

## JAMES 1 – RESILIENT FAITH

### Background

James, the brother of Jesus, leader of Jerusalem church and mentioned by Paul and Peter as being a key person in the church. Paul called him a pillar of the church (Gal 2:9). Martyred in AD 62 (as recorded by Josephus). James did not believe in Jesus during his ministry but came to faith after the resurrection. Jesus appeared to him (I Cor 15:7). Brought him to faith.

Date: Much evidence for the letter being written around AD 45-50 – if so, that would make it the earliest letter in the New Testament.

As usual, there is an overview of James available through the Bible Project  
- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/james/>

Audience: Jewish believers – probably the diaspora (CH 1:1) but mainly Jewish Christians. They were part of a persecuted church.

Theme: faith that works

### WARM-UP

Do you feel that we, as Christians and the church, as a whole, are under pressure from our society? Last census showed growth of no religion & decrease of Christianity. How do we feel about the decline in Christianity in Australia?

### Read James 1:1-18

James was writing to Christians who were under pressure, marginalised and very much a minority in society. The book has been called an amalgam of Proverbs and the Sermon on the Mount – it is quite different in tone to the letters of Paul and Peter. It has both warning and wisdom.

Q: What are some of the ways we can react during hardships? (doubt, self-pity, short-sightedness, blaming God or others). Have you been there? If not, how did you avoid those reactions?

Q: How should the way Christians view difficulties be different to that of a person with no faith? *(Linked to our view of this life as a preparation for life in heaven versus the world's view of it an issue of entitlement and therefore any bad is unfair).*

Q: How can we put what is happening into perspective, both in the context of our lives as a whole and of eternity? See 2 Cor 4:8-10 and then 16-18.

Q: What does James say we should do? Ch 1:2. Does that seem possible or impossible?

Q: What does James say are the benefits of going through hardships? Verses 3, 4, 5 and 12-13.

Q: What does the passage say about the character of God – verse 17? How hard or easy do you find it to believe in God's goodness during hard times (Rom 8:28 and 35-39).

**DISCUSSION:** How can we help each other when one is going through a tough time?

**PRAYER:** For each other. You might want to use one of the prayers Andrew put up on Sunday

God, I am struggling, I feel discouraged and am starting to doubt. I need your wisdom – to see my situation correctly, to see myself correctly, to see you correctly. I trust in Your goodness. Give me the faith to persevere and to hold on to you.

God, I hate this situation I am in and that others seem to be better off than I am. Help me to appreciate my humble position, as it causes me to reach out to you. Help me to persevere until I receive the crown of life when Jesus returns.

God, I take responsibility for the sinful decisions I have made and the ways I have allowed my view of you to become distorted. I believe that you are good and that every good thing comes from you. Help me to live with thankfulness for the new life you have given me.