

## Reflect / Discuss

- When someone says, "I'm a Christian," what kinds of things do you instinctively expect to see in their life?
- Are you more tempted toward striving (trying to earn approval) or toward drifting (spiritual complacency)?
- Growing up, did you hear more "Try harder for God" or "Just believe and don't worry about obedience"?

**Read:** Romans 3:28, Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16

- According to Paul, what role do works play in justification?
- Why is it so important that salvation is not based on works?
- What happens to our assurance if salvation depends on performance?
- Do you ever feel like God is disappointed in you when you don't perform well spiritually?

**Read** James 2:14-26

What kind of "faith" is James describing?  
What does he mean when he says "even the demons believe"?  
What is the difference between belief and submission?  
Why does James use Abraham and Rahab as examples?

Paul asks: "How is a person justified before God?"

James asks: "What does genuine faith look like once it exists?"

They are answering different questions.

**Read** 2 Cor 13:5-6 If you were to do this, what would you conclude about your "examine"?

If someone examined your life this year:

- What fruit would they see?
- Would they conclude your faith is active?

The Order of Salvation

Salvation has three movements:

1. What God does for us — Justification.
2. What God does in us — Regeneration.
3. What God does through us — Fruit.

Read Eph 2:8-10 (especially verse 10) Mat 7:17-20

Why does order matter?

What happens if we reverse the order?

Can someone claim Jesus as Savior but reject Him as Lord?

## Faith That Works

3-01-26 / Mark McCartin

**James 2:14-26**

### I. Faith Alone OR Faith + Works?

**1. Eph 2:8-9:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith... not a result of works..." (Gal 2:16; Rom 3:23-28)

**2. Jas 2:14** *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?*

### II. Apostles at Odds?

**Hermeneutics Matter:** Genre, context, audience, purpose...

### III. Different Questions, Same Gospel

**1. What is the Root of Salvation? On what basis does God declare a sinner righteous?**

**Paul: Salvation by Faith** - What God Has Done For Us (Rom 1:17; 3:28; 6:23; 5:1 Gal 2:16; 3:11,24-26; Tit 3:4-5)

Paul is addressing a performance-based legalism of trying to earn salvation / self-justification.

**2. What is the Fruit of Salvation? What does genuine faith look like once it exists?**

**James: Genuine Faith Produces** - What God Does Through Us (Jas 2:14-26)

James questions the authenticity of a Faith profession that produces nothing.

**2:14** *...if someone says he has faith but does not have works (deeds / actions)? Can that faith save him?"*

## 2:15-16 The Illustration of Empty Compassion

James is addressing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation self-satisfied and complacent “believers” who think mental agreement equals living faith.

**Charles Spurgeon:** “If you want to give a hungry man a tract, wrap it in a sandwich.”

### III. Three “Faiths” (Can that faith save)

- a. Dead Faith (2:15-17,26)
- b. Demon Faith (2:19)
- c. Living Faith (Jas 2:20-23; Matt 7:1-17)

### IV. “Justified” Same Word Different Meaning

Greek word “dikaioō”:

1. to render, pronounce, declare to be righteous,
2. to show, exhibit, demonstrate one to be righteous,  
(Paul Gal 3:6 Root: Gen 15:6 / James 2:21 Fruit:  
Gen 22 & James 2:23 Root: [Jas 2:14, 17-19, 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? ... 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. ... 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works. Gen 15:6)

### V. TWO SPIRITUAL DANGERS

**2 Cor 13:5-6** *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?<sup>6</sup> And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test*

### 1. The Striver (Rom 8; 1Jh 1:9)

**Mat 7:21** *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

**Jhn 6:40** *For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life...*

**Mat 7:22-23** *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not DO...in your name...<sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

*"If you are in Christ, you are not on probation!"*

### 2. The Drifter (Phil 2:12-13; 1 Jhn 2:5-6, 9; 4:20)

**Luke 6:46** *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"*

**Eph 2:8-10** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

### Christianity is..

Not: I obey so God will love me.  
It is: Because God loves me, I obey.

Not: I perform to be accepted.  
But: I am accepted — therefore I live differently.

We are justified by faith alone.  
But the faith that justifies is never alone.

It moves. It grows. It produces fruit.  
Not perfectly. Not flawlessly. But genuinely.

### So here is the question you must answer:

Are you striving to earn what Christ already finished?  
Or are you claiming faith without surrender?

Faith and works are not enemies.

They are inseparable companions.

It is not faith or works.

It is faith that works.