



James

How to Live the Christian Life!

Living with Faith

James 2:14-26

Message #5 of 12 – S662

Sermon given on November 8, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living with Faith

James 2:14-26

Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 2**
- Today, we continue our series through the letter from James **How to Live the Christian Life**
- James is a very practical book of the Bible – a How to book on the Christian life
- In chapter 1 we discussed living with trials and temptations, and saw the importance of God’s Word in the Christian life
- Last time in chapter two we looked how we should treat other people, as equals, without partiality
- Today we come to one of James’ main messages in this letter; the discussion of faith and works
- This is so important, that I would say that it is impossible to live the Christian life if you get this wrong
- In fact, James is going to say that you can’t even get to heaven if you get this wrong
- My goal, with God’s help is to help you to get it right
- If you are able and willing to do so, please stand as we read today’s text as a sign of reverence for the Word of God
- Read **James 2:14-26**
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living with Faith**
- The Christian life is like an airplane
- It needs two wings to fly – faith and works
- And to fly right, they need to be in balance with one another
- If you have ever worked with birds, you might know that to keep them from flying you clip one of the wings, just clip the feathers on one wing
- They can’t fly right, and eventually they will stop trying to fly

- Same thing is true in our Christian walk – without faith and works, not going to live right
 - In today’s text, James is going to describe three kinds of faith
 - In the end we are going to see that only one kind of faith is true faith
 - Only one kind of faith is saving faith
 - Only one kind of faith leads us to heaven
 - The first kind of faith is **Dead Faith**
 - **James 2:14-17**
 - The key to understanding verse 14 is in the phrase ‘if someone says he has faith’
 - A mere confession of faith is not real faith, is not true faith
 - ‘Can faith save him?’ – Can that kind of faith – can just saying you believe God actually get you to heaven
 - This is a rhetorical question, that expects a ‘no’ answer **Matthew 7:21** **Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**
 - Just saying you believe in Jesus is not going to save you
 - True faith is always accompanied by works
 - Uses the example of a person without enough food or clothing
 - If a person claiming to be a Christian can help and doesn’t, his faith is useless
 - And in verse 17, worse than useless – it is dead faith
 - This does not mean that works are necessary for salvation
 - The Bible teaches clearly that faith alone saves ‘sola fide’ **Romans 3:28**
- Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**
- But that doesn’t mean works aren’t important **John Calvin** **It is faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies can never be alone.**
 - Just saying you are a believer does not make you a true Christian
 - Using James words - that would make you a hearer, but not a doer.
 - The second kind of faith is **Demonic Faith**
 - **James 2:18-20**

- Faith is invisible – it is an internal work of God in the life of an individual through the Holy Spirit based upon the truth of the Word of God and the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross
- Your word that you have faith is not sufficient evidence of true faith
- Even saying you believe God and His Word is not good enough
- James uses the demons as his example
- ‘Even the demons believe’ – what do they believe
- They believe in God, they believe in the Trinity, they believe that Jesus is Deity, they believe in Hell, they believe what the Bible says
- And that belief causes them ‘tremble’ or ‘shudder’ because they believe that their ultimate destiny is to be cast alive into the Lake of Fire
- But that belief doesn’t save them, because there are no works born from that faith
- There are people, maybe some right here today, or listening to this message, that know what the Bible says, and even believe God is real, they believe heaven and hell are real, they believe that God is righteous, and that He will judge them for their sins, but they do not respond to God’s call
- That kind of faith is dead also
- Third kind of faith **Dynamic Faith**
- This is the kind of faith that saves, and it proves that it saves by what it does
- James is going to use two diverse examples of dynamic faith; Abraham and Rahab
- These two were about as far apart as two people can be
- A man and a woman, a righteous man and a prostitute, the friend of God and an enemy of God
- They are like bookends on all of humanity, if these two can exercise dynamic faith, than anyone can
- **James 2:21-24**
- In verse 23 James quotes Genesis 15:6 – Paul also quotes this same verse to say that is when faith began for Abraham – when God made the promises to Abraham and He believed God

- In verse 21 James refers to an event that took place seven chapters later in Genesis 22 – offered the son God promised as a sacrifice
- James says Abraham was justified by works – offering his son
- Doesn't mean that he was saved by those works, it was proof that he was saved, it was the evidence of his salvation in chapter 15
- Justification is one of the key doctrines of Christianity **Warren Wiersbe**

Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of Christ's finished work on the cross.

