

Passage: James 2:14-26

Title: The Test of Faith and Works

Summary: James writes to us so that we might examine ourselves. James is going to make a clear case in this passage on what real faith looks like in real life. True faith will have the evidence of works to back it up. James shows us 3 types of Faith, and points out that only one is a saved faith:

- Dead Faith – 2:14-18
- Demonic Faith – 2:19
- Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

James 2:14–26 (NKJV) ¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. ²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need

Written by James / Didn't believe – to Leader / Hindsight / Everyday Living

The Book of James was written by none other than Jesus' brother James. James was a leader in the church, a pillar in the church (Acts 21). James didn't believe that Jesus was God when He walked this earth (John 7:5); but after the resurrection Jesus appears to him (1 Cor 15:4-7), and everything changed. James is going to write us this letter, he will talk about everyday practical stuff. He will talk about trials in life, our works, our tongue, prayer, and other things; as he writes these things, no doubt he will be remembering how Jesus handled them, reflecting back on watching situations, and watching his oldest brother. He will reflect on Jesus' life of love, and a life of sinlessness, in a world that can be so hateful at times, and so full of sin. James will write these things based on hindsight, based on first hand witnessing of how his older brother lived life, everyday. James watched Jesus handle everyday life, and that is what this book is about; it is about living everyday life as a Follower of God, in a fallen world.

Jesus Rubbed Off / Nature Illustrations / Favorite Teacher - Sermon on Mount

We can see how much Jesus rubbed off on James, for James style resembles his brother so much. Like Jesus used nature as illustrations for His teaching points, so does James some 30 times. He uses nature analogies such as the sea, flowers, sun, fire, horses and ships to name a

few). It is obvious who James favorite teacher was, because this epistle covers every topic that Jesus covered in the Sermon on the Mount. There is amazing parallelisms between the two; James does not actually quote the Lord's words, but he obviously had internalized Jesus' teachings and reproduced them with spiritual depth. Jesus covered about 30 topics in the Sermon on the Mount, and we will see that James touches on every one of them in this epistle. The Book of James is Sermon on the Mount 2. The Book is also very quick and concise, moving from thought-to-thought quickly. So the Book of James is the New Testament Version of the Old Testament Proverbs. It resembles Proverbs because it is very poetic the way it flows its thoughts using illustrations and analogies.

So We can Examine Self / How am I Doing

Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount so that we might examine ourselves and ask the question, "so how am I doing in each of these areas?" James writes to the church, to us, and as we read, we have to ask ourselves, "so how am I doing in these areas?" This book is practical and applicable for us living in the year 2022, and the ultimate goal of this epistle is giving to us in verse 4 of chapter 1, to bring us into maturity, perfect and lacking nothing.

As in school, we take tests to see how much of a handle and mastery we have on a subject, we will do the same in this book.

3 Key Verses

Here are three key verses to get us going:

*James 2:20 (NKJV)*²⁰ *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*

*James 1:22 (NKJV)*²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

*James 1:4-5 (NKJV)*⁴ *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* ⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

The Outline of the Book of James:

Chapter 1

- Introduction (1:1)
- The Test of Perseverance and Suffering (1:2-12)
- The Test of Blame in Temptation (1:12-18)
- The Test of Response to the Word (1:19-27)

Chapter 2

- The Test of Partiality (2:1-9)
- The Test of the Law (2:10-13)
- The Test of Faith and Works (2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- The Test of the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The Test of Wisdom Applied (3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- The Test of the World's Influence (4:1-12)
- The Test of Dependence (4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- The Test of Endurance (5:1-11)
- The Test of Prayerfulness (5:12-20)

Intensely Practical / In Your Face / Hebrews / Earthly Scene /Promised Blessing

This book is an intensely practical book that packs a powerful punch. James is the kinda book that is in your face, and get it right. In Hebrews we explored the heavenly scene, now James we explore the earthly scene. It was wonderful spending a few months in the heavenlies, I could have stayed in Hebrews for another year, but the fact is until heaven, we are living here (so the blessings of verse-by-verse studying). Studying this book will have a great effect on you, This book is that practical, God even promises us that as we saw last study:

(James 1:25 NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 7:21 NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Great Controversy

This passage has caused great controversy in the church. Martin Luther said this book should be excluded from the Bible, and it should be thrown into the Rhine River. Why did he say this? Because Martin Luther was the champion of "justified by faith". It was through Romans 1:17, that the just shall live by faith that started the Protestant Reformation.

