

# Living or Dead... How Are We Doing?

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[ 0 : 00 ] The scripture reading today comes from the book of James, chapter 2. Please read along in your bulletin. What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works, can that faith save him?

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed, and be filled, and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

Even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may as well say, You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith without the works and I will show you my faith with my works.

You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his son, on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works.

[ 1 : 10 ] And as a result of the works, faith was perfected. And the scripture was fulfilled, which says, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

And he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. This is God's word. Amen.

Amen. Wow. That's amazing. Great worship. Thanks, guys. You could tell there was a theme there in the songs, right?

The songs came up with the same theme. Welcome to Watermark Community Church. My name is Tobin Miller. I'm one of the pastors here, teaching pastor.

[ 2 : 09 ] So if this is your first time here, we are glad that you're here with us and joining us as we worship the Lord. One of the things you'll see in our church is we're kind of chaotic with kids everywhere. And part of that is because that's kind of our stage of life, too, with four kids.

And our world is out of control sometimes. One of the things that I would say we're very teachable on as a couple. One of the things that God continues to teach us on is how to raise our children.

And so if you have methods of how you've raised perfect kids, we would love to hear that. Because we have the big L written up, not loser, but learners. Might be losers, too, but I don't know.

So we have the big learner there. And it's interesting because with four kids, each of our kids is so different. And as a dad, I just want to get in there and fix it. I just want to get the right thing for the right kid and the right time.

And those things don't always work that way. And what I'm continuing to learn is we have truth and we have love and we have grace. And as we speak with people and we speak with our children, those three need to be intertwined or it doesn't necessarily work very well.

[ 3 : 20 ] One of our kids, when they do something wrong, I just need to look at them. And they just fall apart. And they need a lot of grace and they need a lot of love.

And they respond to truth. And the truth is they just know their heart is so sensitive. One of our kids, when they do something wrong, they want to debate why they did it wrong. And to prove to us that it's not their fault, but that someone else caused them to do that.

And so for them, I have to share a little bit more of truth and talk to them about this is what's going on and what's happening here. And then bring in the grace and love.

One of our kids has this rock for a head. And no matter what happens to, I won't say their name, but they just cannot get what's going on in their world.

And so with that, I feel like I need a lot of truth, a hammer of truth to try to break the rock. And at the end, as we sit there and watch our kids grow and watch people grow and go on journeys, we realize that unless God is working in people's hearts, unless God is there and he's making us sensitive to his spirit, that often, no matter how well you do, grace and truth and love, not much works out.

[ 4 : 47 ] James learned that in his church. We're going through the book of James. James was the half-brother of Jesus. He's the first pastor in the church of Jerusalem. The book of James that we're reading is probably the earliest book in the New Testament.

It was probably written about 55 A.D. So most of the people in the church had seen Jesus. They had seen his life. They had seen him walk. They had heard his words. And 15 years into this church, the church is having a lot of problems.

Remember, James is this pastor. And one of the things you learn as you read about history of James is that everyone in the congregation knew that he cared for them and that he loved them. His nickname was Camel Knees.

And he got that nickname, Camel Knees, because he spent so much time praying for his people that he developed these massive calluses on his knees that everyone could see.

And so whenever there was truth coming in and people came in and said, well, I don't know, where's the love? All they would have to look at sometimes is his knees. And they'd realize that he loves them in amazing ways.

[ 5 : 57 ] And he's proved that as he walks with them. And so the church has gone through these struggles. And the struggle is they've looked at different mirrors in their world and they're trying to find out how they're doing. Are they doing well?

Are they doing good? And so they put up these different mirrors like we talked about last week. And they looked at how are we doing in these things. And they've used the mirror of the world. And they've used the mirror of culture. And they've used the mirror of religion.

And they used the mirror of peers. And they used the mirror of themselves. And all the time they're looking into these things around them. And they're trying to evaluate, am I doing well? Am I doing good?

And James says that the only mirror that we can look into is the mirror of God's word. Because it's the only thing that's constant. It's the only thing that's of authority. It never changes. It's spoken from the word of God coming out of his mouth into people.

And through his word we evaluate everything. It's the only mirror that we can look at in our world and try to figure out what's going on there. And so as we look into the mirror of God's word, it changes how we think about his word and about people and about God.

