

James' 4 Life Lessons for Men

- James, who's writing this book of the Bible that we're studying, who's his big brother? It's Jesus Christ. I mean, how many of you grew up with a big brother? Now remember, just imagine, just fathom, just consider like you're Jesus' kid brother. And James' life is one of the most extraordinary lives lived in one of the most incredible families that has ever walked on the Earth. And what's interesting is by the time we get to the Book of James, which we're studying, he's a grown man. He's a mature man. He's a mature Christian. He's a leader in the church. He's at the point where he's ready to write a book of the Bible. The truth is he didn't start there. In fact, James started in the same place that every other guy starts. And through the course of his life, there were steps in progress that brings him to this mature place where we find him in the Book of James. So what I wanna do is I wanna start where James started. and I wanna look at James' life, and I wanna look at four lessons for men from the life of this man. And what can happen is when we see somebody like James in the Bible, we can think, oh, gosh, he's mature. He's wise. He's seasoned. He didn't start there. He started where we all start, and here's where we find him starting. We'll take a little look and looking at James' life. First of all, James disbelieved in Jesus. Mark 3, it says: "When his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He's out of his mind.'" Okay, Jesus is saying, "I'm God," and His really nice, devout, spiritual, Jewish, rural family's thinking, "Our son has lost his mind." We're gonna go get him. We got a round room. We'll tell Him to stand in the corner. We've got a coat for Him with no sleeves. Somebody will prescribe medication. We just gotta tuck our boy away. He ain't making any sense." And so His family comes to literally do an intervention. They're going to pull Him out of public life. "And His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside, they sent to Him and called Him. And a crowd was sitting around Him and they said to Him, 'Your mother and brothers are outside seeking you.'" He goes on to say, "My mother and brothers are those who do the will of God." So, here's the deal. James grew up, and Jesus and James lived in the same house. They occupied the same space. So he knew who Jesus was, but he didn't believe in Jesus. How many of you, this kind of explains where you started? Maybe you grew up in a home, you're like, "Oh, I heard about Jesus. We went to church. My mom knew Jesus. My dad knew Jesus." Jesus kind of was in my house a bit growing up, too, but I didn't believe in Him. How many of you that's your story? That's where you started? That's where I started. I was a Jack Catholic boy, and we had a picture of Jesus in our house. My mom talked about Jesus. We had one of those huge Catholic Bibles, gigantic Catholic Bibles. If a terrorist came in, you just hide behind it. You'll be fine. But we never opened it. It had so much dust, you could write damnation on it with your finger. We never opened it. But if you did, you'd see the pictures of Jesus. So we have a picture of Jesus. We got the Bible with more pictures of Jesus. Jesus was in my house, but Jesus wasn't in my heart. I didn't know Him. Every single man starts by disbelieving in Jesus. Okay, that's where we all start, and some of you are there today, tonight. Whether you're in the room or you're watching online, you may say, "I've heard about Jesus. He's been maybe in my school, in my youth group, maybe in my college experience, maybe in my family. Maybe we pray to Him when Thanksgiving comes, but I don't believe in Him. I don't think He's God. I mean, He was a good man, but He's not God. And you know, He died, but I don't think He rose from the dead, and I don't think He ascended into heaven. I don't think He's

