

Salt Church
James 2:14-26
“A Faith that Works”
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The Fruit of Salvation

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Recap

James 2:1-13

Last week we learned about the danger of showing favoritism to the wealthy.

- There was much discussion about the church and the needs of the church and **the danger of chasing after people with money** while rejecting those who do not have money.
- The issue wasn't in giving attention to those with wealth but rather **the disdain for those who had nothing** to offer in the way of money.
- James reminded us of several important things:
 - All of God's children are rich because of who their Father is and their eventual inheritance.
 - Therefore all of God's children deserve to be treated with respect and love.

James reminded us of the non-negotiable command from Jesus to “love our neighbor as we love ourselves.”

- From there we discussed how some people are easier to love but we expressed the simple truth that “God loved us even when we were His enemy.”
 - In other words, some people require **more patience**, more grace, more mercy, more love, **and even more patience**.

Before we were finished, we discovered the proper way to address sin in our brother's life.

- Jesus said we go to them in private and talk to them about what we see.
 - If there is no sin, then no harm and no foul.
 - If there is sin, there must be confession and repentance.
 - ***The goal is always love and restoration.***
 - If they refuse to repent then you go and get two or three witnesses and call that brother to repentance.
 - If they refuse, bring it to the church and treat them as lost until they repent.

We closed with these very powerful words from James 2:13

¹³ For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy.

Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- A reminder of two things:
 - 1st God desires to show mercy and therefore we should have the same desire.
 - 2nd Mercy triumphs over judgment, meaning God's mercy will save us from His holy judgment and this should motivate us to extend mercy in every area of our life.

So far, in the book of James we have been given instructions about:

- The trials and tribulations and God's purpose for them.
- Our need for wisdom and how to acquire it.
- The fate of man (everyone dies).
- Testing and temptation.
 - recognizing the difference and who is behind them
- Instructions in the requirement to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
- Instructions for the child of God as it relates to his tongue, especially in the area of gossip
 - for it can destroy lives, communities, nations, and churches.
- What true and pure religion looks like especially in the way that we take care of each other.

- The danger of favoritism.
- The value of showing mercy.

Today we discover the fruit of salvation:

“A Faith that Works”

James 2:14-26

¹⁴ What use is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

- **This is one of the most important theological questions a child of God could ever answer.** Before we have a chance to answer this question James gives us a hypothetical scenario:

¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

- **This is lip service!**
 - It comes from a **heart that feels nothing** for his brother who is in need of the basics of life.
 - We are not talking about a car or even a house.
 - We are talking about food and clothing.
- “What use is that?”
 - No use, ***it’s just words.***
- Don’t miss what is at stake here, this is more than just food and clothing.
 - This goes much deeper than you think and it may surprise you that **the greatest need here is not the one who needs food and clothing.**

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by itself.

- The greatest need is **within the one who says “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,”** for this person is **lost in the worst way.**
- **They believe that they are saved,** (keep in mind James is writing to the church.)
 - ***They are deceived!***

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; and I have works. Show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

- Can you hear what the Holy Spirit is saying through James?
 - True faith in Jesus Christ ALWAYS produces works!
 - Why?
 - ***Because the fruit of salvation is good works unto the Lord.***

Paul confirms this through the power of the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 2:5-10

⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, He made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith,** and this not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God;** ⁹ **not of works,** so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

What did we just learn?

- We are saved by grace alone through faith alone and not by works.
 - But Pastor doesn't that go against what James has said?
 - It doesn't
 - For verse 10 says ¹⁰ **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**
 - Salvation is not achieved through good works but the fruit of salvation produces good works.

- Good works that God the Father prepared before we were saved so that we would walk in them.

Jesus said it this way in John 15

John 15:5

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, **you will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.

- **This fruit is the fruit of good works**

There is a shift in James’ argument:

¹⁹ ***You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.***

- What is James saying?
 - **This is not a theological issue!**
 - The demons have excellent theology.
 - Meaning, they understand who God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are and this is why they “shudder.”
 - The problem with the demons is that their understanding of the trinity **has not provoked them to good works.**
 - But there is something we humans better understand
 - ***They are not deceived*** into believing that just because they know the truth that they are saved.
 - They know the truth and they understand where they are headed.
 - **Allow me to show you:**

Luke 8:26-33

²⁶ They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ **When he saw Jesus, he cried out**

and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

- Where is the abyss?
 - How did they know about the abyss?
 - Why are the demons afraid of Jesus?
 - Matthew adds this statement about this moment in Matthew 8:29.

