

# 1. The Big Issue

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Preacher: Andy Gemmill

[ 0 : 0 0 ] what's going on. But we're beginning a new series this evening in the letter of James, and we're going to turn to that now for our Bible reading. Andy Gemmill is going to be leading us in the preaching shortly. And James, you'll find, begins on, I think, page 1011.

But we're going to read, first of all, not from chapter 1, but from chapter 4. And Andy will explain that later on. But we're going to read chapter 4, verses 1 to 10.

And that will get us into the heart of this very poignant and very searching letter.

So James, then, chapter 4, at verse 1. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it's to no purpose that the scripture says, he yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us.

But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

[ 2 : 3 2 ] Be wretched, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. Let's pray briefly as we come to God's word.

Heavenly Father, we pray that at the end of a long day, you would please give us alert minds, open eyes, and open ears, and soft hearts to see your truth, to hear it clearly, to respond to it rightly.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I wonder if you've ever heard these words. You must have heard someone say, it's just the way he is.

Usually it's in response to something that's been difficult to handle. Somebody will say to somebody else, ah, don't worry, it's just him. It's just her. It's just their way. It might be the behavior of an individual, the teenage strop, the bad temper, the sharp tongue, the overly critical, the bossy.

[ 4 : 0 0 ] It's just the way they are. Or it might be their behavior of an institution. Oh, the company's always been like that. Or, well, politics just works that way, doesn't it?

Or even the behavior of a church. Congregational meetings, someone will say, don't tell me about congregational meetings. Now, of course, there are good reasons for Christians to be patient and kind with one another.

God has been very patient and kind with us. There are good reasons to overlook one another's shortcomings, for we have all been forgiven very much indeed.

But that, it's just the way that he, she, we, they are, can be an excuse to ignore what ought not to be ignored.

Namely, that some behavior is really bad behavior and shouldn't just be ignored or brushed under the carpet. Sometimes, something needs to be said.

[ 5 : 0 8 ] Sometimes, something needs to be done. This evening, we start a short series looking at the letter of James. You'll find it on page 1011 in the Blue Bibles.

Some of you here this evening will be very new to the Christian message. Just beginning to have a look at what Christianity is all about. And if you are, then my guess is you may not have come across this little letter yet.

It's near the back among the smaller books. It's easy to miss. But if you've been involved in the Christian, in the Christian walk for a little while, you will almost certainly have come across this letter.

I remember meeting this letter fairly soon after becoming a Christian at university. We studied it in our Christian Union small group Bible studies. I think I remember being told at the time that we were studying this letter because it was very practical.

That was the word that was used. And often our CU Bible studies were a bit vague and not very practical. And I'm sure our CU leaders chose this to study because at least our discussion would get as far as doing something.

[ 6 : 13 ] And I guess that for most Christians, that's the big thing they know about this letter. It's a practical letter. James does indeed get practical. He talks about things people do.

Things like making plans. Things like how we speak to one another. How we behave towards one another. How to handle difficulties in life. What to do with money.

About the importance of doing things as well as just thinking them and believing them. Everyone agrees that this is a practical letter. But to be honest, that's often about as far as people get with it. And so many questions often remain unasked. For example, who is James writing to exactly? And why is he writing?

What made him get out of bed one day and say, you know, that letter really must be written? And when you read the letter, it's not at first very obvious what the whole thing's about.

[ 7 : 18 ] What we're going to try to do this evening as an introduction is to find out what is, what is the whole thing about? We'll be skipping around here and there and trying to answer this one question.

Why was this letter ever written? What made the man get up that morning and say, right, today's the day to make a start? For if we can understand that, we may be able to begin to make sense of how this letter meshes with our own lives over these next few Sunday evenings.

Now, look at the introduction. The introduction looks very general, doesn't it? James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes in the dispersion, greetings.

Well, it's got a kind of Jewish feel to it, the twelve tribes. Maybe he's writing to Jewish believers, but it looks very general. He says he's writing to the dispersed people.

At first sight, there's no particular destination in mind. There's no city, no region, no names are mentioned. There are no personal greetings in this letter at all.

[ 8 : 28 ] And sure, as you read through the letter, there are all kinds of bits that reach out from the pages and grab you by the throat and shake you a bit, but it's not at all clear at first sight what makes them hang together.

There doesn't seem to be a particular situation or a historical event that's triggered the writing. It's not obvious that this is a letter written to deal with false teaching, for example.

