**Faith Foundations 2021-2022**

**The Catholic Epistles**

**Session 12**

**In this final lesson on James’ epistle, we will read the final verses of the book, which does close the letter on a positive note (positive for James, at least). These final verses focus on the necessity of prayer and evangelism, as well as the blessings that come upon those who dedicate themselves to these crucial tasks.**

**Read James 5:13-18. What is James’ solution for seemingly every situation that a Christian might experience?**

**How is prayer a blessing to us both in good times and in bad?**

**Whom should Christians call when they are sick? What does the term “elders” mean in this context (and in the entire New Testament)?**

**If you were to get sick, whom should you call? Have you ever done so?**

**What does the practice of anointing the sick with oil symbolize? Have you ever seen this happen?**

**What will prayer do for a sick person? Should we regard this statement from James as a guarantee of healing? When will ultimate healing come for all who pray to the true God in faith?**

**What will happen to those who have committed sins, who then pray to God for mercy?**

**How should we Christians handle it when we have committed sins against each other? Is this always easy? Why or why not?**

**What does James say about the prayer of a righteous person in verse 16? What does it mean to be truly “righteous” in God’s eyes?**

**How should we Christians expect God to answer our prayers?**

**How does the example of Elijah help illustrate the power of prayer? Read 1 Kings 17:1-7 and 18:41-46 to learn more about these events.**

**Read James 5:19-20. What should we Christians do when someone “wanders from the truth?” How does this encouragement fit in with James’ prohibition against judging others (e.g.—4:11)?**

**What will the person who restores a fallen brother or sister do for that person? Why then should we be eager to speak to those who have fallen away from the faith?**

**Speaking the truth in love to those who are in error, especially those who used to be Christians, is difficult. It is hard to do so without appearing to be judgmental, and it can cause rupturing of relationships. But we Christians can never be afraid to say what is right and true! By so doing, we can bring salvation to those who have forsaken Jesus, and bring them back into the kingdom of God. That is always something worth doing, and so James ends his epistle by encouraging us to speak the Gospel boldly, so that some of our hearers might be saved from sin, death, and the devil.**

**Now that we have finished the book of James, let’s think about some issues that tie everything together.**

**How has the distinction between homologoumena and antilegomena been helpful for you as you have read and interpreted James?**

**If you were to make the book of James the main scriptural foundation of your faith (or perhaps just your favorite book of the Bible), what would your faith be like?**

**How much is the grace of God mentioned in James? How many times does the name of Jesus appear, and in what context?**

**Considering the answers to these previous questions, why would Martin Luther (and others) have ranked James very low on their list of favorite books of the Bible?**

**Although it probably should not be considered among the “chief” books of the Bible, I hope we can all agree that reading James is certainly a useful thing to do. We may not derive any of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith from it, but it still gives us some very good practical counsel on how to live faithfully as a Christian. When read in its proper context, James serves as a very helpful book of the Bible for us. It encourages us to remain faithful to Jesus and His Word above all things, and to live our lives according to His will. The only books in the world we could read that are more spiritually enriching than James are also found in the Bible, and that makes James a very valuable book indeed!**