each other.

Above all, we live in the light of the coming of the Lord. As we move into James 5, 13 to 20, we have the power of prayer, the example of Elijah, confession and healing, restoring the wandering believer.

And finally, the gospel-shaped conclusion that brings the whole letter to a powerful close. This is where the sermon will reach its emotional and spiritual climax, and I think it will bring everything

together powerfully.

I put down the three Ps, prayer, power, and perseverance. A church that prays in every season, verses 13 to 15, James now turns from patience in suffering to something deeply practical and profoundly spiritual.

[31 : 22] Prayer. Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise, verse 13. It is almost beautifully simple.

Linda shared this morning the answers to prayers that our church family here have received over the past couple of months. Prayer works. Suffering. Pray. Cheerful.

Pray. Sick. Call for prayer. James is showing that in every season of life is meant to be lived in dependence on God. Nothing is outside the scope of prayer.

Not pain, not joy, not illness, not weakness. And prayer is not a last resort. It should be the believer's first response. Suffering and prayer.

Is anyone among you suffering? The word covers all kinds of hardship, physical, emotional, spiritual. James does not say, complain, isolate yourself, or pretend it's not happening.

[32 : 23] He says, pray. Because prayer is where the soul finds strength. There are moments in life when advice is not enough. When explanations are not enough.

When even the support of others is not enough. But prayer is always enough. Not because of us, but because of the one to whom we pray. Now, let me just add one word of balance here.

James is not teaching the so-called health, wealth, and prosperity gospel. The answer to prayer is always governed by the sovereign will of God. We pray in faith, but we leave the outcome in his hands.

But that should never discourage us from praying. Many of you have prayed for our daughter Naomi as she battles cancer. We haven't received the answer we would naturally choose, but we have experienced something just as real.

Again and again, God has carried us. He has given us a peace that truly passes our understanding. And we know that he has been through the prayers of God's people.

[33 : 27] Sometimes God grants remarkable healing. Sometimes he gives strength to endure. Sometimes the complete healing doesn't come until we receive our new resurrected bodies and be in his presence.

But God always hears our prayers. God always answers. And God is always faithful. Joy and worship. As I've said before, is anyone cheerful?

Let him sing praise. James includes both joy and sorrow. Christianity is not a one-note experience. Some Christians think spirituality means always being solemn.

James says, If you are joyful, sing. Worship is the right response to blessing. Joe does a great job with our worship here. And we are so blessed by his talents.

How many of us say thank you to him? I'm leaving that as a challenge. It's almost humorous how balanced James is. He will not let us be gloomy saints or shallow optimists.

[34 : 32] He calls us to a life where every emotion is directed to God. Sick and need in prayer. Verse 14. Is anyone among you sick?

Let him call for the elders of the church. Here we see the gathered church in action. The elders pray in faith. The sick person is not isolated. The church members come alongside them and pray.

And James says, The prayer of faith will save the one who is sick. This is not a formula. It's not mechanical. It is relational. As I've already said, it is dependent on God's will.

Sometimes God heals immediately. Sometimes he sustains through suffering. Sometimes he heals ultimately in glory. But he always hears.

The heart of praying is that it isn't about one praying, but it is all about the one hearing. Our wonderful creator God. Our Abba Father. Or better put, our Daddy Father.

[35 : 37] Part 8. Confession and healing. Verse 16. Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. This is one of the most misunderstood verses in James.

It does not promote public exposure of every private sin, but it does call for honesty, humility, and openness within the body of Christ. Secret sin thrives in secrecy, but healing often begins in confession.

Not for judgment, but for prayer, for support, and for restoration. Someone once said, I would confess my sin to others, but I'm still praying about which one I should mention.

James is calling us to authenticity. Not perfection, but honesty before God and one another. Now I want to add a note of emphasis here, so you don't get confused.

I just said, call for honesty, humility, and openness within the body of Christ. Now if someone shares something with you, and they don't want it to go any further, make sure it goes no further than God in your private prayers.

[36 : 45] It is not an excuse for what I call gossip in prayer. Don't say, I want to share this person's problems that you can pray for them. Just share it with God.

Keep that confidence. Part nine, the prayer, the power of prayer, and he's given Elijah's as an example. As an extraordinary example, Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.

That sentence is very important. Elijah was not superhuman. He was not spiritually elite. He was human, just like us. And yet he prayed fervently, and God acted.

The rain stopped, and in three and a half years, he prayed again, and the rain returned. Not because Elijah was extraordinary, but because God is. This is deeply encouraging, and it removes the excuse, I could never be like Elijah, or any of these other great saints.

James says, you don't need to be, you need to pray. If we truly believe God acts, we would pray more. Elijah believed, and he prayed, and heaven responded.

[37 : 54] And the last part, part 10, restoring the wandering believer. James 5, 19 to 20. James ends with a deeply pastoral note. My brother, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, notice he assumes it will happen.

People drift, people struggle, people wander, sometimes slowly, sometimes suddenly. But James does not say, ignore them, criticize them, abandon them.

He says, bring them back. Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death. This is shepherd language. This is rescue language.

This is a gospel language. The church is not a museum for perfect people. It is a hospital for sinners saved by grace. Not indifference, not judgmental distance, but pursuing grace.

James doesn't end with a blessing, but with a mission. Rescue the wandering, and that is how the letter finishes, not with theory, but with action, because real faith perseveres in trials, resists temptation, controls the tongue, submits to God, does not love the world, endures suffering, prays in every season, and restores the fallen.

[39 : 06] And that's Christianity in motion. Final conclusion. You can all breathe a sigh of relief. Nearly finished the book of James. James wouldn't want us simply to finish studying his letter.

He would want us to finish the Christian life well. As we close this letter, let's step back and see the whole journey. Chapter 1, faith is tested. Chapter 2, faith works.

Chapter 3, faith speaks wisely. Chapter 4, faith submits humbly. Chapter 5, faith perseveres patiently. James began with trials, and he ends with restoration.

He began with scattered believers. He ends with gathered hope. And all of it is lived in the light of the coming of the Lord. One day, prayer will become praise.

Faith will become sight. Patience will no longer be needed. Suffering will end. Wandering will cease. And Christ will appear in glory. We've spent weeks in the book of James.

[40 : 05] James has challenged our tongues, our tempers, our priorities, our faith, our patience, and our prayer life. Let me leave you with this thought. We often ask, what would I do if Jesus came to my house?

The truth is, if we belong to him, he already has. He lives within us by his spirit. So the real question isn't whether he would feel at home in our house, but whether he feels at home in our hearts.

Jesus said, surely I am coming soon. And the church responds, amen, even so, come Lord Jesus. Let's close with a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we would like to thank you for your word through James and we thank you for its honesty, its challenge, and its hope. Teach us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Strengthen those who are suffering, humble those who are proud.

Restore those who have wandered. Teach us to pray with faith. Teach us to live with eternity in view. Keep us faithful and ready for when we see our Lord Jesus Christ, when he returns or takes us home.

[41 : 10] And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.