

# Tests, Trials and Temptations

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 August 2008

Preacher: Jonathan Smith

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Tonight we get to start a new series, seven week series on the book of James. I'm really excited about this because the book of James is a great, great book. And unfortunately, to begin with, I was going to preach all seven sermons here tonight.

Sorry, over the next seven weeks. I'd love to have a crack at it, but you wouldn't stick around. I was going to preach all seven sermons, but I had a change of holiday plans, and Renee and I are now taking five weeks off to trek around Africa, going away Tuesday week.

So we'll be away for five weeks, and other people will preach those five sermons. I'll preach the first two, and it's a great privilege to do that because James is a great book. It's a great book.

If you've never read through James, I want to encourage you to go home and read through the whole book tonight. Just by way of introduction, I want to talk a little bit about the man, James the man, and then the book of James, and then we'll pray and get into this first chapter.

So firstly, the man, James the man. James, who wrote this book, is actually the brother of Jesus, or the half-brother of Jesus, I guess, given that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

[ 1 : 1 3 ] James was his brother anyway, and they grew up together in the household of Joseph. He was a carpenter. So, you know, think a couple of two young guys hanging out with their dad, going to work with their dad, banging nails into wood, that kind of thing.

And we know that James wasn't actually a believer in Jesus until after the resurrection. So Matthew 13.55 talks about James being the brother of Jesus.

John 7.5 talks about James not believing in Jesus, saying who he was, that being the Son of God. And 1 Corinthians 15.7 says that James, after the resurrection, believed in Jesus.

So Jesus, after he was raised from the dead, appeared to a whole bunch of people, 500 people at one time. He also appeared to his disciples, and he appeared to James. And James believed that he was the Son of God.

You might kind of be able to resonate with him. If you've grown up with someone, say a brother, and you've kind of, you know, seen him nappies, and seen him getting detention at school, and kind of goofing around, and then he grows up like Jesus did, and claims to be the Son of God.

[ 2 : 2 4 ] You can see how James might not have jumped on board straight away, might have been a little bit jealous, might have thought, this can't be right. Anyhow, he sees Jesus raised from the dead, and he believes.

We know from church history and from tradition that James was a really zealous follower of Jesus. He was really fair dinkum about his faith.

And so you're going to see throughout the book that he's constantly calling us to real discipleship, like sold-out discipleship, sold-out love for Jesus. And it's said in church history that all of his clothes were worn through at the knees because he spent all of his time on his knees in prayer.

He was that kind of guy. He was that kind of Christian. And just like his brother, he was actually martyred and killed for his faith. A couple of early church historians from the first century tell us that he was thrown off the roof of the temple in Jerusalem and martyred because he wouldn't stop preaching the gospel.

So that's a little bit of his life. He obviously was close to Jesus when Jesus was teaching because James has more allusions to Jesus' teaching than any other book in the New Testament.

[ 3 : 34 ] So his teaching in this book a lot of the time sounds a lot like the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels. And that's because he was tuned into Jesus' teaching, learnt it well from the apostles, and so it's reflected in the way that he talks.

The book itself is really controversial. It's had a really controversial history. A lot of people didn't want it to be in the Bible when the canon of the Bible was put together.

A lot of people found it hard to understand. You'll see tonight that he goes all over the place in chapter 1. It's the hardest chapter to preach because he throws thoughts out on a page and there's not a lot of structure.

So it's kind of like a sermon in that way. Some people see it as this book as being sort of like a sermon. Like if you took a preacher's notes and tried to read them, that'd make no sense because you don't have the connections that a preacher gives.

So it's a little bit like that. There's not a lot of structure. It's not really a theological book. It's not heavy on theology. He's not trying to teach a doctrine like Paul does in Romans and in other places.

[ 4 : 37 ] He's more concerned with Christian living, how he should live as Christians and what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus. And so this kind of leads the theologically nerdy kind of people to not really get into it.