(Romans 1:17 NKJV) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Paul – James Contradiction / Balance of the Bible

At first glance it appears as if the Apostle Paul's teaching on faith is contradicted by James, but we will see that they don't contradict, but compliment. Paul writes to dispel that a person can earn their salvation through works, and James writes to dispel that just saying "I believe" will assure a person's salvation. The wonderful balance of the Scriptures; this Bible will afflict the comfortable, and it will comfort the afflicted.

Paul's Teachings – Faith

In Paul's teachings he makes it clear that salvation is by faith and not works:

(Galatians 2:16 NKJV) "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

(Ephesians 2:8 NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

(Ephesians 2:9 NKJV) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Jesus even said:

(John 6:28 NKJV) Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

(John 6:29 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

James Teachings – Works

We start this study in James with him saying:

(James 2:14 NKJV) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

31,102 / Faith Proven by Works / Examine Ourselves

James appears to be saying that faith alone can't save, but as we have said many times, there are 31,102 verses in this Bible and they are a woven unity, and the best interpretation of the Bible is the Bible. What James is ultimately going to sum up for us in these verses today is Faith that is real faith will be shown, will be proven by your works. Remember James writes to us so that we might examine ourselves. James is going to make a clear case and warning to the reader, don't think you are saved just because of your words. True faith will have the evidence of works to back it up.

Check Ourselves Inside & Out

Remember where we have been in this chapter, "The Test of Partiality", and the Test of the Law"; it is not just how we view people externally, but how we evaluate ourselves inwardly. And in this test, James is saying for us to check ourselves both internally, and externally.

Outline

James shows us 3 types of Faith, and points out that only one Saves:

- Dead Faith – 2:14-18
- Demonic Faith – 2:19
- Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

The 7 Churches / James / Jesus – He who has an Ear

I think it necessary to point out to you just what God thinks of our works, as they go along with our faith. In Revelation, seven churches, and seven letters, and in every letter, God says to them, I know your works:

First Definition of Works:

The word for work, in the Greek in our passage, is “ergon”, and it is where we get our English word “energy”. So there is an energy spent, to do an action. Work has an action behind that needs and uses energy, and thus well beyond just words.

Church of Ephesus -

*(Revelation 2:2 NKJV) "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;
(Revelation 2:3 NKJV) "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.*

Church of Smyrna –

(Revelation 2:9 NKJV) "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

Church of Pergamos –

(Revelation 2:13 NKJV) "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Church of Thyatira –

(Revelation 2:19 NKJV) "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

Church of Sardis –

*(Revelation 3:1 NKJV) "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.
(Revelation 3:2 NKJV) "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.*

Church of Philadelphia –

(Revelation 3:8 NKJV) "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

Church of Laodiceans –

*(Revelation 3:15 NKJV) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.
(Revelation 3:16 NKJV) "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
(Revelation 3:17 NKJV) "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'; and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked;*

James will close this subject out by saying;

(James 2:26 NKJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Jesus would close every one of those letters with:

(Revelation 2:11 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Dead Faith – 2:14-18

People with Dead Faith substitute words for deeds. They know correct vocabulary for prayer and testimony, and may even be able to quote a Scripture or two. But their walk does not measure up to their talk. They think their words are as good as works, what they have is only an intellectual experience. In his mind he knows the doctrine of salvation, but has never submitted himself and trusted Christ for salvation.

(James 2:14 NKJV) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

The Question

James asks the question, so that the hearer would consider, what is saving faith? What does saving faith look like?

Here's someone who professes faith, but there's no evidence of possessing faith. He talks a good talk. Isn't faith more than words? What about works? He's asking what constitutes true saving faith?

**(James 2:15 NKJV) If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
(James 2:16 NKJV) and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?**

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

(Matthew 6:4 NKJV) "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly

Context of the Situation in Church

2:15. The expression "brother or sister" has two implications. Christianity elevated the status of womanhood above that of the existing cultures. The needs of suffering women were recognized along with that of suffering men. It also emphasized the care believers should have for hurting members of the Christian community (Galatians 6:10).

2:16. The ill-clad and hungry brother or sister in James' illustration (2:15) seemed to make people uncomfortable if they had only a profession of faith. One of the group became the spokesman who tried to ease the embarrassment by urging the needy to leave the gathering rather than helping them. It was the common problem of not wanting to get involved.