my savior. I don't think He's perfect. I think He's a good man, but not the God-man." We all start there. Some of you are brand new Christians, and you've moved beyond there. So we all start at this place where we disbelieve in Jesus. For you guys that are here, what I would say is don't be ashamed. Don't be embarrassed. If you're watching online, you're like, "Yeah, that's where I'm at," the best thing is just to be honest and to say, "Here's where I'm at." Jesus' family was honest. His brothers, his sisters, his mom show up, and they say, "We know who He is, but we don't agree with who He says He is. We know He exists, but we don't believe He's God." If you're there, be honest with that. And then the next step that we all take, and I'm hoping that we all take together, is he doubted Jesus. So he knew Jesus, but he had a lot of questions, and he was confused. I know many of you men, and it's an honor to have you. We love you. And you know something about Jesus, but you still got some questions. I want you to be honest with those questions. If you follow the truth, the truth will lead you to Jesus Christ. Every man who has followed the truth will tell you the truth leads to Jesus Christ. So here's the story of James, Jesus' little brother, John 7:2-5: "Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brother said to Him, leave here and go to Judea that your disciples may also see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." Here's the key line: "For not even His brothers believed in Him." Okay, how many of you, you're the first one to meet Jesus in your family, and the rest of the family doesn't understand you? Let me say this. If they don't understand Jesus, they can't understand you. Jesus' own family didn't understand Him. And so, excuse me here, James, and John is writing that James questioned. Does he know who Jesus is? Yeah, it's his big brother. Does he know Him? He knows Him, but he doesn't know Him. So, previously, he completely disbelieved in Jesus, but now it's moving to the place of doubt. And he's got questions, and he's got objections, and he's got hurdles, and he's got curiosities. Some of you guys are here. You're saying, "Okay, I believe a guy lived named Jesus, but I got a lot of questions. Before I raise my hand as a Christian, before I sign up to be baptized and go public for team Jesus, before I declare myself to be one who worships Jesus as God, before I pick up the Bible and say, okay, I'm gonna hear from God, and I'm gonna learn about Jesus, and this is who I am now." Some of you are in that position where you've got a lot of doubts. Okay, is it okay to have doubts? Absolutely. Is it okay to have questions? Absolutely, the best thing is just be honest. You need to know here at Real Men, our goal is that you can just be real. So you know what, here's where I'm at. I disbelieve. I don't think Jesus is God. I think the religion is hooey. I think the Bible is nonsense. And I think you guys are all crazy. That's fine. We can handle it. Let me just tell you this. We've heard it before. We can handle it. Other guys will be at the place they're like, "Well, here's where I'm at now. I've heard about Jesus. I've learned a little about Jesus, maybe this church or another church or maybe a Christian that I know, or maybe my wife is a Christian, and she's brought a little bit of Jesus into our house. BUT I still have doubts." Could cause somebody really rise from the dead? Could God really become a man? Could anybody live a sinless life? Could a grown man be a virgin? You know, questions. Are these things possible? I've heard of unicorns, but I've never seen one, or is this real? That God would become a man, that God would live without any sin, that God would refuse all of the temptations and pleasures that plague every man, and that He would humble Himself and choose poverty and submission and humility and be accused and attacked and maligned and hated and betrayed and arrested and

even disowned by His own family so that He could take our place and die, that we could take His place and live? And if you look at that, and you say, "I got questions," what we would say is, "We all started there." Every single man who is a Christian started where James started, disbelieving and then doubting. How many of you guys, you were doing a Jeopardy episode with God? You have a lot of questions. How many of you are those guys? You're like, "I got a question about the Bible. I've got a question about Jesus. I got a question about the resurrection. I got a question about other religions." Here's what I would tell you. Take your questions and follow them. And when you find the truth, you'll find Jesus, and He's the one who's gonna set you free. So what I would say is if you disbelieve, we are so honored to have you. I started there. We all start there. Next step, doubting. We've all been there. Some of us have been there for a long time. Some of us pass through there rather quickly. The guys around your table, they can handle your disbelief and your doubts. You don't need to be religious. You don't need to pretend. You don't need to put up airs. You don't need to proclaim something that you don't actually hold fast as something that you believe. You don't have to be fake. Just be real. Say, "I got questions." And the guys around your table, if you have questions or doubts about Jesus Christ, let me just ask the guys around your table and your table leads, are you happy to receive those? Absolutely, right? That's why they're here. So if you've got questions or doubts, bring them. So in James' life, he starts with disbelieving, and then he moves into doubting, and then something amazing happens in his life. And that is he moves into devotion. We all go from disbelief to doubt. My hope and prayer is that we all would move into devotion. So here's what it says in 1 Corinthians 15:7: "Then He appeared to James and then to all the apostles." Let me give you the context of this. 1 Corinthians is one of the first books written in the New Testament. It's one of the earliest. It was written just a few short years after Jesus lived, said He was God, died, rose from the dead, proving that He's God. And what it says in all of 1 Corinthians 15, the context is on resurrection from the dead. The one thing that no man has ever done is conquered death. Jesus is it. And what happens at 1 Corinthians 15, it gives the historical record. And it says that after Jesus rose from the dead, it says that He appeared to crowds upwards of 500 people at a time. Okay, so Jesus' resurrection was not in obscurity. It was publicly verified. Let me say this. The greatest evidence that Jesus is God is the resurrection. The most proven historical fact in the history of the world, and it's a strong statement, but it is provable, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Jesus is dead, then we should just shut it down and go home because we're all wasting time. If Jesus rose from the dead, then He is God, just as He said, and He proved it. And He hung everything regarding His credibility on His resurrection. So when Jesus was on the Earth, He kept saying, "You're gonna kill me for saying I'm God. And then three days later, I'm gonna resurrect and prove to you that I'm God." So they murdered Him, and He proved them wrong through His resurrection. And when it comes to the resurrection, the burden of proof would be on those who don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus. The Muslims would say, "He swooned on the cross. He didn't die." Well, He was flogged, which leaves most men dead, and then He was crucified. What's the point of crucifixion? Death, that's the whole point. And the executioner declared Him dead and to assure His death, ran a spear under his rib cage, puncturing His heart sac so that water and blood flowed from His side. Is He dead? Yeah, anybody work in the medical industry? When they put a spear in your heart, it's official. You're dead. And then they wrapped Him in upwards of 100

