



Sermon Discussion Guide

The Parables: Truth Takes Work - James Junior

November 2, 2025

Hook - Getting to know one another

- *How is everyone doing this week? Add other questions to get to know one another, especially ones related to the topic in the sermon.*
- What's something in your life that you've had to work hard to understand or get good at, but that was worth the effort?
- When was a time you took a "shortcut" that didn't quite work out the way you hoped? What did you learn from it?
- Are you more of a "microwave" or "slow cooker" person when it comes to learning new things or developing habits?

Book - Scripture

- This week we will practice together what James talked about in his sermon: slowing down and **wrestling deeply with the words of Jesus**.
- Read Mark 3:20-30 out loud two times as a group, slowly.
- Begin with observations.
 - What words, phrases, or images jump out at you?
 - Who are the main characters? Who is speaking or acting, and how?
 - Where and when is this happening? What is the context before and after this in the Gospel of Mark?
- Are there any other who-what-when-where-why details that you missed? What else seems important?

Look - Connections to our world today

- *This section focuses on implications about **what this text means** about what's wrong in the world, about trusting God, about who God is, etc.*
- *Think through some of the questions James asked about this particular passage in his sermon:*
- What is the meaning of the phrase "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" in the passage's immediate context?



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- What does Scripture say about sin and forgiveness?
- What do I learn about God's heart here?
- What might Jesus be inviting me to see or change?
- What might "eternal sin" mean in the wider biblical story?
- How do these themes relate to hardened hearts in Isaiah 6 and Mark 4?

Took - Personal Application

- *This application focuses on **how God is calling us to respond**. This could be personally, as a family, small group, or church. It could be something to believe, to meditate on, to say or do this week.*
- Pass out scrap paper, and have everyone in the group take 3-4 minutes to write out one short summary sentence: *"The big idea I think this text wants the church to hear today is..."*
 - Share these around the circle.
- *What is one tangible way you might respond or act on the truth of this passage in the next week?*

Time of Prayer