"Depart in peace" was a customary Jewish parting expression. It had deep meaning when used sincerely, expressing a wish for total well-being. See Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50. When used as a formula for asking someone to leave it was hypocritical and in this case utterly heartless.

"Be ye warmed and filled" indicated an intentional decision not to do anything to provide help. It was expecting that someone else would respond to the need, making the destitute person responsible for finding such a generous person.

The change from the singular "one of you" to the plural "ye" indicates that the entire congregation was guilty of the action even though just one person was the spokesman.

"What doth it profit" indicates the uselessness of an empty profession of faith. When a selfish condition exists, the needy are not cared for, and the able but unwilling persons lose an opportunity to be a blessing and in turn to be blessed. See Psalm 112:9 with 2 Corinthians 9:6–11; Proverbs 19:17; 28:27. *Harris, R. W., ed. (1989). Hebrews–Jude (pp. 213–215). World Library Press.*

Letter to 7 Churches

The letter to the 7 churches, I wonder if God wrote a letter to me today, what would it say.

James – Principle – Illustration

James is great! He gives, first of all sort of a principle, and then he will illustrate the principle. Just like he gave you the principle that we are not to have respect of person. And then he illustrates it by saying, if a guy comes in loaded with rings, and so forth. And now he gives another principle of this business of faith.

Words can't Warm Them / Faith isn't In Word Only

A person can't be warmed and filled by our words only, it takes action to make them warmed and filled. It takes me going to my closet to get a jacket for them; it takes me going to the cupboard to get them some soup and bread. Just words will still leave them cold and hungry. James is making the analogy that our faith must be backed by action, that it can't be in word only. We need to be Doers of the Word:

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

(James 2:17 NKJV) Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Spurgeon

We believe that men are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith which is alone. They are saved by faith without works, but not by a faith which is without works. (Spurgeon)

Faith Shows Up – Shows Itself in Real Actions

Jesus is the bread of life. You know what? You can hold up a loaf of bread to someone who's starving and say, "This is bread," and they can say, "I believe that. I know that. That is definitely bread." But until they eat and partake of the bread, they will continue to starve. The words in agreement are not enough to satisfy the necessity of the soul for salvation. You must take, eat the bread.

John 6:35 (NKJV) ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Taste and see the Lord is Good:

Psalms 34:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

Real faith shows up in real life and that real life is going to look like something. Faith looks like something. It transitions. It transfers. It transacts something that's seeable, more than just hearable. Yes, we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead. We too shall be saved. Those words need to be spoken. But then there's a life that comes with it that proves that the living God has come up and taken residence in our very being as He promised that He would to all who would receive Him, that He would come and make a down payment. It'd be His very spirit inside of our very beings and you know what? People can argue it all they want. They can debate all they want. But I just have to say it is impossible for the living God to take up residence in someone's life and there be no difference. How could it possibly be God Himself, living in a person, living in us and yet we're not changed. The very word is we're told in Corinthians from glory to glory. It may be a slow process. But it's a process. It may be for some little steps. But it's steps nonetheless. He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it and I just hold that place. There's nothing being seen. There's no fruit that Jesus says to judge others by. May we first and foremost judge ourselves. Is their fruit that's evident of a life of salvation.

Charles Blondin

And in verse 15 he tells us what true, saving faith looks like... "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" Your blessing was nothing but hollow words.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." In essence, real faith leaves tracks. A legitimate faith will leave an imprint. I'll act on what I believe.

Real faith - saving faith - the faith that gets you to heaven - is a commitment to the point of action! Charles Blondin was a famous acrobat. On June 30, 1859 he crossed Niagara Falls on a three inch rope - 1,100 feet across the falls and 160 feet above them. Over that summer Blondin did numerous stunts from the tightrope... he did a backwards somersault, crossed blindfolded, pushed a wheelbarrow across the rope, walked it on stilts, he crossed at night, he even cooked an omelet on a portable stove halfway across... But Charles Blondin's most amazing feat on the wire above Niagara Falls came on September 15, 1860. Before crossing that day, he turned to the crowd and asked, "Do you believe I can carry a man

across the rope on my back?" The crowd roared, "Yes, we believe!" That's when Blondin asked for a volunteer... Yet of all the people who said they believed, none would climb on Blondin's back. Their talk was cheap.

Their lack of action betrayed their claim to faith.

