



LIVING FAITH

JAMES 2:24-26

Adult Church School
August 31, 2020

JAMES 2:14-26 (ASV)

- ¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?
- ¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?
- ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.
- ¹⁸ Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from *thy* works, and I by my works will show thee *my* faith.
- ¹⁹ Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren?
- ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² [c](#)Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; ²³ and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, ¹And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.
- ²⁵ And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

JAMES 2:14-26 (CEV)

- ¹⁴ My friends, what good is it to say you have faith, when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you? ¹⁵ If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food,
- ¹⁶ you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help?
- ¹⁷ Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!
- ¹⁸ Suppose someone disagrees and says, "It is possible to have faith without doing kind deeds."
- I would answer, "Prove that you have faith without doing kind deeds, and I will prove that I have faith by doing them." ¹⁹ You surely believe there is only one God. That's fine. Even demons believe this, and it makes them shake with fear.
- ²⁰ Does some stupid person want proof that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Well, our ancestor Abraham pleased God by putting his son Isaac on the altar to sacrifice him. ²² Now you see how Abraham's faith and deeds worked together. He proved that his faith was real by what he did. ²³ This is what the Scriptures mean by saying, "Abraham had faith in God, and God was pleased with him." That's how Abraham became God's friend.
- ²⁴ You can now see that we please God by what we do and not only by what we believe. ²⁵ For example, Rahab had been a prostitute. But she pleased God when she welcomed the spies and sent them home by another way.
- ²⁶ Anyone who doesn't breathe is dead, and faith that doesn't do anything is just as dead!

TRUE FAITH

- **Faith** cannot be held together with favoritism. Faith must be held together with deeds/works of faith.
- **Faith** that plays favorites does not evidence itself in merciful action.
- Mere *outward religion* must develop into a **faith** that acts consistently with the mercy of God.
- True faith according to James has to be shown by work (acts that meet the need of others), otherwise the world does not know of the genuine godly trust of the child of God.
- The Christian is justified by faith before God but is justified before humans through the works they can see. Acts of mercy are the only demonstration of faith.



THE DISCUSSION OF FAITH BY JAMES AND PAUL

THERE IS NO REAL CONTRADICTION BETWEEN JAMES AND PAUL REGARDING FAITH. GOD ALONE CAN SAVE.

JAMES

“Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself” James 2:17

- James was expounding upon the *nature of faith*, not on the question of *salvation*.
- Only genuine **faith** can stand up under trial and thereby be “perfected”.
- James focus is after *conversion*.
- James was fighting against a “*lite*” *faith* which minimized the necessity of work after coming to **Christ**.
- James says after we come to **Christ** works are imperative. James saw faith as trust in God alone.
- James’ goal was **usefulness**

PAUL

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Eph. 2:8

- Paul’s teaching about **faith** and **works** focuses on the time before conversion.
- Paul was fighting against *tradition* which promoted a false works salvation
- Paul says works cannot bring us to **Christ**
- Paul was concerned with **justification through Christ alone** and not by **ritual works of the law**, such as **circumcision**, apart from faith in **Christ**.
- Pauls’ goal was **justification**

JAMES ILLUSTRATION OF WORKS (V. 15-17)

- **Faith** by itself, if it is not accompanied by **action** is DEAD.
- *Brothers or sisters* are fellow believers who sit at the Lord's table, with the rest of the church in worship, is inadequately clothed, is so destitute that he/she does not even have food. If you are able to say "*go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed*" without a twinge of conscience. SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH ONE'S FAITH!!!
- One's faith is not only outwardly DEAD it is inwardly DEAD. It is totally lifeless and useless.
- The inconsistency between what one claims to be and what one actually is, is typical of those outside of Christ.
- If one tend to talk about our faith in Christ and the truth of His Word, but do nothing, we may be in spiritual trouble.

"If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help?"