Some people have said, therefore, that this is just a collection of helpful bits of practical advice about Christian living that have been put together a bit like a pamphlet and circulated. Maybe if James had lived in this age, he would have been a blogger, [practicalchristianliving.org](http://practicalchristianliving.org), helpful hints for holy living.

Maybe it's that kind of letter. Well, maybe. However, I think as one goes through this letter, a rather more specific focus begins to emerge.

Let's just take a little trip through the letter and see if you notice a change in tone as we advance through. Let me start you off in 119, for example.

[ 9 : 36 ] Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Now, frankly, that could be written to anyone everywhere and it would have some purchase. Look at 126. It's a bit the same. If anyone thinks he's religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

Religion that's pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world. Again, that could be written to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Everyone knows that speech is a tricky subject and it's easy to be self-deceived. But now, look over to chapter 2, verse 2. Imagine, says James, imagine a situation where two different people come into your church assembly.

A rich man, well-dressed, and a poor man with shabby clothes. Just imagine that for a moment and imagine that when they arrive through the door they get treated very differently from one another. [10:53] The rich man is made a great fuss of and the poor man is told to sit over there quietly in the corner and mind his own business. Now look at chapter 2, verse 5. Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he's promised to those who love him?

But you have dishonored the poor man. Now don't you feel that's got a bit of an edge to it? You have dishonored the poor, he says.

It doesn't feel quite so hypothetical anymore, does it? Looks as though the finger is beginning to point a bit. And look at 2, 6. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you and the ones who drag you into court?

Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you are called? I suppose one could throw that out into the ether and it be generally true. Anyone in the world who's going to be persecuted legally is likely to have that done to them by the rich.

Wealth buys you access to legal services. However, don't you think it sounds as though he knows that his readers are being dragged into court by some rich people?

[12:12] And that continues. Look at 2, 15. If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food 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?

So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. And then look at verse 18. But someone will say, you have faith and I have works.

In other words, he seems to anticipate a bit of comeback from his readers, an objection, which again suggests that this example is not quite as theoretical as it might look.

chapter 3, verse 1. Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers. Now that could be a general instruction about teachers.

But look on to 3, 9. With our tongue, we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

[13:16] That's getting quite strong, isn't it? He's talking about cursing people. I suppose it could be general or it could be written to a situation in which that's precisely what is happening.

When we get to chapter 4, it gets even more direct. That section we had read to us earlier on, 4.1. What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?

Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

It is beginning to sound very personal, is it not? Doesn't it give the impression that he's got particular people and a particular situation in mind? And when we get to 4.4, well, it's as strong as it could possibly be.

You, adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Now, friends, can you imagine writing 4.4 to a general audience?

[14:30] I don't think so, do you? This letter starts off looking as though it could have been written to anyone, anywhere, anytime, but the further you go through the letter, the hotter the language becomes and the more you begin to think that we have here a particular group of people in mind and a particular set of problems and I think the very closing verse also suggests that.

Look at verse 19 of chapter 5. My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Suggest, doesn't it, that this letter is a remedial letter, a corrective letter written to bring people back from wandering and that's what I'm going to assume in this series, that though the letter starts off looking very general.

It's actually aimed at a particular situation. Now, if that's the case, what is the problem? Well, though chapter 5 talks about wandering from the truth, it seems that this is not a letter written to deal with bad teaching.

On the whole, James seems to assume that his readers have orthodox beliefs. They think the right sorts of things about God. On the underhand, what we do find in this letter is a great deal of bad behavior.

[16:10] What a catalog of relational dysfunction is described in this letter. people are slow to listen, quick to talk, quick to become angry.

They dishonor the poor. They favor the enemies of God. They lack mercy. They lack kindness. Their speech is uncontrolled and destructive. They curse those made in God's likeness. They're full of jealousy and selfish ambition. They squabble. They fight. They speak evil against one another. They plan arrogantly. They hoard wealth at the expense of the poor. They grumble against others. All of these are said and more. This letter is absolutely stuffed full of bad behavior. Imagine having to run a home group or a youth group or a church full of people like that.

You might find it not all that hard to imagine. You may have had to do that in the past. Bit of a nightmare, isn't it, when people are behaving in that kind of way? I think the problem that this letter is written to deal with is men and women behaving badly.

[17:16] It's everywhere, wherever you look in the letter. If this were a general letter about practical Christian living, it's hard to believe that you could write it like this and have anyone listen.

I think there's a particular situation in mind where Christians are treating one another very badly indeed, and here's a letter written to bring them back from that flavor of wandering from the truth. Why are they behaving badly? Well, as you go through the letter, there are some external features which might contribute.