Finally, one man stepped forward. The crowd didn't know it, but it was Blondin's manager, Harry Colcord. Harry had already tied his future to Blondin's daring, so why not go all out and trust him with his very life?

And this will be our reaction if we really trust Jesus. We'll climb on the Savior's back and let Him carry us. We'll tie every area of our life to Jesus. Real faith, saving faith, faith that gets you to heaven – is not a sideline faith. It's a faith that acts on what it believes.

(James 2:18 NKJV) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Known by Fruit

Jesus said you will know them by their fruit, he isn't talking about judging them, just examining them: [\(Matthew 7:20 NKJV\) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them."](#)

True Faith Produces a Changed Life / Don't be Deceived

You can show your faith in the things that you do. They are a demonstration of your faith. If there is no evidence, if there is not demonstration of faith, then that kind of faith is to be sorely doubted. True faith, will produce a changed life. It will produce works of love, kindness, goodness. If a person said I am a Christian because I went forward at a Billy Graham Crusade, or raised my hand at a church, but they just continue to live the same life they lived before, James says you need to examine yourself for you may be deceiving yourself.

A Faith That Saves – Is Faith That Works

It's true, faith is faith and works are works.

Don't turn faith into another work. You are made right with God not by what you do, but by what Jesus did, and your faith in His work. Salvation is by faith alone, but if you're really saved faith will never be alone...

It will be accompanied by works and loving action.

Some people point to a supposed contradiction between Paul and James. Especially in verse 24 where James says, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." That seems opposed to Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Martin Luther was so upset with the book of James he called it "a right strawy epistle..." He included it in the canon of Scripture, but failed to put it on the same level with the rest of the NT. It was strawy, not golden.

The so-called conflict between Paul and James clears up when you realize the vocation of the authors. Paul was a theologian. He was adept at breaking down abstract ideas. He deciphered steps and causes. James though was the son of a carpenter. He cared about the end result. The steps and procedures you followed while building a chair don't really matter if you end up with a handsome, sturdy piece of furniture. And this is how these two men dealt with salvation.

Paul broke it down into cause and effect. Faith alone is the cause. Spiritual fruit and good works are results.

Whereas James had a more comprehensive view of salvation. He was so sure faith produced works, he saw salvation as a package deal. If a life didn't show good works, then it obviously didn't possess real faith.

Paul's letters are spiritual schematics. They break down the inner workings of faith. While James sees God's work as a building project. It's not over until the trim is finished, and the punch out list is complete. Paul x-rays the roots of faith... James eyeballs the fruits of faith... Paul says faith comes first and should never be confused with works. But James says works always follow faith. Works are the evidence of faith. Package them together and you see the complete picture... A faith that saves is a faith that works!
Sandy Adams. (n.d.). James - Sandy Adams.

Demonic Faith – 2:19

James wanted to shock his readers, and he does. It comes to a shock to people that demons have faith. What do they believe, they believe that God exists, and they believe Jesus is God (Mark 3:11-12 & Mark 5:1-13). This faith is an intellectual faith, and it even has emotion along with it as we will see.

(James 2:19 NKJV) You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble!

Faith is obviously more than an intellectual assent. Even the demons are orthodox in their doctrine. Just an agreement on the facts doesn't constitute real faith! Here's a side note, the demons "tremble." The word means "to bristle up." It's the idea of a hair-raising experience. A demon's faith in God doesn't save him, it scares him. He believes in God's judgment, and it causes the hair on the back of his neck to stand up.

The Words of the SHEMA

James is banging on the Unbelieving Jews here a bit. The Jews would say what is called the "Shema" everyday, but they missed their Messiah:
(Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV) "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

Even the Demons Believe / Faith produces Righteousness

James is saying that's great that you believe there is one God, even the demons believe that; in fact they go one step further - They tremble (they have emotion along with the knowledge)! So just to say you believe in God, doesn't save you. It is Demonic Faith for it is a lie straight from the pit of hell. Unless there is a changed life, there is no real evidence of salvation. There is no real evidence of faith. True faith will produce in your life, works of righteousness.