But the everyday Christians like you and me love it because it's really practical, really clear and simple. There's a lot of exhortation, a lot of commands from him.

So it's really clear in that. There's more imperative words in this book than any other book in the New Testament. That means there's more commands, clear commands about what we should do, how we should live than in any other book.

So it's really clear. It's kind of like a sermon. You might feel beat up by James. Tonight you're going to hear, you're probably not going to hear a lot of jokes over the next seven weeks. There's not a lot that's humorous about this book.

He's just really serious. Have you ever met one of those guys who's just really serious about Christianity? This is this guy, James. He's going to beat us up, but he's going to tell us to trust in Jesus at the same time.

[ 5 : 42 ] So Christians love this book. I love this book. Martin Luther called it the epistle of straw. He didn't like the book. He thought it was a secondary kind of book.

It doesn't have a lot about justification by faith, which is what he was on it about. But we disagree with him. We think it's a great book. And I think over the next few weeks you'll learn so much about faith through hearing this book preached.

So having said all that, I'd like to pray for us and then we'll get into this chapter. We didn't go all the way through in the reading.

I don't know if there was a mix-up with the roster there, but we're going to go through the whole chapter and I'll read it as we go. So don't worry about that. And I'll just be honest with you. I've never, ever, ever been this exhausted in my life.

So if you could pray for me as I pray for you, if you could pray for me as I'm preaching, God would just give me a good amount of energy between the Holy Spirit and the Red Bull. We'll get through it tonight.

[ 6 : 45 ] So I'd appreciate that. Why don't we pray together? Lord, we thank you so much for this great book that you have inspired, the book of James.

We thank you that James was so committed to Jesus, to following Jesus, to living our Christian life that actually meant something and did something. I pray that you would convict us tonight, that you convict us, that you have a hand in our suffering and in our trials and in our sickness, and that by that you're bringing out maturity in faith.

I pray that you convict us that we should not only hear the Bible and accept the Bible, but that we should obey the Bible, that our faith should do something and achieve something.

And I pray that you would convict those of us who are being half-hearted, limp-armed, weak Christians who aren't committed to you, that you would show us that you demand wholehearted discipleship, that we might become spiritually mature.

So work through this sermon tonight for our good and for your glory. Amen. Amen. I've never ever used a PowerPoint clip or a YouTube clip, but I'm going to do that tonight.

[ 8 : 03 ] We're going to start with a clip by Gloria Copeland. She, with her husband Kenneth Copeland of Kenneth Copeland Ministries.

You always got to be a little bit worried when someone names the ministry after themselves. There are some good ones, pretty American. Some good ones, there are some really dodgy ones. These guys have a huge ministry, and I think they have a really, well, you can judge for yourself.

I've got a short clip, minute ten, Gloria Copeland on sickness and suffering. Let's get it up there. The scripture says the traditions of men make the word of God of no effect.

You know, you might have been raised in a church that didn't believe in healing. They believed in the new birth, but they didn't believe in healing. I was raised in a church that didn't believe in much of anything.

They didn't believe in the new birth. They didn't know about the new birth. They didn't know about healing, much less prosperity. And, you know, whatever you raised up in, that's just naturally, you know, what your grandma taught you.

[ 9 : 07 ] That's what you naturally believe. But it's not naturally true. So we have to get rid of traditions that we've heard. And I had a list of them somewhere, but I don't, here they are.

But here's some things. Let's just go over a few of these. I was impressed to do this today. I haven't done it in a long time. God gets glory from sickness and disease, from the way you suffer.

There could be nothing greater. There could be no lie greater in the whole world than that one. That God gets glory when you're incapacitated, when you're sick.

Nobody gets glory when you're sick, but the devil. One of the greatest lies around today, says Gloria Copeland, is that God gets glory from the way that you suffer.

Let's take a look at verse 2 to verse 5. He says, James says, See, the truth is that God sends us trials, not just allows trials, but sends us trials and tribulation of all kinds.