[ 6 : 59 ]     God's word is the only thing that can convict us and speak to us and encourage us and tear us apart and restore us. Today I want to look at this passage.

This passage has caused me a lot of problems as an early Christian. A lot of problems. When I had come to faith at an early age, I developed this huge burden for my family.

And I prayed for my family for a long time. My extended family lived in Montana. And so we knew that that summer we were going to go up there. And so I started to go on this journey with God and ask about how God has changed me and the things that he's been teaching me.

And I started to pray for my family. Because I knew I would have a chance to see my grandparents. We only saw them once every three years. And in this opportunity, I was praying that I could share what God had done in my life to them.

And so I prayed and I studied and I read the four laws and I looked at the navigator bridge and I looked at the wheel and I learned all these different ways to share my faith. And I had people praying. Did I mention that?

[ 8 : 04 ]     Praying and praying and praying. And we got up there and we drove to Montana to come visit them. And one quiet afternoon, I got my grandparents by themselves, the 12-year-old.

And I shared with them about what God had done in my life. How he came into my heart. How he showed me mercy. How he showed me grace.

How he showed me love. I shared with them my sin and the things that were wrong in my life. Even as a 12-year-old, I realized that I was separated from God and there was no way that I could get back to him.

I shared with them how God had opened my eyes and my heart to his son Jesus. I shared with them the gospel of faith, just as Paul shares in Romans, that it's by faith alone. And I stopped.

And I waited for their response. It was silent. There wasn't a drill drill like now. And all of a sudden, they looked at me and they said, Tobin, are you trying to tell us that we are saved just by faith and not by our works?

[ 9 : 16 ]     Are you trying to say that once we're saved, that that's it, that God's grace powers over us, and that nothing that we can do, we can lie, we can cheat, we can do anything, and God has to forgive us?

Yes. Then they said, are you telling us that even Hitler could be in heaven right now if he asked for forgiveness for what he did?

And I don't know, my parents, my grandparents were kind of strange because immediately after that, they said, even Elvis? To this day, I do not understand that.

But for some reason, they equated Elvis and Hitler together. And they said, do you mean even Elvis could be in heaven if he prayed and asked God for forgiveness and to make away all the things that he did?

And I kind of sat there and they go, you know, we know so many people in the church who have said that they follow Christ, but they live lives that are totally, totally out of control. And then they opened up the Bible and they went to this passage in Luke, I mean, James chapter 2, and they read verse 17 to me and they said, even so, faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

[ 10 : 31 ]     And they continued to go through the book of James with me about works, works, works. You see, they were going to a church at that time which is similar to the church in Wan Chai with the big cathedral and the guys wear the white shirts and they wear the ties and they wear that little name tag that says elder, so and so.

Because they had left their church because they felt like everybody was a hypocrite and inconsistent. And then they looked at me and said, Tobin, you're 12 years old, but you're so naive because everybody knows that you need to work to earn your salvation.

It says so in James. I was silent. I mean, I just kind of sat there like, fail on what I just tried to do, right?

And I sat there and I started praying and I walked away from that time and I went home and I started reading the Bible because I had this fear. The fear was that maybe my faith wasn't real.

Maybe my faith was insincere. Maybe I had learned the wrong thing. Maybe I was doing the wrong thing. And so I studied and I studied and I studied because I wanted my faith to be alive, not dead.

[ 11 : 55 ] And I want to talk to you really briefly about some things that I have been learning over these years. Some things that I wish that I could have said to my grandparents. But I didn't know.

I didn't know. The first thing we know right away is whenever we come to Scripture that whenever Scripture seems to contradict itself, the assumption most of us say is that God is wrong. God did something bad.

God contradicts Himself. None of us ever say, well, maybe I'm understanding this wrong. But the first thing I learned was that whenever we come to Scripture that God is consistent, that He never contradicts Himself, that He always is truthful in everything that He does.

The problem is with you and with me, that we're not listening to Him and we're not looking at what God's Word is actually saying. The next thing that I learned as I looked at Paul and I just read Romans over and over and James over and over, I learned that in Romans, Paul was talking about how a man gets to God.

If there's a timeline and there's a cross, Paul was before the cross in Romans and he's looking at our journey to the cross. And he's saying that we get to the cross by faith, faith alone in the works of Jesus Christ and His life that was sacrificed for us on the cross, the blood that was shed and that is the root of our salvation.