Works Don't Save

Again, you are not saved by works of righteousness. People can do the work of righteousness and if they are trusting in those works of righteousness, they'll never be saved! You are saved by your faith in Jesus Christ, but a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, will produce works of righteousness in your life! You are not then looking to those for your salvation, but you're looking to them as the proof of your salvation:
(Ephesians 2:8 NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (Ephesians 2:9 NKJV) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

My Life / Disobedience

I make this point again, for this was my faith for 27 years of my life. I thought I was a good person, I went to church, I gave to the church, I never killed anyone. I said I believed in God, but besides a few crumbs here and there, there was no obedience to God. I lived as I chose, and mostly in rebellion to His Word:
(Titus 1:16 NKJV) They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

(1 John 2:3 NKJV) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

(1 John 2:4 NKJV) He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

Dynamic faith is faith that is real, faith that has power, faith that results in a changed life. Dynamic faith has the intellectual knowledge of God, attached with emotion, that is put into action.

James illustrates this dynamic faith in the lives of two well-known people of the Bible, Abraham and Rahab.

(James 2:20 NKJV) But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

(James 2:21 NKJV) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

(James 2:22 NKJV) Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

(James 2:23 NKJV) And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

(James 2:24 NKJV) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Sermon on Mount Cross-Reference:

[\(Matthew 5:6 NKJV\) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.](#)

Verse 2:22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? – James gives us the key to this whole passage, the works proved out Abraham's faith.

Genesis 15 / Paul Quoted Also

Verse 23 - *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness* - this passage (quoted from Genesis 15:6) is essential for understanding that it is faith that saves.

[\(Genesis 15:6 NKJV\) And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.](#)

Paul quoted this:

[\(Romans 4:1 NKJV\) What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?](#)

[\(Romans 4:2 NKJV\) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.](#)

[\(Romans 4:3 NKJV\) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."](#)

[\(Galatians 3:6 NKJV\) just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."](#)

Abraham Righteous the Moment he Believed / 50 years Prior

Abraham was declared righteous at that moment he believed God, not on Mount Moriah that day he was willing to offer Isaac. Abraham believed probably some 25 - 50 years before he went up to sacrifice Isaac. If you miss this point, then you will always be struggling with the faith and works argument:

Counted – Legal Term / Bankrupt / Justification

The word "counted" is a legal or financial term; it means to "to put to one's account." As a sinner Abraham spiritual bankbook was empty, he was bankrupt! But he trusted God, and God put righteous on Abraham's account. Justification is an important doctrine in the Bible. Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of Christ finished work on the cross. It is not a process but an act. It is not something a sinner does, it is something God does for the sinner when he trusts Christ. It is a once-for-all event. It never changes.

Transaction Completed / Withdrawals Being Made

James is making the point, that you can tell that Abraham was justified, that the transaction (accounted) was completed, by his changed life. There was something in Abraham's account, in his check book, because he was making withdrawals from that account.

Ephesians 2:8-10

Ephesians 2:8-10, sums us for the three things God has done through saving faith, that works:

- v.8-9 – What God has done for us (saved by Grace)
- v.10 – What God has done in us (we are His Workmanship)
- v.10 – What God does through us (good works)

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God,* ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Mt Moriah Proved the Reality of Faith / Faith that Works

Abraham by his works proved the reality of his faith. He proved God's work of grace took in his life. It is not **faith and works** that saves a person, but it is **faith that works**. All that Abraham did on Mount Moriah was prove what took place in his heart years earlier. Think about the day you gave your life to the Lord, what were you doing? You were looking at your own sin, and seeing a need for a Savior. You were not out doing any works, you were broken and humbled.

Faith Show in Your Works / True Faith Works / No Action without Faith

Faith that is real faith will show up in your works. True faith works. No man will ever be moved to action without faith! And no man's faith is genuine, unless it moves him to action!

Faith – Do things World can't Understand / Doesn't Make Sense

True faith will make you do things that people say are crazy. People must have asked Abraham, what were you thinking, why would you take your son up to Mount Moriah to plunge a knife through his heart? And Abraham would say God's Word and directing had been given, and I trusted He would work all things out, even raise Isaac from the dead if necessary. Abraham trusted God with what was most precious to him, Isaac; His faith took on action. That is when you know a person is saved, when they obey the Word of the Lord, and following the leading of the Lord, even when it doesn't make sense to them. Later on this would be proven to be a powerful picture of God sending His only Son to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

(James 2:25 NKJV) Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

Story Rahab / Put Her Faith in Action

God told Abraham that the iniquities of the Amorites were not full yet.