[ 10 : 47 ] He sends us trials, sickness, death of a loved one, cancer, freezing weather. He sends us trials in order to strengthen our faith, purify our faith, and in order to mature us as Christians.

Your faith is just like a muscle. And so, you notice those Olympians at the moment. None of them can just walk up to the start of a marathon and run like an Olympian.

Right? They've got to go through the pain of daily training in order to build up the strength to be able to run that race.

None of us can walk up like those weightlifters do and lift 200 kilos over our head, unless you're jaunty. No one can do that. The normal, everyday people like you and me can't lift 200 kilos over our head or 500 kilos over our head without going through the daily pain of training in order to build up our muscles.

And so, the way that God gives us endurance as Christians, the way he strengthens our faith is by sending us trials, tribulation, in order to strengthen us.

[ 12 : 12 ] A muscle that's left alone without any resistance gets really weak. You see, astronauts who go to the moon or wherever, they've got no resistance, there's no gravity, and so their muscles really degenerate very fast.

They come back really weak. Same thing if you go into full-time ministry. Believe me. A muscle left alone without being worked and resisted becomes weak.

And so, James' point is similar. He says, count it joy. Don't just put up with a trial, but count it joy. Nothing but joy.

Because these trials are producing in you endurance. And endurance leads to maturity. His buddy, the apostle Peter, right over the page, says something really similar.

In chapter 1, 6 to 8. He says, in this you rejoice. Same language. Count it nothing but joy. Or in this you rejoice. Even if now, for a little while, you have had to suffer various trials.

[ 13 : 27 ] There's the word. Gloria Copeland can be more wrong.

God sends us trials to strengthen our faith. Have you ever noticed anyone who's just sort of thrown away their faith because they've had to go through a period of suffering?

And I mean, it can be real suffering. Like 20 years of pain and sickness. And they throw away their faith. They give up the opportunity that God's given them to come to maturity in faith.

And to strengthen their faith. And they cast it aside because they've been taught, God's got nothing to do with your suffering. He's either weak and he can't do anything to stop it. Or he's mean and he won't stop it.

The Bible teaches us that suffering, trials, strengthen our faith. And...

[ 14 : 42 ] Just remembered a quote from Charles Spurgeon. He was a great preacher. One of my great heroes. He said... I guess that...

There is no greater gift that God can give us. No. Health is the greatest gift that God can give us. Apart from suffering. Because he said...

I can... You know... Pile up on a penny... The amount of spiritual growth... That has happened in my life... In the good times. But he said...

The spiritual growth that's happened in my sufferings... And he had heaps of sufferings... Is altogether... Uncalculable. Uncalculable. That's what this passage is saying to us.

The people that James was writing to... Were going through tremendous suffering. They were being ostracised by the ruling class. They were being kicked out of their jobs.

[ 15 : 44 ] They were being refused food and money. And so he says to them... As he says to us tonight... Don't begrudge your suffering. Don't begrudge your trials.

But use them as an opportunity... To grow in faith. I wonder if...

We're capable of doing that. If we need help... We can look at the next few verses. Five to eight. James says... If any of you is lacking in wisdom... Ask God who gives to all generously...

And ungrudgingly. And it will be given to you. But ask in faith... Never doubting. For the one who doubts... Is like a wave of the sea... Driven and tossed by the wind.

For the doubter... Being double-minded... And unstable in every way... Must not expect to receive anything from the Lord. James says...

[ 16 : 42 ] Spiritual maturity requires wisdom. And so what he's saying is... You might be sitting there thinking... There's no... I'm just not there in my faith. I can't... Trials come and I'm... You know...

Heading for the Panadol... Straight away. Or... I'm trying to get out of them... As soon as they arrive. And... I'm not there yet. I can't... Count... My trials as a joy. I can't rejoice in my sufferings.

James says... If you're there... If you can't... See God's hand in your trials... And in your testing times... He says... You need to ask God for wisdom. Wisdom is...

