

## Faith and Deeds

- 14** What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?
- 15** Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.
- 16** If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?
- 17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
- 18** But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.
- 19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.
- 20** You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?
- 21** Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?
- 22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.
- 23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.
- 24** You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.
- 25** In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?
- 26** As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/my-bible/#!/passage/niv/james/2:14-26/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/5.html>

Good Morning, My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you with the words of King David "I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa 122:1 KJV). If you are glad to be here this morning then I invite you to stand on your feet and praise Him. Praise Him for He is worthy of all praise. Praise Him for taking care of you. Praise Him for sending His Son to die for you. Praise Him for His grace and mercy to you. Let all the people praise Him!

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday I asked:

**AM I A CHRISTIAN ALL THE TIME OR  
DOES MY FAITH NEED TO GO TO REHAB?**

At the end of the sermon I challenged you to look in the mirror and honestly find **one area** where you needed rehab and begin to work on it. On 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday I told you that I had some *isms*, some areas where I needed help. We worked with the theme:

**MY ISMS NEED JESUS**

and I concluded that sermon with:

**6 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT SHOW FAVORITISM**

**IT IS NOT WHAT JESUS TAUGHT  
IT IS NOT WHAT JESUS DID  
IT INSULTS THOSE MADE BY GOD IN THE IMAGE OF GOD  
IT IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT  
IT SHOWS A LACK OF MERCY  
IT IS SIN**

*But if you show favoritism, you sin and  
are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.  
For whoever keeps the whole law and  
yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

This third Sunday in February we continue with our study of James with a focus on chapter 2 vv. 14-26. It is believed that James was writing to Jewish Christians who had heard Paul's teaching about faith and works or faith and deeds and they were **taking** what they had heard and spinning it to fit what they wanted to do. Kind of like when we say

"do unto others before they do unto you or  
do unto others as they have done unto you".

So because this spin was confusing others and leading them to sin James addresses the issue of faith and works or faith and deeds.

**14** *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?*

**15** *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.*

**16** *If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?*

**17** *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

Before we begin to address the issue this morning we need to make sure that we understand all the meanings of faith as used by James in this passage.

- **Knowledge Faith** – faith that is in your head and no where else
- **Dead Faith** – faith without works or deeds is dead
- **Living Faith** – faith that includes deeds or work

Next let us clarify what James means by works, actions, and deeds. Simply stated there are two kinds of work: the work we want to do without God and the work we are able to do with the help of God/Holy Spirit. There are many places in the Bible where we can find a list of these two types of work, this morning we will use Galatians 5:19-23

**19** *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;*

**20** *idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions*

**21** *and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

**22** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

**23** *gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law<sup>2</sup>.*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/5.html>

With that as background information will you stay with me for a few minutes longer as we talk about:

### **A FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD!**

**SHALL WE PRAY!** Father God we come this morning asking you to help us with our faith. When things are going well our faith is strong, but when things are not as we would have them to be our faith often begins to get weak. We need your help. Father, sometimes we think we have faith, but we want to keep it to ourselves. Help us to know that the faith that pleases you is an active, living and shared faith. Now Father, I ask that you use me to teach about faith this morning. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you. Let the words I speak fall on good ground in order that it might grow. In the name of your Son Jesus the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN.

### **A FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD!**

James provides three major arguments for faith and works.

- Faith must include appropriate works
- Faith must be accompanied by action
- Faith without work is dead

When James wrote about faith he used examples that made sense to the people who receive the letter. When a preacher preaches about faith they should try to do the same thing; use examples that make sense to the audience. But I must admit I found it hard to find faith examples that I thought would fit our context this morning.

Since I could not find examples I decided to make a list of what faith is to me.

Faith is like a plant

- it needs to be nurtured to grow
- it will grow as big as the container you place it in
- it needs to be turned toward the sun to grow straight

Faith is like a slogan

it is like the slogan of the state of Missouri – show me

it is like the 1969's Coke slogan – things go better with

it is like Nike – you need to just do it

it is like energizer – keeps going and going and going

Some famous African Americans have written about faith.

Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service.  
Without it, nothing is possible.  
With it, nothing is impossible.

Mary McLeod Bethune,  
Last Will & Testament of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

My faith has been the driving thing of my life. I think it is important that people who are perceived as liberals not be afraid of talking about moral and community values.

Marian Wright Edelman

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible Teaches:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,<sup>(e)</sup> just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”<sup>(f)</sup><sup>5</sup>

### **A FAITH THAT PLEASURES GOD!**

Do you have a faith that pleases God?

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<sup>3</sup> <http://africanamericanquotes.org/god-religion.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=hebrews+11&version=NIV;KJV;MSG>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+1&version=NIV>

I HAVE THE FAITH  
THAT SEES THE INVISIBLE  
EXPECTS THE INCREDIBLE  
RECEIVES THE IMPOSSIBLE  
FAITH, THAT CAN CONQUER, ANYTHING  
FAITH, THAT UPROOTS MY PROBLEMS  
FAITH, TO KNOW GOD CAN SOLVE THEM  
FAITH, TO VISION MY FREEDOM  
I, I HAVE FAITH, THAT CAN CONQUER ANYTHING  
FAITH, TO REACH THE UNREACHABLE  
FAITH, TO FIGHT THE UNBEATABLE  
FAITH, TO REMOVE THE UNMOVABLE  
FAITH, THAT STANDS THE INVINCIBLE  
FAITH, THAT CAN CONQUER ANYTHING  
OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO, FAITH, TO REACH THE UNREACHABLE  
FAITH, TO FIGHT THE UNBEATABLE  
FAITH, TO REMOVE THE UNMOVABLE  
FAITH, THAT STANDS THE INVINCIBLE  
FAITH, THAT CAN CONQUER ANYTHING  
OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH, OH  
FAITH, THAT SEES THE INVISIBLE  
FAITH, THAT EXPECTS THE INCREDIBLE  
FAITH, THAT CAN CONQUER ANYTHING THING!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/vanessa\\_bell\\_armstrong/faith-lyrics-225328.html](http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/vanessa_bell_armstrong/faith-lyrics-225328.html)