

06/28/26 Message

Part of Real Religion A Journey Through the Book of James
June 27, 2026

Message: Faith Isn't Enough

Series: Real Religion

Background

This series is an exposition of the book of James, written by Jesus' brother who "found faith" after His death, burial, and resurrection. James was writing to a persecuted church, and he wanted them to understand the difference between man-made religion and true, genuine, real religion.

We see something happen in James that should be what happens to us once we grasp who Jesus really is. James became full of the Holy Spirit who lit a fire inside him that made people notice this man was changed!

—Pastor Chad

James is shouting:

- Walking with Jesus is not about RELIGION it's about RELATIONSHIP!

Faith (Alone) vs (Good) Works

James 2:14-26 (NLT)

14 What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

17 So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

18 Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't

have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”

19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. 20

How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

21 Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the

altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions

made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous

because of his faith.”

He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. 25 Rahab the

prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely

away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

I call this message Faith Isn't Enough! That sounds crazy, especially since everything we know about this life with Jesus has to do with faith! We can't physically see Him, feel Him, or talk with Him, and so everything we do boils down to this spiritual experience. Some folks just can't grasp this 'all things spiritual.' That's why it requires faith! Without faith, you can't experience this spiritual world where our life with Jesus starts... and grows... and thrives! But James says, in v17, faith by itself isn't enough!

—Pastor Chad

- What are considered “Good Works”
 - Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, studying the Bible, stewardship, worship, etc.)
 - Ministry to believers (serving those in our church family)
 - Mission and Evangelism (sharing the gospel and serving others)
 - Personal obedience (living it out daily)
 - Mercy Works (aka Compassionate Deeds)
 - Vocational Works (job related to ministry, mission, or the church)

What I've found in life and perhaps you have too; many times, the prayers we pray have already been answered! We're just too busy praying to see the answers are right in front of us because God showed up before we asked! If you look at each book of the Bible separately and independently, you would think the writers have completely different views of their faith. Paul proclaims this gospel of grace where salvation is an unearned free gift from God, and to access it, you have to use the key which is faith. It's salvation by faith alone. Then you have James saying that genuine faith is proven by good deeds. On the surface, it appears they're arguing with each other, but they're not, they're actually complimenting each other. The two views aren't competing with each other, they're completing each other. It's not either/or, it's and/amen.

—Pastor Chad

Faith AND Works

- Following Jesus isn't about THINKING it's about DOING (vv14-18)

I can have a heart full of "want to" yet when it comes to action, "want to" equals "don't do" until you put legs to it!

—Pastor Chad

- Real faith RECOGNIZES the need and DOES SOMETHING about it!

- Simple BELIEF is not enough (v19)

Knowing what to do and not doing it doesn't bring you any closer to Jesus. Knowing what to do and not doing it doesn't bring you any closer to being saved. Knowing what to do and not doing it doesn't bring you any closer to heaven. The demons know what to do, but they clearly don't do it. They know about Jesus, they believe Jesus is real, but they clearly don't follow Jesus!

—Pastor Chad

- Abraham and Rahab had a strong faith that moved them to

ACTION, and their action PROVED their faith was real (vv21-25)

- Their action didn't create the faith, the faith created the action!

- Faith + Action = More Faith + More Action = Even More Faith
+ Even More Action

How You Know

Matthew 7:16 (NKJV)

You will know them by their fruits...

Makes me ask. If someone saw you last week, not just when you were at your best, but when you were at your worst. If someone saw you last week, what fruit did they see? Did they see a follower of Jesus, or did they see a lost person desperately following the ways of the world? We call this a fruit audit. Do an audit of the fruit in your life. What do you see? What do others see? What fruit are you producing and what does it say about your relationship with Jesus (or lack thereof)? Here's another: Have you been using words when action was needed? Are you living out your faith in a way that reflect you being the hands and feet of Jesus? Are you serving, giving, ministering the way Jesus expects you to?

—Pastor Chad

Challenge:

- Look for one solid action that costs you time, money, comfort, sacrifice, or whatever God reveals to you, and do it as an expression of real faith. Do it as an expression of living out your faith, an expression of revealing your faith... to God... to others.

James isn't asking the Jerusalem church to keep their faith by their works; he's showing them what real religion looks like. It's when your faith leads you to action not just every now and again, but every single moment of your life. Your works don't save you, but they reveal your salvation.

—Pastor Chad

- Works are EVIDENCE of being saved!

Do you live out your salvation?

Is there evidence of your salvation?

What do others see?

What does God see?