pounds of burial linens and spices. And they put His body in a cold tomb hewn out of rock, secured by the Roman government, protected by Roman soldiers. He's there for three days without food, water, or medical care or a beating heart. Any of those will get the job done. You're very much dead. He died. And then He rose. And what's amazing, I don't prepare, really, notes for this. I verbal process. So let me just verbal process the resurrection for a bit. The first eyewitnesses to the empty tomb were women. In that culture, women could not testify in court, only men. Therefore, if it was myth, legend, fable, or folklore, the resurrection of Jesus, you would never say that women found the empty tomb because they were not the most credible eyewitnesses and likely could not testify in court. So if it was fabricated, this is not how you would make up a myth. In addition, Jesus' body was then evidenced by crowds upwards of 500 at a time for 40 days, openly and publicly. And this was staggering. People could walk up, and He would show them, "Hey, this is where they crucified me. I'm back." In addition, if Jesus was dead, what should the political and the religious leaders do who conspired to murder Him? They should produce the body. I mean, all they had to do is bring out the dead body because Christianity has started. People are like, "Jesus said He's God, said He's gonna rise. We heard He rose from the dead. We heard He's alive again." There's starting to be a movement. There's a little momentum. We've got this crazy new religion starting named after Christ called Christianity. Oh my gosh, how do we shut this thing down? Shortcut to shutting it all down, here's the dead body. Now they knew exactly where the dead body was because before Jesus died, it was promised and prophesied 700 years in advance through the prophet Isaiah, that He would be buried with the rich in His death, Isaiah 52 and 53. Was Jesus rich? Nope, very poor. On the Earth, He's very poor. So how does He get buried in a rich man's tomb? After He dies, the historical record in the scriptures say that there was a man named Joseph of Arimathea, who is more of a quiet disciple out on the margins of Jesus' ministry, observing from a safe distance. And Joseph was likely a political leader. He was affluent. He was well-known. And he had a burial tomb that he had purchased for himself. So it's legal property just like the deed and the plot number to your land where you own your home. And he gifted that to Jesus. After Jesus died, they had nowhere to bury Him, so Joseph gave Him the tomb. So He was buried with the rich in His death. But in addition now, who knows where He's buried? Well, Joseph does. In the same way, if you gave somebody your house, you know where that's at. Plus it's recorded property deed with the Roman government, just like your house. So the government knew where it was. In addition, the Roman government put their seal on the entrance to the tomb, so they knew where it was. And they posted a guard on duty. He knew where it was. On the day of resurrection, the women showed up at the tomb because they knew where He was buried. And then they go back and tell John and Peter, and John and Peter, they're the two disciples that run to the tomb first. John gets there first 'cause he's the youngest, and the youngest is always the fastest, amen, old guys? Even if it's a resurrection, I'm walking. I'll get there, right? And if you're young, you run, and if you're old, you miss running. And so that's kind of where we're at. John gets there first. He waits for Peter. Peter goes in first. And the body's gone, and there's the burial linens. And Jesus is in town. He's having breakfast with people. He's hugging people. He's seeing people. What's really interesting, too, there's a historian. His name is Edwin Yamauchi. He's very well noted in sort of ancient archeology. And he says that in the days of Jesus, the tombs of at least 50 holy men were enshrined in that area. How many of you have

