

FAITH IN ACTION

Faith that Works, James 2:14-26

Dead Faith (Intellectual Faith)

James 2:14-17 (KJV) ¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

- James is challenging fellow believers by asking two penetrating questions:
 1. What benefit is to say you have faith, but you don't have any works?
 2. Can a person be saved with "this kind" of faith?
 - The answer is No!
 - Faith that is based on nothing but words, will eventually be exposed as counterfeit faith
- The issue in James' day and today is we have people who "profess" their faith in God, but there is nothing about their daily living suggests "their faith in God" has changed their lives
- Saving faith results in a change in *what you believe, what you do, who you trust, and who you obey*
- James gives an example of a fellow believer who is part of a church and does not have *adequate clothing* and is in *desperate need* of food
- The text is suggesting the need is *urgent*
- You see the person and you say to them "*Go in peace, be warmed and be filled*"
- What good is that?
- James says if your faith does not have any works, it's *a dead faith*, a worthless faith, an ineffective faith, it's an I don't know where you got that kind of faith from faith!
- Faith *without* deeds has no saving value
- They have a faith that believes *about* Jesus, not a faith that believes *in* Jesus
- The faith that saves *proves* itself in the action it produces
- Saving faith is not only a *declaration* but also a *demonstration* of our obedience to the will of God
- The right actions prove our faith is real, sincere, and genuine

Demonic Faith (Emotional Faith and no Action)

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. ¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

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- Some may say that faith and actions can be “separated”
- You do your deeds and I’ll have my faith, and we’ll be religious or godly in our own ways
- James responded by saying your faith can’t be seen if it doesn’t have any good works
- James went onto say I’ll show you my faith by my good deeds
- Faith can’t be demonstrated apart from action
- Anybody can say they have faith, but it is the action of the person shows its genuineness
- Even the devil and his imps believe, and they tremble
- Meaning the devil believes there *is* a God, the devil believes the Bible is the *word of God*, the devil believes that Jesus is *the Son of God*
- The devil believes to the point that he trembles or he is emotional about it
- Many people can hear a sermon and get emotional about what they have heard and say Amen and agree with everything said, but leave the church unchanged because they didn’t do anything with what they heard
- Our *confession of faith* must also have a *life of deeds* that demonstrate *the truth* of our confession
- Faith without works is dead, empty and useless

Dynamic Faith (Living Faith: Words, Emotions, and Action)

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. ²⁴ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ²⁵ Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- James uses two figures from the Old Testament to show us what *faith that works* looks like
- James used Abraham because he was most revered the Jews and was known for his remarkable obedience by even being willing to sacrifice his own at the command of God
- In **Genesis 15:5-6 (KJV)** ⁵ ***And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. ⁶ And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.***

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- God showed Abraham the stars in heaven and said his seed innumerable like the stars in the heavens
- And vs. 6 says, ⁶ ***And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.***
- Abraham is *the first person* whose faith is explicitly mentioned in the Bible
- Verse 21 of the text says Abraham's faith in God is demonstrated by his actions when he offered Isaac on the altar
- Abraham demonstrated his faith in God, by getting up the next morning saddled his donkey, took Isaac, two young men and the wood for the burnt offering and they head to the place God would show them
- Abraham has all the materials for the sacrifice and Isaac says, Father I see the fire and the wood, but where the lamb for the burnt offering?
- Abraham says to Isaac, The Lord will provide Himself a lamb for the burnt offering and they travel to place for the sacrifice
- Abraham has laid Isaac on the altar and is about to thrust a knife into his own and the angle of the Lord calls Abraham, Abraham
- Abraham says, Here I am and stopped
- There was a ram caught in the thicket; Abraham sacrificed the the ram and names the place Jehovah Jireh, meaning the Lord will provide
- Abraham obeys God even in this difficult command
- Faith and actions work together
- Abraham's faith was made perfect or complete by what he did
- Abraham was not saved by works, but by **a faith that works**
- Abraham's faith and his actions were working together
- Abraham's faith and obedience made him a *friend* of God
- Why does James give another example of living faith, faith in action?
- Isn't Abraham enough?
- Abraham not only believed, his belief in God was seen in his actions
- James included Rahab because she was on the *other end* of the spectrum
 - She doesn't appear to be someone we would want to emulate, she's completely different than Abraham
 - Rahab was from the other side of the tracks, she had a bad reputation, and she belonged to the enemies of God
- Despite their differences, what they both have in common is they *exercised or demonstrated* faith in God
- She is brought up here because it doesn't matter where you're from or what you've done, *genuine faith* in God can change anyone's life
- Israel was about to enter the Promised Land and take over the city of Jericho

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- Joshua sent out spies into the city to get a lay of the land
- There they met Rahab, the prostitute
- Rahab told the spies she believed in what the word of God said and what God was about to do ***Joshua 2:11 (KJV) ¹¹ And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.***
- Rahab believed the word in her *mind*, she was even touched in her *emotions* but you can tell her faith is real by what *she did*
- Rahab was made right with God on the basis of her faith in the Word of God, her heart or emotions impacted, followed by her actions that based on her faith
- The living faith of Abraham and Rahab are recorded in the Bible to show us what living faith looks like, and what it means to put your faith to work
- It's recorded in the word to show us that they lived the way lived and did what they did with a small amount of information
- But it's also recorded for us who profess faith in Christ to examine ourselves to make sure we have a genuine saving faith, living and active faith
- Give yourself a checkup, make certain your faith in God is real, genuine, living and active faith