[ 13 : 20 ] When James talks about it, when James talks about faith and works in his book, what he's talking about and what he's addressing is people who are hypocrites in the church. People who say they're Christians but they're living differently.

And so as Paul's looking towards the cross, James is looking back at the cross, James is looking at over his whole life and he's saying, are we living lives that are consistent to our faith and our words?

When Paul comes to the scripture, he looks at things from God's perspective. He's looking down and seeing how can we reach God? When James and James talks about things, he's talking about from man's perspective.

He's looking at as you look at people and you look at their lives and you're seeing have they reached God? If you were to ask Paul, how do I know that person is a saved person? Paul would say, you go into their house and you look in the fireplace.

How do you know there's a fire in the fireplace? You look. And if there's a fire there, you know that something's going on there. There's a change in their life. You look at their heart. So only God can do that.

[ 14 : 29 ] But James says, if you were to talk to James, how do I know that person's saved? How do you know that person's been born again? James would say, well, I can't look at their heart. I can't go inside and see what's going on in their heart.

But I can walk by their house. And I can look at the chimney. And I can know if there's a fire in the chimney, if there's smoke coming up out of the chimney.

James would say that we are justified by works. And what he means by that is that we prove that we have this right relationship with God, that God met with us and that we've been justified by His works.

And our works show that we've already come to faith. And Paul says that we are justified by faith. And what he's saying is the only way we can reach God is through the life and sacrifice of Jesus.

Paul and James are saying the same thing. James is saying this, we come to God by faith. but not by a faith that is alone.

[ 15 : 37 ] That we've come to God by faith but that faith changes us. And so Paul, James is trying to show the people in his church what it looks like to be saved, how we can be saved.

James is going to talk about alive faith and dead faith and demonic faith. And he's saying every one of us is living one of those.

And he wants to talk about alive faith, dead faith, and demonic faith. And what he's going to say is I want to show you four things that are true. Four things that are true about a faith that is alive. And so we can just go through it and we're going to fly through this.

You look at your passage verses 14 through 16. The first thing you see is James says that when the faith is alive, what uses it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works, can that faith save them?

If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and then one of you says to them, go in peace and be warned and be filled and yet you do not do anything to help them, what is necessary, what use is that? And James says right away that a faith that is alive is not indifferent to people in need.

[ 16 : 45 ] That if your faith is alive, when you look at people who are in need, especially people within the family of God, if you see people that are hurting and alive faith draws you towards those people and alive faith prompts you to do something that the seed of the gospel that's been put in your life, when it sees brothers and sisters, especially in the family of God who are in need, that seed is growing and that seed draws us towards people who are hurting and who have needs.

If your faith is dead, he says you can walk away, you can walk past them, you cannot be bothered by them, you cannot be affected by them. Dead faith allows us not to be affected by people in needs. He says dead faith would say, as you looked at those people in needs, oh, that's too bad, that's their fault.

Too bad they got themselves in that situation. And what he's saying is a dead person doesn't remember that they could be there also if it wasn't for God's grace and mercy in their life.

James goes on and he says that alive faith in verse 17, even so, if faith has no works, it is dead, being by itself. He said that if faith is alive, that it's not independent of works, that faith always produces works, faith always produces fruit.

He says basically in Greek that faith and works are like two wings on a bird and they have to be there. They have to work together and a bird with one wing just doesn't work and he says in the same way that is true with our life, that if our faith is alive, that there's works that follow.

[ 18 : 29 ] That if our faith is alive and the word he uses there is really intense, if it has no works, it's dead. The Greek word is nekra, necrotic. It's gangrene. That when God looks at us and our faith is dead, all he sees is gangrene, dirty tissue, something bad.

But in a live faith, James says, in a live faith it will affect our hearts, it will affect our hands, it will affect our feet, it will affect our mouth, it will affect our money, it will affect our time usage, it will affect what we do in there.

You see, in James' church, people were coming to church every day and they were reading the Apostles' Creed. Every day people were walking into church and they were dropping their kids off of childcare and they were doing communion.

Every day people were listening to testimonies over and over in James' church as he looked at the people in his congregation. He realized that not many people were changing.