- My role in justification is believing **Ephesians 2:8-10**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- Abraham's 'work' was proof that he had already been justified by faith
- Justification takes place on two planes
- Vertical – by faith justified before God – Horizontal – by works justified before men
- True dynamic saving faith always functions on both planes
- Second example is Rahab
- **James 2:25**
- You can read about Rahab's faith in Joshua chapters 2 and 6
- Because of her profession as a prostitute she had learned about and His promises to give the land of Canaan to the people of Israel
- She believed that God was going to do it – that she and her people were deserving of destruction – that only by humbling herself before God could she save herself and her family – that is faith
- As a work of faith she hid the two 'messengers' or spies – which was treason against her country
- Her faith resulted in her doing something
- As a reward for her faith, she was saved when Jericho was destroyed, and she eventually married the Great-great-grandfather of King David and is named in the lineage of Jesus
- James closes this chapter with a comparison
- **James 2:26**

- The human body is temporary – the spirit is eternal
- Death occurs when the spirit departs from the body – body cannot live without the spirit
- Faith cannot live without works, works of faith are what brings faith to life
- It is important that we understand what these works are that we have been referring to **J. Ronald Blue**

To gain spiritual maturity a believer must be what God wants him to be and do what God wants him to do.

- You can't do what you want and be doing works of faith
- You have to be yielded to the Word of God and to the Spirit of God to do works of faith
- Abraham would never have considered offering his son, if God hadn't told him to
- Rahab would never have risked hiding the spies if she hadn't believed God wanted her to
- True faith does whatever the Lord asks us to do

Gospel Reality

- This kind of message invites the question, 'What kind of faith do you have?'
- We looked at three kinds; dead, demonic, and dynamic
- If your faith is an intellectual faith, but it doesn't bring you to understand your sin separates you from God, and doesn't reach out to meet the need of others – it is dead
- Or if you believe, and your sin bothers you and you are concerned about whether you are going to heaven or hell, but you don't humble yourself before God – that is a dead faith – it does not save
- Only a faith that believes God and that is proven by responding to God's Word and Spirit can save you
- Please turn to **1 Corinthians 11**
- Would like the ushers to come forward – I have handout for you
- We are going to partake of communion shortly
- And when we do we read verses 23-26 to describe what we are doing
- I would like to read what immediately follows that text

- **1 Corinthians 11:27-32**
- On the handout is a list of questions
- David is going to play for a few minutes – reflect upon those questions
- Before He begins, Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world
- Simply acknowledging that is true will not save you from hell
- Even acknowledging that you have sinned will not save you
- True saving faith is believing that your sins make you worthy of hell, and believing that Jesus died for your sins
- True saving faith happens when we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to come into our lives, and committing to letting Him live His life out of us, any way that He wants
- If at any time, while David is playing, you realize your faith may not be saving faith – turn the sheet over and read the prayer in your heart, and believe it, and you will be saved
- Then you partake with us
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- -
- -
- Amen
- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever.

Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

Examine Yourself

Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? 2 Corinthians 13:5a NKJV

1. Was there a time when I honestly realized I was a sinner and admitted this to myself and to God?
2. Was there a time when my heart stirred me to flee from the wrath to come? Have I ever seriously been exercised by my sins?
3. Do I truly understand the gospel that Christ died for my sins and rose again? Do I understand and confess that I cannot save myself?

4. Did I sincerely repent of my sins and turn from them? Or do I secretly love sin and want to enjoy it?
5. Have I trusted Christ and Christ alone for my salvation? Do I enjoy a living relationship with Him and through the Word and in the Spirit?
6. Has there been a change in my life? Do I maintain good works, or are my works occasional and weak? Do I seek to grow in the things of the Lord? Can others tell that I have been with Jesus?
7. Do I have a desire to share Christ with others? Or am I ashamed of Him?
8. Do I enjoy the fellowship of God's people? Is worship a delight to me?
9. Am I ready for the Lord's return? Or will I be ashamed when He comes for me?

Use this list to reflect upon the state of your faith. If you feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit on any of these things, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make your faith more real in that area. If you would like to make your faith real, pray the prayer on the back of this sheet, believing it to be true in your heart and you will be saved.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if *there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psalm 139:23-24 NKJV

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:9-10 NKJV

Prayer for Salvation

Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life to You. I confess You as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank You for saving me.

Amen.

The Bible says that if you believed what you just prayed that you are saved. All of heaven is rejoicing because you are now a child of God. We would like to rejoice with you. Please fill out a Response Card or tell one of the pastors. If you need a Bible, please let us know, we have Bibles available for free.

You are beginning an exciting new adventure of faith. Please let us pray for you and help you get started glorifying God, blessing others, and growing in your faith.

Go to www.calvaryfv.com to find other useful things to help you grow in your faith.

