

## The Faith That Moves us to Live

*The passage we are going to look at today is one of the most difficult in the whole Bible if we leave it to just itself. Seen together with all of this one book James and seen together with all of the Bible – this passage brings a clear and compelling picture of what it means to be saved and the role faith and works play.*

*I grew up in a church culture where the word “saved” was used a lot. If you did not grow up in a church you may have only heard this term used in cynical ways toward Christians on shows like South Park and Friday Night Lights or movies like the Apostle or SAVED. In these type of saved usually means becoming a holy roller who, pretends to do little wrong, while quickly learning what and who they must hate. In some religious circles, the word is rarely used. In Evangelical circles - it is a synonym for being a Christian or being a follower of Christ.*

*The word saved is in God’s word – a lot. It can mean to be rescued physically or it can mean to have one’s soul rescued from God’s judgment and brought to a life with God. 64 times this word is used in the NT or all the books written after Christ’s life. 15 of those 64 times Jesus uses save to describe being rescued and brought to life in God. Jesus even uses this word to convey the sole purpose of His life. Luke 19:10 (ESV) “The son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

*In this passage, God is going to show us and hopefully move us to trust that ...*

**Faith alone saves – but faith without works is not saving faith.**

*God will show this to us as He answers to questions for us.*

01. What is “faith” that “saves”?

02. What does “faith” that “saves” look like?

James 2:14 (ESV) What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

01. What is “faith” that “saves”?

“save” – *to be rescued by another* **Word implies an act that always happens by another vs escape.**

- We are sin-full, under God’s holy judgment, and need to be rescued.
- To be saved is - **to be made right before God – forgiven and accepted – by the person and work of Jesus.** *Bible never speaks of escape only saved – this case Jesus gives us, forgives & acceptance.*

**“Faith” is ...**

- n. pistis / v. pisteuo - Entrusting your soul to someone or something.

*Faith is not just an intellectual agreement or an emotional response.*

*I can believe that planes can fly – but I will not get on plane because the idea of an enormous object like a plane moving in the sky with seemingly nothing holding it up – scares us to say – nope, not doing it. That is a picture of intellectual agreement. I can give a passionate speech about the excellencies of an airline as the CEO of the company and still not fly because I don’t trust planes. That’s an emotional response. Faith – is entrusting my life to my belief that planes can fly by getting on that plane even though I am scared and this seems crazy.*

James 2:19 (ESV) You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

**“Faith” that “saves” is ...**

John 3:16 (ESV) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 1:16 (ESV) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) 8 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.

- Entrusting your soul to the person and work of Jesus ALONE.

*Faith that saves is not trusting in Jesus AND your work to make you right before God.*

**Faith that saves is not just believing Christian truth – but forsaking self-confidence and man-made hopes to trust wholly in Jesus and His work. J I Packard**

*Faith that saves is not trusting in Jesus plus anything else to make you right before God.*

The key point of the passage: James 2:18 (ESV) ... I will show you my faith by my works.

*He is not saying our works gives salvation or our works and faith gives salvation.*

Earlier in James God has already said.

James 1:21 (ESV) ... receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

*Is God now contradicting himself and saying **faith and works saves. NO!***

*He is saying – I will “show you my faith, my salvation - by my works.” How? ...*

## 02. What does “faith” that “saves” look like?

Saving faith moves us to works or acts of obedience.

James 2:14-17 (ESV) 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 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.

1- Only giving nice words to a starving person is useless – it is deathly to them. Food gives life.

*If you say you have faith that saves but you have zero works – your works are proving your faith is dead. Real saving faith would move us to compassion and action.*

- Faith that leads to *NO* care for the vulnerable is not saving faith. *It is dead.* It does not exist.

John 3:17 (ESV) But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Matt 25:31-40 Jesus echoes, “when I was hungry you...”

*“Mercy to the full range of human needs is such an essential mark of a Christian that it can be used as a test of true faith.” Tim Keller in Ministries of Mercy, 35)*

*We may have a hard time hearing this but God is very clear ... (repeat 1<sup>st</sup> statement – then say +)*

*Saving faith moves us to compassion and action for the vulnerable.*

5 times the Word says Jesus has compassion. Every time he is moved to action.

*God says if we are saved by faith, Jesus is in us. If He is, He will move us to compassion and action.*

Let’s be extremely clear about this:

*Caring for the vulnerable – acts of mercy to those in need - is not a means to salvation.*

*God is clear in this book - James 1:18 (ESV) Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth. **BUT***

*Saving faith moves us to compassion and action for the vulnerable.*

James 2:18 (ESV) 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!

