

For Our City

Last year we saw the beginnings of a movement. The “For Our City” sermon series became the launching point for churches throughout our area to collectively address the needs around us. United by Christ’s love, propelled by Christ’s mission, we’ve had the privilege of extending hope to a city that many have deemed hopeless.

This year, let’s keep that momentum going.

The book of James is one of the oldest letters contained in today’s New Testament, yet his words ring with resounding urgency. James reminds Christ’s followers of the need for dynamic, living faith—a faith that is never comfortable with dividing belief from action. As men and women who embrace the electrifying good news of the gospel, we become the conduits through which God’s grace is communicated to our families, to our neighborhoods, and to our city.

OVERVIEW:

Week One: Source of Compassion (James 1:1-18)

- **Issue to address: Unity**
- **CALL TO ACTION: PRAYER** - Strategic plan for churches and individuals to pray for every school, street, and home in our city and surrounding area. Give each church a target area, then track their progress, encouraging people to post where they have prayer walked AND “tag” homes and communities they’ve prayed for, “we prayed for you today” type door hangers or cards. Launch #FOROURCITY campaign – challenging people to change how they speak over our city & begin to pray and speak the love and life of God over this region.
- **THEME:** If “crises reveal character,” then the needs of our city represent an opportunity for the body of Christ to demonstrate gospel-motivated compassion. In a world full of fashionable “causes,” the Church represents the abiding character of Christ.

Week Two: Action of Compassion (James 1:19-27; James 2:14-26)

- **Issue to address: Foster Care/Care for the Family**
- **CALL TO ACTION:** Current plan for recruiting Foster Care families and other action steps as developed.
- **THEME:** The answer to perceptions of religious hypocrisy is not less religion, but deeper, true religion. James tells us that this sort of religion is manifest in caring for widows and orphans. Today’s Church can put their faith into action through foster care and caring for families in our community

Week Three: Motivation of Compassion (James 2:1-13; 3:1-18)

- **Issue to address: Social Division/Marginalization**
- **CALL TO ACTION:** ADOPT-A-BLOCK PLAN
- **THEME:** Division persists along political, racial, and socioeconomic lines (cf. James 2:1-13). The way we speak about others often reinforces these divisions (cf. 3:1-12). But because the gospel eradicates selfish ambition, God’s people can pursue peace.

Week Four: Transformation of Compassion (James 4:1-12; James 5:13-20)

- **Issue to address: Addiction**
- **CALL TO ACTION: TBD (Brooke's House support AND drug turn-in campaign)**
- **THEME:** All sin is a form of dis-ordered love—a desire misdirected toward something other than God (cf. James 4:1-12). Addiction is no different; its roots simply run deeper. As the body of Christ, we can work together to cultivate a community of healing (cf. James 5:13-20) and elevate Jesus as our supreme love.

Week Five: Urgency of Compassion (James 4:13-17)

- **Issue to address: Poverty**
- **CALL TO ACTION: Adopt-a-school plan (serving the underserved)**
- **THEME:** Poverty flourishes when we care for our own needs ahead of others. James reminds us of the brevity of life and encourages us to trust in the sovereign plans of God. The gospel saves us from finding identity in material things, and thereby frees us to use our resources to show God's love through our generosity.

Week Six: Eternal Impact of Compassion (James 5:1-12)

- **Issue to address: Human Trafficking (?) possibly OR we could focus on the church's responsibility to come together to be the hope of the world, and the long term vision to be the transformational agent in the world around us.**
- **CALL TO ACTION: Either involvement in the human trafficking OR homelessness AND the churches legacy in our city.**
- **THEME:** James condemns those who take pleasure at others' expense. While James speaks of wealth and materialism, we see this same thing happening today in the context of sexual exploitation. There are strong links between pornography and human trafficking. The images we consume only fuel a culture of dehumanization. The solution is to repent of our tendency to use others and to work toward the rescue of these victims.