That their lives were the same. Two months before, six months before, one year before, that there wasn't a change in their hearts, there wasn't a change in their actions, there wasn't a change in their mannerisms.

[ 19 : 51 ] And James says, really bluntly, if that's true, your faith is dead. So maybe the question we ask ourselves today is we look at our life. Has your life changed?

I mean, are you different in your walk with God today than you were two months ago?

Six months ago? Two years ago? If you were to examine your walk with the Lord in your life, is it different?

And James is saying it has to be different. Because if you have the seed of the gospel in your life, if you have Christ in your heart, you're going to look more and more like Him.

And the question that James put to us is are we looking more and more like Christ these days? Or are we looking more and more like Tobin?

[ 20 : 59 ] He says, a live faith will change us and we'll be different. He goes on and he says in verses 18, he says, a live faith, a genuine faith is not invisible.

But someone may say, show me your faith. I have works. Show me my works. You have faith. And what he's trying to say in the midst of all of that is that if you have a faith that is alive, people can see it. People can see your faith being lived out.

They can see a difference in your world. He never had place where people who come in and you're talking to them and they say, yeah, I'm a believer. I follow Christ. And you say, well, how do I know that?

And you say, because I said so. And you said, well, show me the change in your life. And the person says, well, my faith is very private.

I don't want to talk about that. And James says, if that's who we are, our faith is dead.

[ 22 : 07 ] It's useless. It's necrotic. It's gangrene. He says, in a live faith, you're always going to be seen. A live faith will always represent itself. It will always manifest itself in relationships.

Relationships with God. And relationships with the people around us. And so James is warning his church, he's warning us to be careful how you think you are.

Don't think that your faith is alive if it's not. Man, I've been running through this passage for 40 years now.

And every time I look at it, those questions hit me. And I have to ask myself. Finally, James says in verses 19 and 20, and I think this is the hardest one of all, verses 19 and 20, he says, you believe that God is one, you do well.

The demons also believe and they shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that your faith without works is useless? what James says here is that faith, alive faith, is not just intellectual.

[ 23 : 32 ] It's just not knowing the right things to say. It's not just being theologically correct. It's not doing the right things and saying the right things and reading the right books.

He says if that's how we live our life, then our faith is demonic. Did you catch that?

He says if your life is just intellectual exercise, if you're just reading and thinking and learning and spouting out things, but there's no change in your life, it's just words, it's just accumulation, it's just things that you're reading but you're not doing, if you're doing that, he says your faith is demonic.

C.S. Lewis would say the best people to learn theology from are demons because demons know everything. They've been in the presence of God.

Their theology is perfect. Their orthodoxy is perfect. In scripture they're always shouting out you're the son, the holy one of God, you've come to save us, you've come to put us away.

[ 24 : 38 ] Listen to him. The demons know their Bible. But their works are dead.

And James is warning his church, he's warning us and he's saying be careful, don't think that just because you're orthodox that you understand and you believe because that's what the demons think.

You ever done this? You're living life like you shouldn't do, this is me. And you're making choices that are poor, and you're doing things that you know don't please the Lord.

And then someone asks you why you're doing that. And sometimes your response is, well, I don't know why I'm doing this, but I still love God, I still know God, I still know God. And James says don't do that because the demons know God.

And they do something different. They know God and they shudder. The Greek word is they have these chills, it's like a cat arching his back. They know what's going to happen when God comes.

[ 26 : 00 ] But James says sometimes we just live these intellectual exercises. And we say, well, I know God, I know God. And he says if knowing God was enough to get you into heaven, the demons would be there.

know God. Knowing God, knowing about God, having a special agreement with him, a special relationship, if that was enough to get you into heaven, the demons know that.

So James is warning us, he's saying be careful, be careful of what you believe because belief is not enough to get into heaven. And a live faith grows and it's connected to works, it's connected to actions and it's seen in friendships and relationships.

Then James goes on and he says, I want to show you what a live faith is like. And he gives us two examples and the two examples cannot be more opposite than each other. One is a lady named Rahab.

She's a pagan. She's living in the city of Jericho. And one is a person named Abraham, the father of the faith. And James uses both of those as examples. They're totally opposite in personality and background and everything.

[ 27 : 24 ] But he says, this is what a live faith looks like. He says, look at Rahab. She's living in the walls of Jericho. We've seen the walls. If you go to Israel, you can see them. They're laid down, but the archaeologists uncover them.