Matthew 8:29

²⁹ “What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”

- What do we see here?
 - The demon’s knowledge of scripture is so good that they know that Jesus has come before the “appointed time”.

So, where is the abyss?

Jude 1:5-7

⁵ Now I want to remind you, though you know all things, that Jesus, having once saved a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, having indulged in the same way as these in gross sexual immorality and having gone after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

- The angels that did not keep their own domain are the fallen angels

- We call them demons.
- These are the same demons that came to the daughters of men in Genesis 6 and tried to produce a separate race of people so that man would not produce the Messiah in the future.
- Therefore Jesus has bound them in chains in the abyss until the day of judgment.
- This is the place they did not want to go.

What have we learned so far?

- We are saved unto works.
- We are not saved through our works.
- The fruit of our salvation will be our good works which are motivated by the unmerited grace of God given to us on the day of our salvation.
 - The day that we first believed upon Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.
- This is not about how much theological information you know
- It is about how that theological information has changed your life
- This is about the fruit of salvation
- This is about “A Faith that Works”

James 2

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

- Are we willing to admit that although a person has gone forward:
 - Said the prayer of salvation
 - Had a very emotional moment
 - Got baptized
 - Are we willing to admit that if that person does not have a pattern of consistent Godly works,
 - motivated by what God has done for them,
 - that they do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

In other words:

- If there has been **no change in that person's life** we can safely judge correctly (according to the word of God) that this person is not a child of God.

Now, let's be careful in how we judge.

- We have already learned that Jesus has called us to judge with the same grace and mercy that He has shown us.
 - Meaning:
 - It takes time for a child of God to mature
 - There will be many failures
 - **But there will ALWAYS be confession and repentance.**
 - Again, our grace and mercy comes via patience and truth.

(side note)

- ***We must be very careful with new Christians***
 - It is a disservice to them and their maturation process to put them behind a microphone after conversion.
 - This can produce in them a heart of pride which will lead to failure.
 - ***They need discipleship***
 - They need to be mentored.
 - They need time as they remove the sin that is still in their lives.
 - The day will come when they can testify to the goodness of God without glorifying the sin in their life.

Now, James is going to lean in on how works are the fruit of what you truly believe:

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.

- What did we just learn?

- Our faith is perfected within the good works that are the fruit of our salvation.
- In other words, our faith will produce some kind of work.
- No faith produces no work
- Great faith produces great work

²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

- Let’s look at Abraham’s faith
 - 1st God’s grace comes to him and calls him out of the sinful life that he was living
 - 2nd Abraham believed and it was counted as righteousness to him
 - Then he moved himself and his family away from the sinful life, following the voice of God wherever He led.
 - 3rd This faith of Abraham led him to good works which was proven in how he was willing to sacrifice his own son.
 - Yes, there were some failures along the way but there always was confession and repentance.

I think at this point James knows that a lot of people would never compare themselves to the great patriarch Abraham so he reaches back into the Old Testament and draws Rahab into the conversation:

²⁵ And in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

- I’m guessing that all of us fall somewhere between Rahab and Abraham.
- What a great witness Rahab is for Jesus.
 - She believed in the God of Abraham
 - This provoked her into action
 - An action that would have gotten her killed.

- In the end her actions led her to salvation.

Did you know that Rahab is in the bloodline of Jesus?

Matthew 1:5-6

⁵ And Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ And Jesse was the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.

- What do you see?
 - I see God the Father not showing favoritism
 - I see God the Father using all kinds of people from Abraham to Rahab.
 - I see people whose faith was real, and their faith compelled them to action (works) that publicly displayed their faith.

What should be our conclusion?

James 2:26

²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

- We close out today's teaching with verse 26.
 - It is a simple but powerful analogy
 - When our spirit leaves our body, the body is dead.
 - There is no debate about this "state of the body"
 - Dead bodies don't do anything
- James says, if you can understand that absolute truth, you can understand this absolute truth, "***also faith without works is dead.***"

Jesus says these words in Matthew 25 that make all of this abundantly clear

Matthew 25:31-46

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

³⁷ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

⁴⁰ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

⁴⁴ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

⁴⁵ “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

⁴⁶ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Powerful words that express this simple truth “faith without works is dead.”