been, you'd drive down the freeway, and you see a memorial? What does that tell you off to the side of the road? There's a motorcycle wreck or a car wreck, and somebody died, and they memorialized that person. We've got Veteran's Day coming up. One of the things that sort of wrecks my soul every year on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day, I go to a national cemetery, and I pray for the families that are present. And I go to see the flags of the fallen, and it's overwhelmingly emotional. And each of those people who gave themselves in service, sacrificing themselves for the sake of freedom, we honor them. We remember them. We memorialize them. We create a place where they are honored forever and where others can come to honor them. And that's exactly what we should do. Yet for Jesus, there was no memorial. Again, Edward Yamauchi says that in the ancient Palestinian environment, geographically, the tombs of upwards of 50 holy men were enshrined. To this day, major religious centers are built over the burial places of religious leaders. We know exactly where Muhammad is buried, the founder of Islam. And there's a huge structure built in his memory, and every year Muslims make sacred pilgrimage around the world to go hang out with a dead guy. We know that Abraham, Father Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith, and I'd say the Christian as well if your faith is in Jesus Christ, he's buried in Medina. We know exactly where he is. It's a holy site for Jewish pilgrims. We know exactly where Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, is buried. And his burial chamber is this large tourist attraction where the Buddhists come from around the world. The biggest movement of any sort or kind in the history of planet Earth is Christianity. Billions of people today know, love, serve, worship, and follow Jesus Christ. How in the world do we not know where He's buried if He's buried somewhere? We know where Jimi Hendrix is buried. I've been there. We know where Bruce Lee is buried. I've been there, too. We know where lots of people are. I know where my Grandpa George is buried. He's buried in Seattle, Washington. I could right now get on a plane, get in a car, and I could drive you to where my grandpa was buried when I was 10 years of age. I know exactly where he is because I loved him with my whole heart. Think of all the people who love Jesus. Think of all the people who follow Jesus. If He died and was buried, and if the tombs of 50 other holy men were enshrined, and we have no idea where He is buried, why? He ain't there. He's not there. It's like, if you're going to the place that he was buried, you get there, and you're like, "Well, gosh, it's open. Well, that's odd." Yeah, He's in town having breakfast. You can go give Him a hug. See, that's unusual. In addition, the first explanation that was seeking to contradict the resurrection of Jesus was by the Jewish leaders, and what they said was, "The body's been stolen." The obvious question is, okay, okay, I'll give you that. Oh, I'll give you that, okay, okay, fine. They stole the body, whatever. How'd they make it alive? That's my question 'cause my Grandpa George is dead. If somebody is like, "They stole his body," you'd be like, "That's terrible." "And he's alive." Okay, that's unexpected. In addition, the man who writes 1 Corinthians 15, which we just looked at, his name is Paul. He started as Saul. He hated Christians. He murdered a Christian leader named Stephen, and then he met the risen Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead, went up to heaven, saw Saul and said, "I'm done with this guy," and came down and literally knocked him off his high horse, blinded him, and converted him. You know you're a bad guy when Jesus comes down. He's like, "You know, dibs, I got this guy. This guy is mine." Okay. How do you get the guy who is the jihadist of his generation to become a lover of Jesus Christ? How do you get someone who is committed to religious terrorism against the followers of Jesus

