

## "Without Works"

James 2:14-26

- We're going to address a passage today that could be confusing
- If we just take a few words from this section
- Forgetting what we know about the rest of scripture
- Or failing to take into account the context
- We could come away with wrong conclusions
- That's why we're looking at 12 verses today
- They tell us about the kind of faith that is saving faith
- And the kind of faith that is "dead"
  
- Today, "Without Works"
- Our theme from James 2:14-26
  
- Based on what this passage tells us
- A man can say he has faith, but it is the wrong kind of faith
- It is not backed up by reality
- There is nothing confirming that it is saving faith
- It is the kind of faith demons have
- They believe there is one God
- But this is simple affirmation of fact
- It is what this passage calls a "dead" faith
- It is faith "without works"
  
- Let's begin our passage of the day for clarification...

James 2:14

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

- This initial question makes us think
- If we understand what the scripture says, we know that faith does save
- We see this over and over throughout the New Testament
- One place we may recall is Romans 4
- Let's begin in verses 1 to 5...

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

- We should ask, what kind of faith is the illustration of Abraham attempting to explain?
- We can reflect on the previous chapter to find out
- Chapter 3 verses 23 to 28...

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

- So, we are talking about saving faith
- Faith that justifies us before God
- That makes us right, righteous, and acceptable before God
- Through Christ alone
  
- But if we go back to Romans 4, we find out what kind of faith Abraham had
- We find that in verses 19 to 25...

"And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

- As James 2 will go on to explain quite clearly
- This was a faith that caused Abraham to do something
- And the doing was proof the faith existed
- The faith came first, it was counted for righteousness
- The action was the proof of faith
  
- There are many other passages we could address that are similar
- But with just these few thoughts in mind lets go back to the question of our first verse today...

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"

- The next few verses help to explain...

James 2:15-16

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?

- We can see the emptiness of this gesture immediately
- A brother or sister has no clothes and has no food
- That is the reality
- And we say "depart in peace," "be warmed," and "be filled"

- But we give them nothing
- If our words were true, actions would have followed, right?
- Words are just words, actions confirm them
- And in this example, the words were proven false
- They were of no profit to the person in need
  
- What does this have to do with faith?

James 2:17

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

- If a person says they have faith, it only makes sense that there would be works
- Good works, Godly works, righteous works, works which God commands
- Would follow faith
- There would be a desire to perform them, given by God
- And a brand new ability to perform them, enabled by the Holy Spirit
- But if a claim of faith is alone, it is dead
  
- It's not necessarily no faith at all
- Perhaps it's simple affirmation of fact
- But that is not the kind of faith that saves
  
- Further explanation...

James 2:18

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.

- Works could never be, will never be sufficient to save
- They are a result of saving faith
- They are evidence that faith is present
- They reveal that saving faith exists within a person
  
- Let's go on...

James 2:19-20

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?

- Now we get to the heart of the issue
- This is obviously the wrong kind of faith
- Faith? Yes.
- But it's just an affirmation of fact
- Even the demons affirm facts
- But their works tell the story

- They do not, ever, what God asks
- They rebel, disobey, and fight against God
- So, we're to take note, this kind of faith
- Faith without works - is dead
- Now to the example of Abraham...

James 2:21-23

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.

- Here we see that Abraham did something
- He went about to perform that which God had commanded
- Because He had faith in God
- His actions were a result of something inside him
- He believed God
- And that meant something real
- It meant he would take action to obey Him
- He had a relationship with God
- And this became evident by his actions
- What else?

James 2:24-26

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.

- We're not justified by faith we claim to have
- But by faith that is proven out
- That has actionable reality attached to it
- Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2021*