

Sermon series on the letter of James: *Putting faith into practice*

Jacob Haasnoot, 2016 (context: International Church in Kampala, Uganda)

In this letter we find 3 recurring themes: 1. temptation & patience; 2. wisdom and using your tongue; 3. riches & poverty.

#	Text	Topic	Notes (focus & questions to consider)
1	James 1:1-18	Faith being tested	Give a very brief introduction on the whole letter. Focus on how our faith is being tested. What does that mean in our situation? Why should we consider it joy? If you can, also address the issue of doubt (6-8). Is it always negative?
2	1:19-27	Doing the Word	Focus on doing the word of God. How do we put our faith into practice (27)? Make clear that it is not either/or but doing both (word & action). You can also refer to 2:14-26, which has the same theme. Don't emphasize the speaking/tongue/anger theme here. We save that for later.
3	2:1-13	No favouritism!	Very clear passage. Make it broader than only the rich & poor divide (e.g. tribalism; class difference; educated/uneducated). How can the church in Africa be different from the world in this area? Do we see positive examples? Verse 12 sounds like a principle.
4	3:1-12	The power of words	Almost poetic passage about the tongue and using words to praise or to curse. Give lots of examples. Key question: how do we tame our tongue? Answer seems to be in verses 11-12.
5	3:13-18	Wisdom from heaven	Two kinds of 'wisdom' (cf. 16 and 17). What is wisdom from heaven? Try to unpack some of the words in verse 17. Sounds a bit like the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5. How do we get this wisdom from above?
6	4:1-12	Humility is the key	Context here is fighting among ourselves in the church. Where does it come from according to James and how to resolve it? God gives more grace to the humble (verse 6). Verse 7 sounds like a principle.
7	5:1-6	The Lord Almighty hears our cries	This is more about injustice than about being rich as such. Strong language. What is the message for the oppressors? What is our calling as a church in a situation of injustice?

			What does it mean that the Lord Almighty has heard the cries of those suffering?
8	5:7-12	Patience as a life style	Patience is connected with the Lord's coming, Him doing justice. How do we live in a world full of suffering & injustice? James' answer is: patience. What does that mean? Is that passively waiting? How do patience and perseverance relate to each other?
9	5:13-20	The Power of Prayer	Great passage on the power of prayer. Also some difficult questions though: what is a prayer offered in faith? What does it mean if a person is not healed after a faithful prayer? What is the connection between sin and healing? What about the oil? Remember that some people in the congregation are struggling with these questions. Be pastoral ☺.