to then die for Jesus? Only the resurrection. And he says it here in 1 Corinthians 15 as well. He also appeared to, throw the verse back out, to who? 1 Corinthians 15:7, James. So let me say this. So we all start disbelieving in Jesus. And then we got questions and objections and doubts, and we work those through. And then the issue that we all have to come to is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let me just bottom-line this for you. You either believe that Jesus is God and rose from the dead or you don't. And all of human history is in one or two categories. You believe that Jesus is God who rose from the dead. You're a Christian. You don't believe that Jesus is God and rose from the dead. You're a non-Christian. That's all of human history. Those are the two teams. We've got all kinds of other teams. What's your nation, what's your political persuasion, what's your economic status. But the issue really is Jesus, most important person to ever walk on planet Earth, the most influential person in the history of the planet. Newsweek, Time, they will have man of the year. He was named man of the millennium. I would say He's the man of eternity. Today more songs have been sung to, more paintings had been painted on, more books written regarding Jesus Christ than anyone who has lived in the history of the world. The biggest movement in the history of the world is Christianity. The largest movement in the history of the world is Christianity. The most diverse movement in the history of the world is Christianity. And the question is, if He's dead, cause, effect, how in the world did we get Christianity with a dead Christ? And if you're here, and I love you, but let me push back on you if you're not a Christian. The burden of proof, my friend, is on you. What other explanation would you give? And as you look around the room, there's a couple hundred guys here tonight all saying, "I met Jesus, and He changed my life," right? Amen? So if He's dead, how do we get Christianity? And who changed these guys' lives? And for James, it all came down to this, the resurrection of his big brother, Jesus Christ, from the dead. For you and I, it all comes down to this. Did Jesus die? Did Jesus rise? If so, then Jesus is Lord. And I would tell you guys, if you have disbelief, seek the truth. If you have doubts, seek truthful answers to those questions. And James ends up at this place where he is confronted with his risen brother. Can you imagine that? How many of you have buried a brother? I mean, the trauma, and then He's back. Now, James has to decide, "Am I gonna worship my brother?" Let me say this. That James became a Christian and a pastor is evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. True?

- Yep.

- How many of you would not start a religion for your brother? I always say this. My brothers have never mistaken me for Jesus. Lucifer, yep. Jesus, nope. Furthermore, James and his mother and his brothers and his sisters and their family, they're devout Jewish people. They know that the First Commandment is there's only one God, and the Second Commandment is you worship Him alone. And all of their life from birth through all of life was built and based upon the Old-Testament teaching that there is one God, and you worship Him alone. And if you violate those two commands, you are an enemy of God, sentenced forever to the fiery flames of hell. We tend to think of choosing your God or religion, kind of like your Amazon shopping cart. You're like, "Oh, that sounds good, or I like that." No, for these people, this was the life and death decision. And to change your God, to change your religious convictions was to be kicked out of your community, disowned by your family, terminated from your employment. And,

ultimately, oftentimes your family would have a funeral, and consider you dead. This is the biggest decision you'll ever make. And here's Jesus risen. And James and his mom, his brothers and his sisters, they got a decision to make. He's God risen from dead, or He's not. What did they pick? He's God risen from death. Let me say this. You can start with disbelief. You can work through your doubts, but like James, there comes a point in every single man's life where you're face-to-face with Jesus, and you've gotta make a decision. He's God risen from the dead, or He's not. My hope, my prayer, my goal is that if you have not yet come to that decision that Jesus is God and that He died and rose in your place for your sins, that today would be the day of your salvation. The reason that I'm a little more focused today is because I love you with all my heart. And I want you to go to church. I also want you to go to heaven. I don't want you to just hang out with us. I want you to hang out with us forever. I don't want you just to enjoy God's men. I want you to become one of God's men. And if your buddy brought you, let me tell you why he brought you, so you could get saved. Now he didn't tell you that because he knew you wouldn't come. So I'm telling you that. But there are times in a man's life where we just need to be honest with each other. You don't know Jesus, you're going to hell. You don't know Jesus, you're on the wrong side of the fight. You don't know Jesus, you're a sinner separated from God. You don't know Jesus, you are living in the path of the wrath of God. I'm just gonna be honest with you. My job is to tell the truth. Your job is to make the decision. And I love you. I want you to make the right decision. I wanna see y'all in heaven, not just church. James made that decision. Let me say this, if James can make that decision, we all should make that decision. If his brother was convinced, you should be convinced. If James says, "My brother's God and defeated death," then you and I could or should all say, "I believe the same thing." The evidence is compelling, and there is no explanation apart from the resurrection. So he becomes a Christian, and that's what we want you all to become. The second thing that happens, he then finds a church. Okay, so he has disbelief, doubt. Then he has devotion to Jesus. Now he's gonna join the church. Acts 1:14, after the resurrection of Jesus, Acts 1, Jesus returns to heaven. He's gonna come again to judge the living and the dead. Jesus is alive right now. He's King of kings, Lord of lords. He's seated on a throne. He's high and exalted. And there'll be a day when we don't have any more elections. We just have one Lord, where we're not fighting any more wars 'cause the Prince of Peace has put down all the enemies. There is a day coming when the mess we have made will be fixed by Jesus Christ reentering human history. And let me say this. If you look at this world, and you have hope, you're not paying attention. Right? How many of you looking at the planet, and you're like, "It doesn't look good?" You know why? We don't need good? We need God. And so what Jesus does is He creates us, and we sin against Him. He comes down to rescue us and deliver us to have a relationship with us so that when He comes back, we rise from the dead as He did. And here's what He's gonna do. He's looking for good men to help build His new kingdom. So the reason we're here is to build the kingdom of God in whatever sphere of influence we have, our home, our family, our business, our ministry. This is our little outpost for our king and His kingdom. But when He comes back, He's looking for some good men to rule the Earth. He's looking for some good men to create new culture. He's looking for some good men to bring His kingdom. So until the King and the kingdom arrive, we gather as the church, which is the outpost of the kingdom. In any battle, you've got your base. And from your base, you try and

