

South Sub Church

February 8, 2026

## Real Faith Speaks Life

### James 3:1-12 (ESV)

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.<sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.<sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.<sup>4</sup> Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.<sup>5</sup> So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!<sup>6</sup> And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.<sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,<sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.<sup>9</sup> With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.<sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.<sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?<sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

### 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.

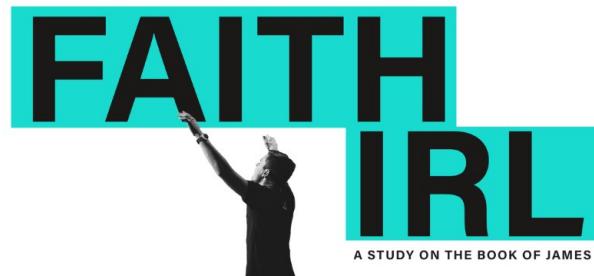
This series will challenge us and equip us to be doers of the Word, learning how a real, active faith navigates real-world trials, choices, relationships, and opportunities. Together, we will discover how faith lived in real life doesn’t just talk—but truly walks.

### Ice Breaker Questions:

1. Would you rather send a voice message or a text?
2. Are you more likely to talk first or think first?
3. If you could go back and mute your response to a recent situation in your life, what would it be?
4. What’s the nicest thing someone has said to you recently?
5. Do you prefer giving directions or following them?

### Scripture Study Questions:

1. According to verse 1, who does James warn about becoming teachers, and why?
2. In verse 2, what does James say about everyone’s tendency to stumble?



3. According to verse 2, how does James describe a person who does not stumble in what they say?
4. In verses 3–4, what two examples does James use to illustrate how small things can control something much larger?
5. According to verse 5, how is the tongue described in relation to its size and its impact?
6. In verse 6, what images and descriptions does James use to explain the destructive power of the tongue?
7. According to verse 7, what kinds of creatures does James say have been tamed by mankind?
8. In verse 8, what does James say about the tongue's ability to be tamed?
9. According to verses 9–10, what contradictory uses of the tongue does James identify?
10. According to verses 11–12, what natural examples does James use to show why such inconsistency should not exist?

#### **Interpretive Questions:**

1. What does James mean by saying that controlling one's tongue reflects spiritual maturity (v. 2)?
2. How do the illustrations of the bit, rudder, and fire help explain the disproportionate influence of the tongue (vv.3–6)?
3. What point is James making by contrasting humanity's ability to tame animals with its inability to tame the tongue (vv. 7–8)?
4. Why does James consider it inconsistent to bless God and curse people made in God's likeness (vv. 9–10)?
5. What does this passage suggest about the relationship between speech and the condition of the heart or inner life?

#### **Application Questions:**

1. Where do your words most often cause harm rather than bring life - at home, at work, online, or in church?
2. How might your words reveal areas of immaturity or unresolved issues in your heart?
3. In what ways could your speech undermine your witness, even while you are actively serving or teaching others?
4. How does remembering that people are made in God's likeness challenge the way you speak about them when they are difficult?
5. What intentional step can you take this week to bring greater consistency between your worship of God and your everyday speech?