There's a suggestion that some of these people are materially poor and others are rich, and there's no doubt that differences in material wealth can certainly provoke bad behavior.

There's a suggestion that there's persecution in the background. People are being, in chapter 2, verse 6, oppressed and taken to court. In chapter 5, the prophets who endured persecution are held out as an example to James' hearers.

[18:24] It may be that there's a hint of persecution in the background, and there's no doubt that if you belong to a church that goes through a hard time, that can put people on edge, and they may start behaving badly towards one another.

So, there might be a poverty issue, and there might be a persecution issue, but these things are very much in the background in this letter.

And all the focus is on internal difficulties, and all the solutions are internal, not external. And James is a bit like a physician.

He wanders around looking at various symptoms, and he puts his finger on a disease. So, let's just, with my apologies, get medical for a moment and have a look beyond the symptoms and try to get a handle on the disease that James is talking about.

What's the nature of this condition? Well, it's got two features, I think. First, self-deception. Look at chapter 1, verse 16, would you please? Yes. Yes. Yes. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.

[19:37] Apparently, there's a problem right from the start. James warns against the possibility of self-deception. Look at 1, 22. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

And again, look at 1, 26. If anyone thinks he's religious and doesn't bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is worthless. The introductory chapter is full of the idea of self-deception being a problem.

That's quite common in medicine for people to be in denial about what they have wrong with them and that's true in other areas of life as well. It is very easy to deceive yourself especially when it comes to relating to other people.

The other feature of this letter and we'll spend more time on this is division. There are lots of recurring issues in this letter. Speech, trials, testing, riches and poverty, suffering, favoritism. We wander in and out of those but there is one idea that runs right through the weave of this letter at every point. It's the idea of doubleness, of dividedness, of lack of singleness.

[20:55] It's all over the place. I'll start with the most obvious ones and then we'll graduate to one or two less obvious ones. Chapter 1 verses 7 and 8. He's talking about how people respond to trials and how God is glad to receive our prayers for wisdom and he says, verse 6, but let the one who prays ask in faith with no doubting for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.

He is a double-minded man, literally a two-souled man, unstable in all his ways. Apparently, it's possible to have a dividedness in response to God's word.

On the one hand, wanting God's help and difficulty. On the other hand, not wanting God's help and difficulty. Literally, two-souled. Chapter 2 verse 4.

We've mentioned this example already. It's the two people who come into the meeting. And in chapter 2 verse 4, James says of his readers, have you not then become, literally, become divided among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

There's a dividedness of attitude towards people in this letter. Or look at chapter 4 verse 4. You adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?

[ 22 : 38 ] There's a divided loyalty here among these people. And look at 4.8. Here's the response, at least part of it, to that divided loyalty. Draw near to God and he'll draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded, you two-souled. Become single again. Stop being divided.

Now, these are the obvious examples. examples. But when you know that the theme is there, you find this dividedness issue all the way through the letter. Look at chapter 1 verse 22.

Very familiar verse, this. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. You can be divided in your response to God's word.

A listener of it, but not a doer of it. Chapter 2 verse 1. Show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

[ 23 : 55 ] These are people who in their minds believe in the glorious Lord, yet in the verses that follow, they find themselves honoring the glory of the world, not the glorious Lord.

Or chapter 2 verse 15. Here's the example of a brother or sister who need things. One of you says to them, verse 16, go in peace, be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body.

What good is that? Here is a division between faith and deeds. They see the need, but do nothing. There is a dividedness there.

Chapter 2 verse 19. You believe that God is one? Well, good for you. Even the demons believe. And shudder.

Here are people who believe deep down that God is one God, single, undivided in his treatment of human beings.

[ 25 : 04 ] But you would expect those people who are ruled by this God to be single in response. However, these people are divided in their responses. Actually, James says, demons do better than you.

They believe that God is one and shudder. There's a unity of response there. I mean, it's the wrong response, but at least they've got their act together. They know what they believe and it makes them shudder.

You guys, you believe that God is one and it's not matched by behavior. 3.9. Last example.

With our tongue, we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. Do you see the dividedness there?

We bless God, curse those who are made in his image. That shouldn't be the way it is, but says James, it is. Let me suggest then that the big issue in this letter is that these people are two-timing God.

[ 26 : 09 ] Married to God, that's the image in chapter 4, but lusting after the world and at lots of levels their response to God is divided. They think they believe one thing, but their behavior betrays them.