extend your influence. Well, the base of the kingdom of God on Earth is the church. It's God's people. So after Jesus rises, the Christians start gathering, and at first there's only 120 of them, far less than us. I mean, it's just mind-boggling. Christianity starts far away with 120 people who are persecuted and hated, following a guy who got murdered by the government, and they're broke. 2000 years later, here we are. Question is who did that? If God didn't do that, who did that? If Jesus is dead, then where did this resurrection life come from? So the church is birthed and born. There's only 120 of them, and they're kind of fearful and scared of what's gonna happen to them. In Acts 1, all these were with one accord, devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. One of the first Christians in the church was Jesus' own mother. I don't know about you. You can fool a lot of people, but you can't fool your mom, amen? Right? Who knows you like your mom? Nobody. Your mom's like, "You're guilty." "I didn't say anything." They're like, "I know." I know. I can smell it. I can see it. You're 48. She's still got a wooden spoon, and she's got you every time, dead to rights. How many of you, now don't raise your hand, but like when the holidays come, your mom tells everyone who you really are? Thanksgiving, your wife is learning who you really are. Oh, I raised him. Let me tell you a story. You're like, "Let me pour a drink. This is gonna be a while." Okay, your mom knows who you are. My mom knows who I am. My mom has never messed up and said, "God, I'm sorry, Mark." My mom has never glitched that way. Right? She changed you. She whooped you. She saw you in puberty. I mean, she's got a front-row seat for who you really are. True? One honest dad in the back, having a chuckle, okay, just praying for his mom. Just thinking about what he put her through. Jesus' mom shows up at the first church and says, "My son's God, and He rose from the dead. Previously, I thought He was nuts. The whole family thought He was nuts. Like, we tried to take Him home. We had a doctor's appointment scheduled. We had a prescription written out. We were trying to talk Him in. He's not well. And we all thought He was crazy." And then Mary's saying, "I was there when they crucified Him. I was looking my boy in the eye, and He died, and I saw Him buried. And then He came back." He's God. His own mother and His brothers worship Him as God. How many of you can't get your family to agree on anything? Right? How many of you, you can't get your family to come together for anything? They all come together to worship Jesus Christ as God. And he moves from a Christian to a church member. This is my hope for you. You're Christian. Jesus is God and savior, member of the church. We're glad to have you here. We're honored to have you. And then you find out your role, to lead, and God made men to lead. And what I like to say is we need less government and more men. We need less government and more husbands. We need less government and more fathers.

- Whoo!

- Amen.

- And so here's where we see James leading, James 1:1. This was the beginning of his book: "James, a servant of God and of Jesus Christ," who is his Lord. He goes on to be under the authority and Lordship of Jesus Christ. That's the only safe place for any man. He goes on to be a pastor. He writes this book of the Bible. He's mentioned a few times in Galatians as one of the