JAMES ILLUSTRATION OF WORKS (V. 15-18)

- The same way that a word or blessing amounts to nothing without the act of blessing, **faith without action is dead.**
- What emerges is an **individualistic faith** that negates **true faith** and is therefore **lifeless**.
- **Self-centeredness** rather than **Christ-centeredness**, is the dominant reality in such faith.
- **Pastor James** was fighting against ambiguous faith in his church which would result in “*double-mindedness* and *self deception* among believers which would produce a lukewarm church.

CHAT: In what ways would James have problems with the way we

Represent our Christian faith today? Would he accuse us

of not having faith? Why? How upset would he be with

The state of America and our role?



THE SHEMA

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4)

- James press his point by referring to the Shema.
- James points out that to make the confession or belief in God is important but that even the demons believe the same. They recognize who God is and they tremble.
- This kind of faith has nothing to show for itself, no personal trust, no pursuit of wisdom; indeed such faith is almost stereotypically the religious mask of hypocrisy.
- The person *who claims faith without works* is less responsive to **God** than a demon.
- **Behind the vanity or emptiness of those who cling to a workless faith lies the attempt to think that God accepts people merely on the basis that they acknowledge His existence.**

2 EXAMPLES OF FAITH WITH DEEDS (WORKS)

ABRAHAM – the Hebrew from Ur of the Chaldees

Abraham is the man to whom God first personally appeared and is characterized by tremendous faith at crucial points of his life, but he was no stranger to lapses of faith.

Abraham is presented as an exemplar of faith

Abraham the Father of Hebrew race

God regarded Abraham as *righteous* (Gen. 15:6)

Abraham's life was a series of surrenders – (1) God first called upon him to give up his father and his old way of life in Ur. (2) He was called to give up the well-watered plains of Jordan. (3) He was told to give up Hagar and Ishmael. (4) He was called upon by God to give up his beloved son, Isaac.

When Abraham placed Isaac on the altar, all he had left was his faith. **Abraham believed God. Abraham became God's friend.**

James points out that works are the practical response of the believing heart to the great mandate of the gospel.

2 EXAMPLES OF FAITH WITH DEEDS (WORKS)

RAHAB – The Harlot From Jericho

Rahab was a Gentile prostitute without God

Rahab was justified by works when (1) she received and hid the spies

(2) Sent them out another way

(3) **Rahab** pleaded that salvation be extended to her and her family

Rahab put her life in great danger

Rahab married Salmon, one of the spies

Rahab gave birth to Boaz

Rahab became an ancestress of the Lord Jesus

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

James sets before us a **dead body** and a **dead belief**.

As the body without the spirit is **dead**, so faith without **works** is dead.

Faith without works has no “action”.

Works/deeds animate **faith** as the **spirit** animates the **body**.

WORKS DO NOT JUSTIFY THE BELIEVER IN GOD’S SIGHT BUT DEMONSTRATE THE GENUINNESS OF **FAITH** TOWARD OTHERS *INSIDE* AND *OUTSIDE* OF THE **CHURCH**.

BELIEVERS MUST OF NECESSITY DEMONSTRATE THEIR **FAITH** BY DOING WHAT GOD REQUIRES, NOT TO SECURE SALVATION BUT TO AVOID THE GRAVE DANGERS OF *DISTORTING* THE **WORD** OF **GOD** OR *DAMAGING* THE LIVES OF OTHER BELIEVERS AND NEEDY PERSONS TO WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED TO MINISTER.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Taming the Tongue

James 3:1-12

Support the Back to School Drive for the Young Highway Task Force

- Bethlehem's Missions Ministry is collecting back to school supplies to support the Young Highway Task Force. Due to COVID-19, school supplies can be dropped off at the Multi-purpose room door on Friday, September 4, 2020 between the hours of 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Please support this effort.

School Supplies

- Composition Books
- High Lighters
Small Binders
Crayons
- markers

Spiral Notebooks

Pens
Pencil Pouches
Index

Pencils

Paper
Sticky Notes
Cards