

**IMMANUEL'S INSIGHTS**FROM THE  
*Pastor's Desk*

June 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

This summer, I will be preaching from the New Testament book of James. Tradition says the author of this brief but powerful letter was one of the brothers of Jesus. He was originally a skeptic when Jesus began his ministry, but after he saw Jesus risen from death, he became a leader in the Church. He became the head of the church in Jerusalem and even the head of the Jewish half of the Church.

Many people love the book of James because it is so very practical. Whereas Paul's letters often focus on theology and on what Christ has done for us, James focuses all his attention on how we are to live. I think that James is trying to emphasize what Jews and Christians have in common: that we are all called to live a life of obedience, humility, and mercy.

Of course, there are those who have complained about the book of James. Luther famously called it an "Epistle of Straw" because it was used to refute the teaching of Paul's letters that we are saved by faith apart from works of the Law. James only mentions Jesus by name twice in the whole book. And James explicitly says that we are not saved by faith alone. But when we understand what both Paul and James actually taught, it is possible to find agreement between James and Paul regarding the relationship between faith, love, and religion.

The book of James is especially relevant for us today because it highlights the ways the first generation of Christians lived in a world that was not that different from our world today. Much of our modern Christianity has lost the spirit of humility and compassion of ancient Christianity. We will do well to meditate on the truths of James.

Meanwhile, the Sunday morning Adult Bible Class will continue conversations about a modern critique of Christianity. We have found that much of what critics reject of modern American Christianity are things that Luther also rejected about medieval Christianity. We are still trying to discover the real heart of the movement that Jesus started.

Yours in Christ, Phil Nielsen



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

As I continue in ministry throughout this internship, I am looking to form a small support committee within the congregation. This committee would serve as a source of encouragement, accountability, prayer, and guidance throughout the internship process. I am seeking 6 individuals who would be willing to meet almost monthly to offer feedback and to support me spiritually and personally during this time of formation and learning. People of different ages, experiences, and perspectives within the congregation would be a blessing.

If you are interested in serving in this role or would like to learn more about what it involves, please feel free to speak with me after service, contact me directly, or just leave your name in the office.

Thank you, and God bless you all!

Yours in Christ,

Jared Walters