

South Sub Church

February 1, 2026

Real Faith Works

James 2:14-26 (ESV)

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

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.

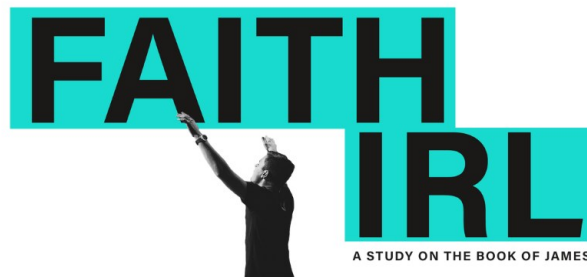
This series will challenge us and equip us to be doers of the Word, learning how a real, active faith navigates real-world trials, choices, relationships, and opportunities. Together, we will discover how faith lived in real life doesn’t just talk—but truly walks.

Ice Breaker Questions:

1. Would you rather help someone move furniture or help them plan the move?
2. What’s one small favor you don’t mind doing for other people?
3. Are you more likely to jump in and help, or wait to be asked?
4. What’s a simple task you’re surprisingly good at?
5. If “actions speak louder than words,” what action do you think says “I care” the fastest?

Scripture Study Questions:

1. According to verse 14, what two questions does James ask about faith and works?
2. In verses 15–16, what example does James give to illustrate faith that does not help someone in need?



3. According to verse 17, how does James describe faith if it does not have works?
4. In verse 18, what contrast is made between faith and works?
5. According to verse 19, what example does James use to show belief without obedience?
6. In verses 20–22, how does James describe the relationship between Abraham’s faith and his actions?
7. According to verse 23, what Scripture is said to be fulfilled, and how is Abraham described?
8. In verse 24, what conclusion does James state about justification and works?
9. According to verse 25, what example is given involving Rahab, and what actions are mentioned?
10. According to verse 26, what comparison does James use to describe faith without works?

Interpretive Questions:

1. What does James mean by asking whether faith without works can save (v. 14)?
2. How does the illustration of unmet physical needs (vv. 15–16) clarify James’s definition of genuine faith?
3. Why does James insist that faith and works cannot be separated, according to verses 17–18?
4. What point is James making by referencing the belief of demons in verse 19?
5. What does James mean when he compares faith without works to a body without a spirit (v. 26)?

Application Questions:

1. When you encounter real needs of others - physical, emotional, or spiritual - what usually determines whether you act or remain passive?
2. In what ways might your faith be more verbal than active right now?
3. What costly act of obedience might God be inviting you into as an expression of genuine faith?
4. How does your life provide evidence—seen by others—that your faith is alive rather than merely professed?
5. What fears, comforts, or excuses most often keep you from acting on what you believe?
6. If someone evaluated your faith solely by your actions this past week, what conclusions might they draw?