pillars or those men that you can count on to hold up the church of Jesus Christ. And then lastly, what happens to James, he goes from being a Christian to a member of a church, to a leader, I'll close with this, he died for Jesus. Let me say this. Every man, here's the journey. We all start by disbelieving in Jesus. Work it through, figure it out, chase your questions and objections. You're gonna come to some doubts. I doubt. I doubt. And then my hope, prayer, and goal is even right now, you would come to devotion. And that the end goal is that one day you would die for Jesus. The most important day of your life is not your birthday, and it's not your wedding day. It's your last day. You're gonna live forever, my friend. The question is where. James was a man, who as he entered into ministry and as he served Jesus as Lord, we want you all to serve Jesus as Lord. They came to him, and they said, "We're gonna make your life very painful. It's going to be very arduous. You're going to suffer unless you just deny that Jesus Christ is your Lord. Just tell the world that your brother isn't really God and didn't really rise, and then pressure's off. No pain, no problem, no peril." They're threatening him. They're bullying him. He's got a decision to make. How many of you men are feeling that same pressure? I'll just deny what the Bible says, disown Jesus, walk away from your faith, join the fools parade of the woke Joe-folk. Just jump in line, the conga line to hell. Just jump in it. It's gonna be a lot easier for you. Won't cost you at work. Won't cost you with your degree. Won't be rejected by your family. Won't be the outcast on social media. You can do this one of two ways, the hard way or the easy way. James says, "My brother is God. He rose from the dead." This is history outside of the Bible. They took him up to the top of the temple. This is where God is supposed to be worshiped, where the presence of God is supposed to be honored. You know what they told him? You got two choices right now. You deny your brother, or we throw you off the temple. The temple that was built in honor to your brother, we're gonna use it to dishonor you. Here's James, probably got a wife, got kids, got a job, got a church, got a reputation. He got a lot to lose. What he says is, "Jesus Christ is my Lord. My brother is God. He did rise from death. So you can't scare me with that because on the other side of death is my brother. At some point, I'm gonna die, and I'm gonna see him. And I don't wanna look at him and say, 'Sorry, I denied you.' Instead, I was devoted to you." For every man, there comes a point, like James, where there is going to be pressure and a high price to pay to remain devoted and loyal to Jesus Christ. My hope, prayer, and goal is that you would live the life that God has for you as long as God would intend for you but that your last day would be your best day and that you would die for Christ. You would die with Christ. You would die like Christ. The Bible says to depart and be with Christ is far better. To live is Christ. To die is gain. Let me tell you this, friends. I don't know where you're at on the continuum. I'll close with this. You may disbelieve. Let's work that through. You may have doubts. Let's work that through. Are you devoted to Jesus Christ? Welcome to your church. What is your role of service to the King and kingdom? And what price is He calling you to pay so that you can remain devoted to Him? And when you die and your eyes close in death, and they open in eternity, you hear this, and this is what I want for all of you men: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Welcome to your rest, sir." This is Veteran's Day week. There is a spiritual war. You're all veterans. Father God, thank you for an opportunity to preach and to teach and to serve. And God, I had no idea where we were gonna go tonight, but I thank you for the verbal process. And, God, anything that would minister to the men, I pray they would hold it in the spirit and in their heart. God, I thank you for James. If he could love Jesus, we can love Jesus. If he could

believe in Jesus, we can believe in Jesus. If he can follow Jesus, we can follow Jesus. He didn't know that his brother was who He said He was, but we sure do. And, Lord, thank you that he endured hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Thank you that he died with his boots on. Thank you that he went out with his dignity intact. Thank you that he was willing to pay whatever price it took to see his brother without shame. God, we live in a dark day when there's more pressure on men to go the route of Judas and betray their Lord rather than James and be devoted to their Lord. God, I pray for the men who are not yet Christians, that Holy Spirit, you would give them faith, you would give them life, you would give them unbelief in the strong name of Jesus Christ. We can't save, but you can. God, I pray for the men who are feeling the pressure as James did, that they would persevere under trial, which is a big theme in James. And, God, I thank you that right now, James is having a really good day. He's seeing his brother in glory. And, God, I long for the day, I look forward to the day when we don't just read about James, but we hang out with James. And we just don't learn about his brother, but we get to meet his brother as well. I pray for the grace on all of these men to finish their race, to complete their tasks, and to be good veterans in this spiritual war as we serve our king until He comes with reinforcements to win a victory that will cause us to usher in peace forever. And so, Lord, thank you that I get to teach, and I pray for the hearts and souls of men in Jesus' good name, amen.