

South Sub Church

January 25, 2026

Real Faith Loves

James 2:1-13 (ESV)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? ⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Sermon Summary:

“Faith — IRL (In Real Life)” is an eight-week journey through the book of James, a letter that refuses to let faith remain theoretical, private, or passive. James insists that real faith shows up in the real world—shaping our responses, directing our actions, and transforming our relationships. In other words, genuine faith is always lived, never merely believed.

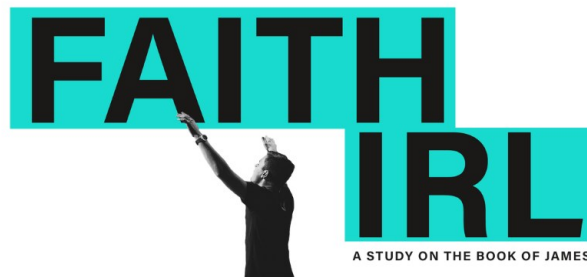
This series will challenge us and equip us to be doers of the Word, learning how a real, active faith navigates real-world trials, choices, relationships, and opportunities. Together, we will discover how faith lived in real life doesn’t just talk—but truly walks.

Ice Breaker Questions:

1. Are you more likely to notice someone’s shoes, smile, or energy when you first meet them?
2. If you were hosting a dinner party, what would make you feel like everyone truly belonged?
3. What’s a small act of kindness that instantly makes a place feel warmer or more inviting?
4. When you walk into a room where you don’t know many people, what helps you feel comfortable?
5. What’s one thing that makes a group feel fair and respectful to everyone?

Scripture Study Questions:

1. According to verse 1, what command does James give regarding faith in “our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory”?
2. In verses 2–3, what contrasting examples does James give of two people entering an assembly?
3. According to verse 4, what does James say believers have become when they show partiality?
4. In verses 5–6, how does James describe the poor in relation to faith and the kingdom, and how have they been treated?



5. According to verse 7, what does James say the rich do in relation to believers and the honorable name?
6. In verse 8, what law does James call the “royal law,” and how is it stated?
7. According to verse 9, what does James say about those who show partiality?
8. In verses 10–11, what is said about keeping the law as a whole versus breaking it at one point?
9. According to verse 12, how are believers instructed to speak and act?
10. According to verse 13, what is said about the relationship between mercy and judgment?

Interpretive Questions:

1. What does the example of seating the rich and poor reveal about underlying values or assumptions in the community (vv. 2–4)?
2. How does James’s description of the poor in verses 5–7 challenge common expectations about wealth, honor, and God’s favor?
3. Why does James refer to loving one’s neighbor as the “royal law,” and how does it shape relationships within the church (v. 8)?
4. What does James mean by saying that breaking one part of the law makes a person accountable for all of it (vv. 10–11)?
5. What does James mean when he says that “mercy triumphs over judgment,” and how does this statement summarize the passage (v. 13)?

Application Questions:

1. Where might you be showing favoritism—consciously or unconsciously—based on status, appearance, influence, or comfort?
2. Whose presence tends to make you more attentive, respectful, or accommodating, and what does that reveal about what you value?
3. How do you typically respond when God’s Word confronts an area of bias or partiality in your life?
4. What would it look like to let mercy guide your interactions this week, especially with people you are tempted to overlook or judge?
5. How does remembering that you will be judged under the “law of liberty” shape the way you speak and act toward others?
6. Where might God be inviting you to practice costly love that treats others as neighbors rather than categories?