

Series Title: Evidence of Genuine Faith: Faith That Works

Message Title: Faith and Works

Text: James 2:14-26

Introduction

The relationship between faith and works has been a cause for division and debate for 2000 years.

- The Judaizers claiming the need for certain actions prior to salvation
- Paul declaring that salvation only comes through faith and not by works
- Martin Luther standing on the statement, “The just shall live by faith”
- Theologians standing on the call that we are not saved by works
- Every decade there is a new arrival of the debate and separation of the two writers, Paul and James.
- But they are not in competition.
- All the Scriptures are God breathed

How is one saved?

What Good Is Your Faith?

James 2:14

¹⁴ *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?*

- What good is it to God if you:
 - Say you will obey but never do?
 - Say you will share but never do?
 - Say you will depend on Him but never do?
- What good is to the Church if you:
 - Say you will pray but never do?
 - Say you will serve but never do?
- What good is it to the World if you:
 - Profess something but your actions don't show it.
- Dennis Prager stated that a vast many atheists state that much of their decision to be an atheist is due to the actions or non-actions of people who claim to be Christian.
 - A professing Christian is a bad actor.... a bad agent... a bad ambassador.
- The World is like people from Missouri – The Show Me State
 - Here is an example of how the world and indeed God sees it.
- They always ask questions like
 - Christians care about life in the womb but not life after the womb.
 - Adoption, child care, help for the poor, the homeless, the ill, the needy...
 - Any stance about what is perceived as social justice issues are linked
 - Not so...
 - Evangelical Christians give more per capita to these issues and the assistance of the poor all over the world more than any other group
 - The manner in which the aid is to be given (taken) those who do not pay vote to make others who already pay...pay more by force.
 - What percentage and what plane – these questions are only seen with hostility.
 - The Narrative is the Narrative for a reason.
 - Evangelists in mansions or jets

- Extremely wealthy Christians who do not give a dime and complain about any assistance
 - Christians say, prayers and thoughts are with you, but take no action or make no change.
 - Christian hurt me... so I will not come to Jesus.
 - The Church has hurt many....I will not come.

Listen to these verses as an example

James 2:15-17

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- **What good is it?**
- **The answer is – It isn't any good at all**
- **That faith is dead**

CAN FAITH THAT HAS NO ACTION SAVE?

JAMES'S POSITION

- **Workless Faith Cannot Save**

Can that faith save him? v.14

- **Workless Faith Is Useless**

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? v.20

- **Workless Faith is Dead**

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. v.17

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. v.26

PAUL'S POSITION

- **By Faith apart from Works**

Rom. 3:28

...we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law"

- **Justified by Faith alone**

Gal. 2:16

...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

- **It is God's Gift – Not Earned**

Eph. 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Are we saved by works? NO

HOW DO WE RECONCILE PAUL, AND JAMES?

- James begins with faith in God

James 1:6-8

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Paul moves toward saved unto Good Works

Eph. 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

JESUS' POSITION

Mark 10:44-45

...⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

John 1:12

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

John 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Luke 6:46

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"

- House on the rock, or no foundation. Hearing and doing.

WE ARE SAVED UNTO GOOD WORKS

Paul and James are not in contradiction to one another.

They complement one another.

They come from different propositions and from different motives.

James began the letter by stating that he was the bondservant of Jesus:

- Slave of Jesus
- Jesus is the Master

Exodus 7:16

And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness."'

- Out of bondage into service.
- From brutal slavery to a tyrant, to covenant service to God.

James Counters An Argument: We are all Made Differently

James 2:18-20

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

Convenient Faith – v.18

- God has gifted you to do these works
- God has given me a deeply private faith

Cognitive Faith – v.19

- I have a deep belief in God
 - Big deal – the demons know full well that there is a God.

Covenant faith – v.20

- You cannot please Him and should not expect anything from Him if you do not believe in His existence. Hebrews 11:6
- Yet the belief calls for dependence and connection and obedience and walking in the values and plan that he has for you
- It calls for ACTION

James Gives two examples: Obedient Active Faith is Counted as Righteousness

Abraham Example:

James 2:21-23

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.

Faith was active.

Faith was completed.

Faith is counted as righteousness.

Faith reveals that we have been justified.

Rahab example:

James 2:25

And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

EVIDENCE OF GENUINE RELIGION IS SEEN IN ACTIONS

James 2:24, 26

24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Challenge

Let there be ample evidence to all who see me that I am a devout, caring, loving, helping follower of Jesus!

Or, count me in the group of believers who:

- Have a form of godliness but deny the power
- Are carnal and saved as through the flames
- Are as dead bodies without the spirit
- A disobedient naughty child
- Needing the Lord to say, I have this against you

Is this the Christian we want to be?

What does that reveal of our true heart toward Jesus?

If we love Him we will do what pleases Him.

We are His workmanship saved unto good works.