2- Let this reach into your head and heart God says. The demons believe God is – *they are convinced.* But they have not rested their rebellious beings upon His work on the Christ to make them right.

- Faith that does not lead us to ongoing repentance – is not saving faith.

*An intellectual agreement or an emotional response is not repentance – as proven by demons.*

*Saving faith moves us to continuously throw ourselves on Jesus and His work to make us right before God.*

*That faith in Christ alone to make you right before God is tested every time you are convicted of sin.*

*Faith in Christ alone – says I’m forgiven before I even ask for forgiveness. But faith in Christ alone still moves me to confession. I’m not made right by my confession – but my confession is a work that proves I am trusting – faithing my right standing before God to Christ alone. I avoid apologizing to those who I think will only hammer me and hold my sin over me. I go to my wife more freely – bc she forgives.*

James 2:20-26 (ESV) 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 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. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

3- We are living a lie – *walking about as fools when we say, I have faith but we live with no obedience.*

Abraham – God is not saying he was saved by His sacrifice. Vs 23 quotes Genesis 15:6 that tells us Abraham was saved – literally made right or righteous by what ... **believing, pisteuo – faith entrusting His soul to God – the work that Jesus would do for him in the future.** What we see here is Abraham and Rahab having a faith that is way past an intellectual agreement or an emotional response. They are entrusting their life and soul to God to make them right. They are all in.

What about verse 24 – **You see that a person is justified ...** What does this mean? Sounds confusing!?!?! Justified – can have three meanings in the Gk language of the scripture much like our English word justify can have 3 meanings meanings. Justify in our language can mean – 1] to be proven right (*Her work justified our hiring her.*) 2] to give a good reason for (*The situation was bad enough to justify further investigation.*) 3] to align (*I like when we right justify words on our song slides.*)

In Gk. justify can mean – 1] to be made legally right, have guilt removed by another 2] to show to be right 3] to set free / Context always helps us determine which meaning the author intends in our language and context helps us determine which meaning God intended in His word as well. Based on the context of this passage, the context of James, and the context of the whole Bible as we have seen - God is not saying works make us legally right. We have seen from all of scripture and James that we are made right with God by Jesus alone – *we must place our soul completely on His work. So he is not using justify to say we are legally right or we have been set free.* He is using justify to show that we are right. (which is a usage of this word) **Read vs 24-25 again.**

Here is what God is saying in these passages:

- Faith that leads to zero obedience is not saving faith. *It is useless or dead.* It does not exist.

**Hear God carefully – Zero obedience reveals you are not saved. He is not talking about immaturity vs maturity or being a casual faith vs authentic faith. God is telling us that you either have faith that saves and moves you to some type of obedience or you have no faith that results in zero obedience and shows that you are not saved.**

**Point of clarity – wrestling with obedience does not show you are not saved. How do children obey their own parents? Sometimes beautifully, other times – not so beautifully, and still at other times it is quite ugly. The point – is there is usually an on again and off again obedience struggle for all kids if we are consistent in our discipline as parents. How do the kids down the block obey you? Two generations ago – maybe they did – but now. It is not even an issue. They don't obey us – why? **BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT OUR KIDS.****

**Not being saved, means you are not God's son / daughter – and you will have zero obedience.**

**Saving faith will lead to obedience of our Father and fruit from our Father.**

**Fruit in our lives is evidence of faith in our hearts. - David Platt / Listen to Jesus' words.**

Matthew 7:16-20 (NLT) 16 You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. 19 So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20 Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

Which describes you?

- 1) Your faith in Jesus and His work displays itself in fruit and moves you to obedient works from your forgiveness and acceptance.

2) Your faith evidences itself in no fruit and no works of obedience. Or, you are obedient only to find forgiveness and acceptance.

**Faith alone in Jesus and His work saves – but faith without works is not saving faith.**

If the first account describes you – *you have not been made right with God by Jesus and His work. You have spent your whole life – justifying yourself, making yourself right before God and this is a dead faith. You see the fruit of it. You have said one thing and lived a life of zero care, obedience, and confession because you are forgiven. Don't hide from God bc you are embarrassed what others will think. Turn to him. Turn from your disobedience, your lack of care, turn from just intellectually agreeing that God is and Jesus is alive. The demons believe this but they won't turn from their rebellion. Most of all turn from trying to make yourself right before God.*

The bad news – all your work to make yourself right before God is useless - according to God.

The good news – Jesus and His work can make you right before God.

*Turn from your work – that is stop trusting it faith it to make you right.*

*Turn to Jesus – right now put your trust in Jesus and His work.*