And the walls were like a series of walls. And in between the walls, there were rooms. And the rooms were filled with weapons and businesses and houses built into the walls. And so she's living in the walls and she's carrying out the world's oldest profession.

Not a bakery. She's a prostitute. Sometimes people get that confused. And so she's living in there and she's hearing these stories of God's people coming through and destroying everything.

And everybody's afraid. And then one day the spies, two spies come to her door and they ask her to hide them. And she hides them on the roof. Now she's heard about God.

She's seen him moving his people through the land. Somewhere in that process, she's put faith in God. Somewhere in that process, she's saying, this is what I need. This is what I want.

[ 28 : 29 ] And so she talks to the spies. When they're about to leave, she sends the people chasing them out in a different direction. That's another sermon. And she talks to them and she says, I know that your God is the God of heaven and earth.

She makes a proclamation. It's her faith. In Hebrew, she's coming to faith. I know that your God controls everything. I know that your God is going to take care of all this land and it's going to be yours one day.

I just ask it, when that happens, would you remember me? And the scout goes, okay, this is what I want you to do. I want you to take this red ribbon and I want you to tie it around the window of your wall.

And whoever's inside your house when we attack, they will be saved. But whoever's outside of this house, they will be destroyed. And if that ribbon falls down, the bargain's off.

If you tell anybody about what's happened, the bargain's off. Think about that. And so she does that. Her faith is being acted out in works.

[ 29 : 34 ] In the midst of this battle, the walls are shaking. The walls are falling down. And she's living in the walls. Does that take courage and faith?

And the scripture says that she's saved. And she's brought into the family of God. And James says, look at her faith. She has courage. She trusted the Lord. She made this statement of faith.

And she lived it out. And you can see by her living out that that statement of faith was true and righteous and good. And that her faith is alive. Look at Abraham, the father of our people.

He was once a pagan and Ur of Chaldees. He was worshiping false gods, we're told. He's not Jewish. There's no such thing as Jewish people before Abraham comes. And God comes to him at the age of 75.

He says, I want you to leave everything. He was a very wealthy businessman. He was surrounded by his family. He had a lot of land. I want you to leave everything. I want you to go to this new land where I'm going to show you, and you've never been there, but I'm going to show you this new land.

[ 30 : 45 ] And we're told that Abraham listens. He comes to know the Lord. He puts that seed, that grain of the gospel in his life. And he says, okay.

But is Abraham a Christian yet? I don't know. We know that the seed went into his life.

It's like Jesus telling this parable of the sower. The message went out. He accepted it, but we don't know what's going to happen to that message. And so Abraham does what God says.

He leaves everything. He goes to this foreign land. And then at the age of 99, the three things that he was promised was a name that would be made great, land, and a heritage, a massive people following him.

At the age of 99, he still has no son. And so God says, I'm going to give you a son. Okay. And he has faith and he trusts God. And that seed of the gospel continues to grow and gets bigger in his life.

[ 31 : 43 ] then 40 years after he first meets God, so 40 years after God first meets him and talks to him about what he wants from him, God comes to him and says, I want you to take your son, the son that you love, your only son.



It's very specific in Hebrew. He's not going to say, well, what son are you talking about? God just pins him down to the ground. And I want you to take him to a far way land where I'll show you. And I want you to make a malk there.

In Hebrew what he's saying is I want you to do a burnt offering of him. So now Abraham's like 120 years old. And the Bible says he took his son with two helpers and they went to that land.

And as they get to that land, they're about to do the sacrifice he tells the boys, the two helpers, you stay here and the boy and I will go worship. And when we're done worshipping, we're coming back.

So Abraham, he has faith. He knows that Isaac is who he's supposed to have the heritage in. For some reason, God is doing this. I don't know what's going to happen, but maybe God's going to raise Isaac from the dead. I don't know, but I know the promises in Isaac and God has told me to sacrifice him and I just need to be obedient to whatever God has called me to do.

[ 33 : 06 ] And we're told in the passage that when he gets there and he's about to raise his hand with the knife, God speaks to him. He says, Abraham, Abraham, don't raise your hand against the son.

Because now I know you love me more than all these other things. Now I know that you fear me more than all these other things.