Being able to discern God's will... In a circumstance. So being able to... See in your trials... That God is working through it. So he says...

If you lack wisdom... If you lack the ability to... Endure and persevere... Ask for it. So simple.

[ 17 : 43 ] He just says... Ask for it. And God is willing to give... Generously. It's not like... If you ask for wisdom... God's going to... Not yet. Or I'm busy. Or... I don't have any wisdom to give you.

He's going to give it... Generously and ungrudgingly. He's going to respond... With generosity... In giving you wisdom. But he says...

When you ask... Don't be double-minded. The actual word there is actually... Don't be double-souled. Like you have a soul...

That needs to thirst after God alone. Needs to be committed to God alone. And so he says... Don't be double-souled. And he actually made up the word... Just... For the sake of getting the point across.

Don't be double-souled. Don't have a foot in each camp. Don't sit on the fence. Be committed to God. Thirst after God alone.

[ 18 : 41 ] And God will grant you... Your request for wisdom. I spent most of my life growing up... Being completely double-minded. Double-souled.

Like I would... Want to be involved in church... Because I thought it was cool. I'd want to get anything good... I could out of God... As kind of a... A wish fairy kind of God.

I'd want to get that... But also want to have... The wisdom of the world... And the pleasures of the world... And everything else that I could get from the world. And so I was epitomizing what he's talking about here. Double-souled.

Jesus said... And this is another reflection... James kind of taking Jesus' teaching. Jesus said... You can't serve two masters. You'll either hate the one and love the other.

You can't serve God and money. And so it's the same principle... James is saying... You can't serve two masters... And expect God... To grant you...

[ 19 : 36 ] Wisdom. You can't... Sort of... Partially... Worship him... And expect him to respond... To your requests. You've got to be sold out.

Over and over again... James is going to call us away from... Weak, limp-armed Christianity... And he's going to call us to...

Sold out... Passionate faith. We're going to skip over 9 to 11...

Because I'm going to talk about that next week... In chapter 2. It's a lot about poverty and riches... Rich and poor... Oppression of the poor... Futility of riches... So we're going to cover that. So I want to skip over to 12...

And read 12 to 16. He says... Blessed is anyone who endures temptation... Same theme again... Such a one has stood the test... And will receive the crown of life...

[ 20 : 35 ] That the Lord has promised... To those who love him. If you look in Revelation... When we get to heaven... Each of us gets given a crown of life. Whether we actually get a crown...

Or whether it's a metaphor for eternal life... It's the same thing. He's saying... If you endure... When you get to the end of your life... And you've endured... And you've stayed close to Jesus... And you haven't thrown away your faith...

Then you will receive what he's promised... Eternal life with him... In heaven. He says... No one when tempted should say... I'm being tempted by God... For God cannot be tempted by evil...

And he himself tempts no one... But one is tempted by one's own desire... Being lured and enticed by it... Then... When that desire has conceived...

It gives birth to sin... And that sin... When it is fully grown... Gives birth to death... Do not be deceived... My beloved... James says...

[ 21 : 31 ] Don't be tempted... When you're tested... Don't be tempted... When you're tested... When you're tested... What he's saying is...

When you face trials... Like these people were... And like you will... When you face those trials... You're going to be tempted... To sin... When you face trials in your life...

You're going to be tempted... Either to... Abandon God... Or to sin in other ways... This happens a lot with pornography... We were talking about this a few weeks ago... You're going through a lot of testing... And you know...

You're having a tough time... And maybe you're depressed... And maybe something's... Gone wrong in your life... And so... You look for that little reward... That you deserve...

Because God has put you through this... Or because you know... You found yourself in these circumstances... And it's not just pornography... It's a whole bunch of sins... We think... Well we're doing it so tough...

[ 22 : 25 ] We just need a little bit of... Something... We deserve a little bit of something... God... Kind of owes me this one... And so...