And I don't think it really matters where you are in this letter. That is the issue that's being addressed all the way through. That's the heart of the disease. This is the disease that lies behind all the symptoms of bad behavior.

This is what the letter is designed to root out. The danger of this disease is that it's not easy to get at. The symptoms are many and varied and in themselves not all that dramatic.

Let me talk about symptoms for a moment. When did you last have a symptom? Well, actually probably about 30 seconds ago. You just didn't notice it.

The truth is that we all have all sorts of symptoms all the time. An ache, a pain, an itch, a rash, a cough. There was a cough just over there. Are you about to die?

[ 27 : 18 ] Well, probably not. We cough all the time, don't we? It doesn't usually mean much. They warned you about this when I was a medical student. They said, when you go to lectures, you'll think you've got all the diseases.

And that's absolutely right. Every student, every lecture you go to, you think you're about to die of something new. Last week, I was sure that I had coronary disease and cancer and cholera. And this week, because we're doing psychiatry, I now know that I'm completely bonkers. It's just like that with symptoms. Most of our symptoms, most of the time, are of no significance at all. And what we need to be told most of the time is that we're absolutely fine and we just need to stop being hypochondriacs and looking at medical websites. But sometimes, sometimes, our symptoms are serious.

I remember spending about an hour in an outpatient clinic one afternoon trying to persuade someone that they were seriously ill. A young woman trying to persuade her that she needed serious treatment.

[ 28 : 27 ] The trouble was that the symptoms weren't that bad. A little bit of a cough, a little bit of shortness of breath. Nothing dramatic. Nothing out of the ordinary, really.

But the reality was that unless she embraced what was going on and took the treatment, she was likely to be a permanent respiratory cripple within a year. If you'll forgive a medical analogy, James is like a doctor trying to get a patient to believe that these several not very important looking symptoms are in fact the result of a fatal disease which needs extreme treatment if the patient is to survive.

The symptoms in this letter, they're largely about relationships with people. The disease is all about relationship with God. Now the truth is that being badly behaved is a pretty ordinary everyday thing, isn't it?

It comes so easily to us and therefore it's very easy to minimize it, to treat it as though it's not really a very significant thing and there is always the danger of self-deception.

And I think the basic way this letter works is that James systematically looks at all these different little, on their own, not very significant looking symptoms and all the time digs underneath to expose the disease.

[ 30 : 04 ] Pastorally, it's very easy to have a kind of symptomatic approach to Christian behavior, to treat the symptoms, the cough, the itch, the ache, without treating the disease.

But this is much too important a disease to do that with. So, let me suggest then that the letter is a sustained attack on an elusive disease.

Let me say something briefly about the method and then about the structure. How does James approach the condition? Well, he takes things that seem small and he digs underneath them to reveal what's underneath.

He puts little things under the microscope and makes them look really big. Sometimes, he takes an outward action and uses it to shed light on an inward attitude.

He kind of literally gets under the skin. Sometimes, he looks at a relatively small thing and imagines what will happen down the line if that little thing is allowed to grow on its own.

[ 31 : 13 ] Let me give you an example of that one. Look at chapter 1, verse 13. Let no one say when he's tempted I'm being tempted by God.

For God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he's lured and enticed by his own desire. Now watch him look down the road.

Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it's grown big, brings forth death. Do you see that?

In a very short space, he's looking a long way down the line. This little thing, well, look down the line and see where it's going. Sometimes, and this is perhaps the most significant thing James does, he looks at how we relate to people and he draws conclusions about how we are relating to God.

Look at chapter 1, verse 19. We've read this one already. Notice what he wants his hearers to do in verse 21.

[ 32 : 25 ] He wants them to receive with meekness the implanted word of God, to take the gospel to heart. But look where he starts, verse 19.

Know this, my beloved brothers, let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.

the subject matter, the place he wants to get them to is listening to God's word, but he starts with how they listen to one another, to human words.

And I think the point is simply this. If you are basically a person who is slow to listen to others and quick to speak and loves the sound of your own voice, if that's the way you are in relation to people,

you are not suddenly going to become a good listener in relation to God.

You can't be a non-listener in one realm and suddenly a brilliant listener in the other realm. The way you relate to people shows what you're listening to God is really like.

[ 33 : 40 ] Chapter 3, verse 9, here's another example of the same sort of thing. Again, we've looked at this already, but it's worth mentioning again. With our tongue we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

No matter what you say to God in church on Sunday, you are not a God praiser if on Monday morning you're speaking against your colleagues at work.