James tells us as we look at Abraham's life, we see a life of obedience. That kernel of truth, the gospel, the message entered into his life, but it hadn't been fruited yet.

And it wasn't until 40 years later when these works happened and he showed that his faith was true by his works. But James says he was justified by his works.

He didn't come to faith. His faith was seen to be true and real because of his obedience. And so James tells us this is what it looks like to follow the Lord.

[ 34 : 29 ] God. We're told in the passage later on that Abraham is called a friend of God because he obeys. What a great title.

Wouldn't you like to have a business card with Tobin Miller, friend of God? If even neater, if God was the one who's saying, he's my friend. That would be amazing.

In John 15, Jesus says that all of his children are his friend. But you know what he says? You're my friend if you obey me.

Because as we obey, as we walk with him, our faith is made full and true and real and seen by everybody around us.

Finally, James ends in verse 26 where just as the body with the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. What he's basically saying there is that if you don't have works, if people cannot see a difference in your life, if they can't see a change in your life, then your faith is not real faith.

[ 35 : 47 ] How are we doing? I mean, when people look at your life and they look at your faith, do they see a faith that's indifferent to the needs of people? Or do they see a faith that is concerned with needy and hurt people?

When people look at your life, do they see a faith that's independent of works? It's just words, it's just words, it's just words, but it's nothing else besides words.

When people look at your life, do they see a faith that is invisible, that it can't be seen by everyone? It's private. When people look at your life, do they see something that is intellectual?

Do you talk about your life a lot? Do they talk about your faith a lot? But all they know about you is your talk. They don't see fruit.

they don't see works coming forth from that. What kind of faith do they see in us? I'm over, but I have one last thought to give you.

[ 37 : 06 ] God's love. I have heard that you love me more than all these things.

Your works have shown, they've proven, they've borne fruit, that your faith is true and sincere, you love me. Fast forward 2,000 years on the same mountain in Jerusalem.

God, our Father, takes his only son. He doesn't put him there for display in his act of do I love you more than all these other things.

We're told God the Father crucifies and sacrifices his son for you and for me.

I know it's not in scripture, but I wonder if God is saying there as he's doing that. I love you more than this.

[ 38 : 37 ] I love you more than this. The question I have for us as a church and as individuals is when we think of that, when we think of what God has done for us in the sacrificing of his son, what kind of emotions stir up inside of you?

When we think of Christ being crucified for you, and God saying, I love you, and I never want you to doubt how much I love you, let me prove it through killing my son.

What are the thoughts that come into your head? What are the actions that are stirred up inside of you?

What are the emotions that you feel? What are the things that come into you as you think of these things? James says that if your faith is alive, your heart is going to be stirred, that you're going to be different, that you're going to look at people differently, that you're going to look at your life differently, you're going to do things differently.

You have to, because your faith is alive. And if you think of the cross and you think of what Christ has done, what God has done for you, and it doesn't elicit a change of movement, an emotion, a thought, you're not doing it to get saved.

[ 40 : 35 ] I mean, if we're God's children, we're already saved. But James says you're doing it because you love God. God's love God.

So my question to close our time with is do you love God? Do you love God?

love God? Do you love Him? James says if we do, our life is going to be different.

It's going to be marked by works and fruit that is going to be seen in every relationship of your life and in your relationship with God.

Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your son. We thank you for the book of James, which is hard. Some of us are hard-headed. We need to get beat up sometimes. But the amazing thing is that you always pour grace and mercy over us.

[ 41 : 51 ] And so we come before you and we look at this passage and we, I pray that none of us don't go to sleep this week in some way and not think about what is my faith really like?

Lord, show us if our faith is alive. Show us if our faith is dead. Show us if our faith is demonic.

And wherever we are in that journey, Lord, we just need you and we love you. And we ask you to change us and to make us people that are different, people that are seen as different to the world.

Again, not because we're trying to earn your favor, because there's no way your son did that for us, but because we love you. God, I pray for this church.

I know that I don't pray for people as much as James did, but what I pray for us, that when people look at our words, but more importantly, when they look at our actions, they would see a church and a people that's been radically transformed by your son in the gospel, that they would see a church and a people that loves you, and that you would teach us each right now what that looks like, and how we're to live that love out all of our lives.

[ 43 : 35 ] we love you, we pray these things in your son Jesus' name, amen.