Often... In a time of trial... We're tempted to sin... And his point is... The trials come from God... The testing comes from God... In order to refine your faith...

At the same time... You're going to be tempted to sin... Don't do that... Be patient... Persevere... Endure... And it's a tricky one...

Because the word... Tested... And the word tempted... Are the same words in Greek... It's the same word... And so... It's a little bit tricky... To figure out the translation...

I think they've done a pretty good job... But I would change one thing... If I was a Bible nerd... And I had the chance... I would change... This one... 13... No one when tempted...

[ 23 : 19 ] Should say... I'm being tempted by God... I would say... I think the better way of saying it is... No one when tested... Should say... I'm being tempted by God... We've established that God tests you...

So... No one when... They're being tested by God... Should say... That's a temptation... Because God... Cannot...

Tempt... God cannot be tempted by evil... And he himself tempts no one... This is a really important point... Because in the time of temptation...

You're not going to remember this... You need to cultivate in your mind right now... This truth... When you come into time of trial... You're going to be tempted... And at the time...

You're probably... If you're like me... You're going to be too weak to resist it... So know now... Don't cash in... That trial... Don't... Lose the opportunity...

[ 24 : 14 ] To grow as a Christian... By... Falling into the temptation... Do you get that? I want to know... Because I'll keep talking about it...

Do you get what I'm saying? If you're going through a rough time... And you accidentally hit that website... That takes you to that dodgy place...

And you didn't ask for it... But it's there... You have an opportunity... You can grow in your faith... Into maturity... In Jesus... And have endurance... And build up your muscles...

Spiritual muscles... By rejecting it... And slamming the laptop down... Or running out of the room... Or do whatever you have to do... Or you can give in to the temptation...

That's not from God... And lose the opportunity to grow... Take the first option... I'll tell you what...

[ 25 : 11 ] I just thought... The best example of this... Isn't my example... The best example of this... Is in the Bible... At the moment... Me and Renee are reading Job... It's a great book... It's the first book I read...

When I became a Christian... In the midst of real trials... It's a great book to read... And this happens to Job... Exactly... Remember what God does... He tests Job... He uses Satan...

To afflict Job... A wind of God... And a fire of God... Consume his family... Job gets afflicted... With boils... And diseases... And sicknesses...

He loses everything... That's the test... Then the temptation comes... In a couple of ways... His wife says to him... She has a... I don't know... She has a bad day...

Or something... She says to him... Why don't you just curse God... And die... Isn't that good advice... Why don't you just curse God... And die... That's the temptation... And he could have done that...

[ 26 : 06 ] And just... Had it over with... The other one comes... His so-called friends turn up... His counsellors... Who think they're so wise... And they say to him...

Well... You know... Bad things don't happen... To good people... So you must have done... Something wrong... It's a temptation there... To despair... And think... Yeah... It's all my fault... You know...

There's nothing to learn here... It's meaningless... He rejects both of those temptations... And in the end of the book... Chapter 42... It's clear... That he is... So much stronger... Spiritually...

He has such a greater... Knowledge of God... And a bigger picture... Of who God is... And it's because he... Persevered... And then gave in... To the temptation...

Let's move on... We'll skip over 17 and 18...

[ 27 : 02 ] Let's go to 19... To 25... He says... He says... Let's go to 19... Let's go to 19... Let's go to 19...

Let's go to 19... Let's go to 19... Let's go to 19... For your anger... Does not produce... God's righteousness... Therefore... Rid yourself of all... Sordidness... And rank growth... Of wickedness... And welcome with meekness...

The implanted word... That has the power... To save your souls... But be doers of the word... And not merely hearers... Who deceive themselves... For if any...

Are hearers of the word... And not doers... They are like those... Who look at themselves... In a mirror... For they look at themselves... And on going away... Immediately forget... What they look like... But those who look...

Into the perfect law... The law of liberty... And persevere... Being not hearers... Who forget... But doers who act... They will be blessed... In their doing...