You're not a God praiser if you're doing that. Your attitude to them, those who are made in God's image, shows precisely what your real attitude to the Creator is.

Now James does that all the way through the letter. It's jolly uncomfortable. Think you love God wholeheartedly he says? Well, look at how you're relating to other people.

That'll tell you how you really think about God. And in this letter their mistreatment of others shows exactly what their attitude to God is. The strongest example is the one we read in chapter 4.

[ 34 : 46 ] Just flip over to that quickly. Before we finish. What does he start with again? He starts with human interaction. What causes quarrels and fights among you?

Your passions at war within you. You desire and don't have so you murder. I don't think he's talking literal murder. He's talking he's unmasking the attitude underneath. You covet and cannot attain so you fight and quarrel.

You don't have because you don't ask. Where's he going with it? You adulterous people verse 4 don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God.

You thought you were just squabbling. Actually what you're doing is demonstrating that you love the world and not God. See what he does? Looks at human behavior draws conclusions about relationship with God.

Well now our time is gone. Let me just make some concluding remarks. What is the contribution of this letter to the New Testament? I think this is the New Testament letter addressed to the dysfunctional church family.

[ 35 : 50 ] It's not that some new untruth has wandered through the door. It's made them deviate offline. The primary issue is their relationships and what James does here again and again is to face these people with the uncomfortable truth that behind such everyday symptoms as not listening, always wanting to speak, getting angry quickly, bad-mouthing one another, behind these very ordinary symptoms lies an attitude to God that must be addressed because it is deadly.

Now, truth be told, we are not always good at dealing with bad behavior. We tend to think of doctrinal error as somehow separate from relationship problems in church, which are just, well, just relationship problems.

And we try and say to people, look, be nice to one another, be kind to one another, treat one another well. But what this letter emphasizes is that when people aren't getting on, that is a theological issue.

It says something about what they think about God. And it needs to be dealt with theologically. And that's why all the time he takes them from their behavior to God, from their behavior to God, from small things to big things.

Third, you'll notice how he doesn't start chapter one by banging their heads together. Chapter one is quite gentle, really.

[ 37 : 35 ] Chapter four, on the other hand, is not at all gentle. Sometimes we see bad behavior going on and we just want to crack a few skulls together and sort things out.

James does not go straight at the problem. We'll learn about his method in the weeks ahead, but there is great wisdom here, I think. He starts very gentle in chapter one.

Talks about finances and trials and all sorts of things that might get anybody interested. Chapter two gets a little bit more personal, as does chapter three, and only in chapter four does he get right to the issue.

He kind of reels them in gently. And there's great wisdom there. Sometimes relational problems are not best sorted out by just smacking a few heads together and hoping that it will get better.

Because sometimes things have gone much too far for that to be a useful result. Fourth, let me observe that James is looking for a profound response.

[ 38 : 41 ] This is a remedial letter. Turn over to 519 again. If anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

This is a letter to those who have wandered from the truth and need to be brought back. But it's written not just to bring them back, but to encourage them to love one another enough to bring one another back.

He's looking for a profound response. Instead of conflict, instead of hostility, he's looking for concern for one another.

Let's end where we started. It's just him. It's just her. It's just congregational meetings. You know what they're like. That's always the way they are.

Well, brothers and sisters, patience is a good thing, a necessary thing, but carelessness is not.

Let's pray together.

[ 40 : 03 ] let's just have a moment's quiet, and then I'll read to you the wonderfully comforting and reassuring words of the gospel that James speaks to his readers.

Just a few moments to respond ourselves to what God has said to us. Let's listen. Thank you. Deeply embedded in this letter is James' great confidence that God's grace is bigger than our dividedness.

Listen to what he says in chapter 4. But God gives greater grace. Thus it says in Scripture, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Listen to these promises. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

[ 41 : 31 ] Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and wonderfully, he will exalt you. We thank you, gracious God, for the way you've made us in your image.

We thank you for your kindness in creating us the way we are. Lord, we thank you for your overflowing mercy and grace in sending the Lord Jesus to this world to take upon himself the penalty that we deserve for the way we relate to you and to one another.

And we pray that as we come to this letter, evening after evening over these next few weeks, you would please make your greater grace effective in our lives.

Help us to respond single-mindedly and heartedly to you where we need to. And please give us confidence that just as you have said, you will draw near to us, that you would draw near to us.

[ 42 : 47 ] Help us to humble ourselves before you. Thank you for your promise that you oppose the proud, but give grace to the humble.

We praise you for this. In Jesus' name. Amen.