(Genesis 15:16 NKJV) "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

So God gave 400 years of grace for the people in the land to repent. Rahab had heard that this God of power, was also a God of love, a God so merciful, that He would accept her. And when it came time for God's judgement to come upon these people, he sent spies into the land, Rahab hid the spies of Israel. Rahab heard the word and was affected. Rahab responded with her mind and her emotions, but she also responded with her will, and she did something. She exercised Dynamic Faith. She proved her faith by her works, she hid the spies at the risk of her life, and she did not let her past (being a harlot) keep her from whom she knew God was (He was God, Mighty God, and a God who would receive her).

The Contrast / Rahab & Abraham

James uses these two, and only these two for a specific reason. So that no one could deny that salvation was all the Lord. Abraham the great father of the Jews, Rahab was a harlot. Rahab risked life for her faith, Abraham risked his son. Abraham was called a friend of God, Rahab dwelled with the enemies of God. Abraham was a Jew, Rahab a Gentile, Abraham was a good man, Rahab was a bad girl, a harlot. Yet both were saved by faith, and that faith caused both of them to put that faith into action.

Not Just from Dead – but Ashes

Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac not just from the dead, but from the ashes. Think about it. His body was going to be consumed. Here's the wood. Where's the fire? Here's the wood and the fire. Where's the sacrifice? Better said, he was going to be totally consumed by the fire after the sacrifice and yet Abraham believed that God would raise him out of the ashes. That's faith.

Isn't it interesting that God puts before us Abraham, the father of faith and Rahab, the harlot? He takes the best man and the worst woman in the Bible that we have and he holds them up both as trophies, pictures, illustrations of faith. Wow.

Our service to Christ animates our faith.

Rahab had greater faith than the children of Israel. When they came and knocked on her door, she was like, "We've been waiting for you. Where have you been? We've been watching you wander around that wilderness for all these years after knowing who your God is and the great defeats. What took you so long to get here?" Literally, she's saying, "I've been waiting for you." She had greater faith than they did in the God they claimed and the God she wanted. That's a beautiful picture. That's why she's in the lineage of Jesus Christ. That's an amazing thought and those buddies' past excludes them from coming to Christ today.

If God Wrote a Letter about Me (or CCAAC)

The letter to the 7 churches, I wonder if God wrote a letter to me today, what would it say.

The Test of Faith and Works, so how are we doing?

(James 2:26 NKJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Death – Spirit Leaves Body

Note the Bible's definition of death, it's when the spirit departs from the body. Once the spirit vacates, the body is an empty shell. It's dead.

Works brings Life to Faith / Abundant Life

The Spirit enlivens the body, so works enlivens our faith. Faith with works is life, abundant life is what Jesus said:

(John 10:10 NKJV) I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly

Ephesians 2:8-10

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Works of Obedience / Works in Action / Only God can Tell You

God demands our “works of obedience”, we have covered that in the Test of the Word, and the Test of the Law. Obedience will set you free from the bondage’s of sin so that you might have that abundant life of fellowshiping with your Creator. But your “works in action”, only God can tell you those, therefore He must have your ear, he who has an ear, let him hear.

Abraham Saw

Abraham was saved by his belief, but had he not put his faith in action, he would have missed out on seeing the preview of the greatest event that would happen in the history of man, God Himself sending His only Son to die for the sins of the world. God Himself becoming the Lamb. So too it is with you, let your faith lead you to action, and you will see and experience things that will make you fall deeper and deeper in love with your Savior. This sounds so simple, but it was so moving to me.

Faith that Works

It isn't faith and works, but faith that works.

So, again, be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself. If you have faith, it will be demonstrated. And you can demonstrate that faith, and it is demonstrated in the works that do. It demonstrates that that faith is genuine and that you are genuinely saved in because you have the faith to be saved, is demonstrated in the works that you do. Doing the works without faith is invalid! Doing the works in order to save yourself will never make it! Looking to your works to save you, they can never do it!

But the faith that will save you, will bring forth fruit, the fruit of righteousness, in your life. Remember Jesus said, by their fruits, ye shall know them. What kind of fruit is my life producing? Is it the fruit of the flesh? The fruit that demonstrates the flesh is in control? Or is it the fruit of the Spirit, that demonstrates the Spirit is in control of my life?

Paul said, therefore, let a man examine himself, for if will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God. It's important that our lives bear fruit! It proves your faith is genuine.

Conclusion

Outline

James shows us 3 types of Faith, and points out that only one Saves:

- Dead Faith – 2:14-18
- Demonic Faith – 2:19
- Dynamic Faith – 2:20-26

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need