[ 28 : 02 ] James says... Read... Accept... And obey the Bible... Read... Accept...

And obey the Bible... Where do I get that from? Firstly... Read... He says here... You must understand this...

My beloved... Let everyone be quick to listen... We could say... Be quick to read... Slow to speak... Slow to anger... For your anger... Does not produce... God's righteousness...

The context is clear... That the word of God... That the word... That he's speaking about... In verse 21...

Is the word of God... The Bible... This book here... So... The refrain... Throughout the book is... Hear these words... Read these words... Read the Bible...

[ 29 : 00 ] Spend time... Reading your Bible... That's the path to wisdom... Read the Bible... Secondly... He says...

Accept... What the Bible says... He says... Therefore... Rid yourself of all... Sordidness... And rank growth... And wickedness... And welcome with meekness...

The implanted word... That has the power to save your souls... Welcome with meekness... The implanted word... That has the power to save your souls...

He says... It's not enough to hear the word... Or to read the word... You need to accept it... You need to soak it up...

His buddy Peter... Says a similar thing... The same... You know... Over the page... I think Peter might have been... Copying off him... When he wrote this... But... Over two pages...

[ 29 : 56 ] Chapter 1... Verse 25... He said...

And it grows up... Pushing out... Evil... And slander... And malice... Peter says... It's like... Pure spiritual milk... Like a baby... You're just...

Drinking in the... The spiritual milk... Drinking in the Bible... And it... Expels... Malice... And envy... And slander... And so on... Similar thing...

What he's saying is... You need to hear the Bible... You need to read the Bible... You need to accept it... And... As a result of accepting the Bible... You need to change... Because of it... You need to expel from yourself...

All those... Wicked things... That are within yourself... Rank growth of wickedness... It's not enough to read the Bible...

[ 31 : 10 ] And accept it as the Word of God... It needs to do something... It needs to change you in some way... Third thing...

You need to read... You need to read the Bible... You need to accept it... And you need to obey what it says... It says... But be doers of the Word...

And not merely hearers... Who deceive themselves... For if any are hearers of the Word... And not doers... They are like those... Who look at themselves in a mirror... For they look at themselves... And on going away...

Immediately forget what they were like... But those who look into the perfect law... The law of liberty... And persevere... Being not hearers who forget... But doers who act...

They will be blessed... In their doing... This might be James' main point... Throughout the whole book... I think... He's just...

[ 32 : 06 ] He just hates... Nominal Christianity... He hates it... He hates religion... For the sake of religion... He hates it when people...

Come into church... And this might be you... Hear us banging away... From the Bible every week... And then five minutes later... You've forgotten what you heard...

Or go to a small group... And you sit down... And you read the Bible together... And five minutes later... You've forgotten what you've read... He says that's worthless... It's like water running through a pipe...

There's no benefit... You need to read it... You need to accept it... And that's going to change... The way that you live... And then you need to... Do something about it... Don't just be hearers...

Be doers... I think here at Holy Trinity... We've got the first two nailed down... We're going to read our Bibles... Whether... You know... We do it on our own... Or whether we're kind of...

[ 33 : 01 ] Part of a group that reads the Bible... We come here each week... We're going to do that... We're going to accept it... Most of us accept... That this is God's word... But are we going to do anything about it... Are we going to obey what it says...

That's the question... The reason that you leave here tonight... And forget everything I've said... In five minutes... Is probably... According to James... Because you're not trying to put it into practice...

If you sit there... And listen to a sermon... And think... How am I going to do this... How am I going to do this... How am I going to do this... How am I going to put this into practice in my life... You're not going to forget it easily... You need to get practical...

If you just grow up to be someone... A know-it-all Christian... Who can chapter and verse the Bible... And it has no impact on your life... It's worthless... Waste of time...

So hear the word... Accept the word... And obey the word... Let's take a look at 26 and 27...

[ 34 : 16 ] Just to finish... I'm just going to raise a couple of questions... We're not going to go into this too deeply... 26 to 27... He says... If any think they are religious...

And do not bridle their tongues... But deceive their hearts... Their religion is... Worthless... Religion is pure... And undefiled before God...

Religion that is pure... And undefiled before God... The Father is this... To care for orphans... And widows in their distress... And to keep oneself... Unstained by the world...

Three test questions for you... Pop quiz... This is James... Test of true...

Spirituality... True faith... And if you do badly... On this test... God is gracious...

[ 35 : 16 ] If you ask for wisdom... He'll give it to you... He'll forgive you... For where you're lacking... And he'll work in you... Even through trials... To bring you to spiritual maturity...

If you'd be committed to him... But here are the three questions... And this is going to come up... Repeatedly... Repeatedly... Repeatedly... Over the next seven weeks... Question number one...

Do you control your tongue? This is so important for James... He is deadly serious... About what you say... He says...

If any think they are religious... And do not bribe their tongues... But deceive their hearts... Their religion is worthless... I'm not talking about... Dropping an F-bomb here and there... I don't even care about that... Something far deeper than that...

Because James says... The way that you speak to people... Is a reflection... Of your heart... Jesus... Said... Out of the abundance of the heart...

[ 36 : 14 ] The mouth speaks... What you say... Is a reflection of what's in your heart... He gets really hardcore... In chapter three... Go home and read it tonight...

The tongue is... You know... A weapon of mass destruction... If you let it go... Number one... Do you control your tongue?

Number two... Are you caring... And compassionate? Religion that is pure... And undefiled before God the Father is this... To care for orphans... To care for orphans...

And widows in their distress... Are you caring and compassionate? Or do you just know great theology... And don't give a stuff... About the world... And the people around you?

Number three... Do you control your tongue? Are you caring and compassionate? And are you stained by the world?

[ 37 : 13 ] Number three... Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this... To keep oneself unstained by the world... And this is really the same question about where your loyalty lies...

Are you double-minded? Double-souled? Are you kind of partly committed to everything the world can give you... And partly committed to what God can give you... As long as he's nice? Keep yourselves unstained from the world...

This doesn't mean that we don't engage with the world... It doesn't mean that we don't get involved in the culture around us... In our community... It doesn't mean that we don't meet with unbelievers... And engage with them...

And converse with them... And relate to them... It's really a question about where your loyalties lie... And it comes down to it... Are you more interested in the latest lines coming out of David Jones?

Are you more interested in... You know... Who won the footy? Or are you most interested in...

[ 38 : 20 ] The Lord Jesus Christ? And what he has to say to you... In his word? That's what we're going to be talking about in the next few weeks...

Because James is deadly serious... About those three questions... So I think we're going to have some time... In a minute to... To spend more time reflecting on them... It would be good for us to do... Before we do that...

Why don't I pray for us now? Lord, it's a humbling thing to be... Preached at... Preached to... By your brother James...

It's a humbling thing to have... Someone go over us... Like he does... Calling us to repentance...

Convicting us... Showing us where our flaws are... The blemishes in our faith... So I pray now that you... God of comfort would come to us...

[ 39 : 20 ] Would show us that... Jesus... Died on the cross for our sins... And for our... Blemishes... And our failings...

But Lord, please don't... Remove... The spirit of conviction from us... But Lord, please don't... Remove... The spirit of conviction from us... Pray that in the time...

That we've got tonight... We would truly reflect on... Where we're at with you... Where we're at with our faith... Whether we're... Sold out to Jesus...

Or half-heartedly following him... Lord, please keep us... Ever... Looking into your word... How... We can change... To be more in line...

More in line with your will... And I pray that you would give... Each of us... Wisdom... To discern your will for us...

[ 40 : 21 ] Lord, make us a community... Of people... That is... Wise... In the ways of faith... In the Lord Jesus Christ... So I'll do all this Lord...

For your glory... For your name's sake... Amen...