

## Proving Faith

- *James 2:14-26*

- So far in the book of James we have discussed temptations, testings, the power of God's Word & the importance of faithfully walking & living the life instead of just talking about it.
- In the later part of this chapter, James calls us to look closer into our lives & specifically how others see our faith.
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
  - Let me say something from the very beginning. As you read James 2, you sort of get the feeling that James is pushing a salvation by works approach, but if you know anything about the Word of God & our Christian faith & specifically what we as Free Will Baptist believe, you know that we believe that salvation is made possible by God's grace & each of us placing our faith in the finished work of Christ. It has nothing to do with us.
    - Romans 11:6 – “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”
    - Many today, as they did in Paul's day, are trying to create a mix of grace & works in order to attain salvation.
      - Paul in essence, says, “Guys, make up your minds. Either its grace or its works, but it can't be both.”
      - Picking yourself up off the ground
      - Drowning man snatching himself out
    - We got folks who are striving as hard as they can to attain salvation, and while they are doing some good things, it is all in vain unless they are trusting in Christ.
  - Though we are not saved by our works, over and over again the importance of our faith, even in the eyes of others, is impressed upon as an essential element in the Christian life.
    - Sometimes it's called proving your faith,
    - Other times it is referred to as exercising your faith,
    - Some claim to live out their faith.
  - But it all revolves around not just talking about your faith or claiming to have faith, but allowing others to see your faith even before they hear you talking about it.
  - Faith is essential in the Christian's life:
    - The sinner is saved by faith ([Eph. 2:8-9](#)),
    - The believer must walk by faith ([2 Cor. 5:7](#)).
    - Without faith it is impossible to please God ([Heb. 11:6](#));
    - Whatever we do apart from faith is sin ([Rom. 14:23](#)).
- **James takes the time here in chapter 2 to discuss 3 different types of faith:**
  1. **Dead Faith (vv.14-17) (What is it?)**
    - a. **Actions Don't Confirm Faith**
      - i. James gives another illustration & points to meeting the basic needs of others.
        1. If a person has need of food or clothing & all we are willing to do is pray for them or give them a word, we have failed in our faith.
        2. Any Christian, any follower of God should do all that they can, even sacrificing their own comfort, to minister to those in need.
          - a. Matthew 25:40 – “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me”.
      - ii. Part of our works and duties as Christians is to be available and be willing to help others, regardless of whether they are saved or not!

1. I John 3:17-18 – “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”
  - iii. The overflow of our faith in God and our relationship with Him is the outpouring of love towards others in need.
- b. Trusting in Religion**
- i. Religion never got anyone to Heaven. Memorizing the Ten Commandments doesn't save us. Following the law doesn't justify or earn our forgiveness.
  - ii. Whereas our actions need to back up our faith, we can't rely solely on our actions as the basis of our salvation.
    1. Let me put it to you this way. We should do what we do b/c there has been a change in our life.
    2. We should not be doing just to gain favor.
  - iii. I believe there is a danger in religion. There are folks today who have an intellectual knowledge of who Jesus Christ is.
    1. They know the right words,
    2. He may even live the right life,
    3. But there has never been a time where they have trusted in Christ, and Him alone, for salvation. And according to the Word of God, they are not saved!
      - a. Romans 10:9 – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”
  - iv. If the extent of your faith is church attendance, memorizing a few scriptures and doing good deeds, your faith is dead.

## **2. Deceiving Faith (vv.18-19)**

### **a. “Believing In God” Is Not Enough**

- i. Without a doubt, if you witness at all, you have inevitably heard someone answer the “Are you saved?” question by responding, “Yes, I believe in God.”
  1. “Yes, I am a member of ...”
  2. “Yes sir, I was baptized as a child.”
  3. “Yes, I went to the altar during Revival.”
- ii. Now hang with me for a second. It is essential that you believe in God in order to be saved. It is a good thing to become a part of a local, Bible-believing church. You show your obedience by following the Lord in believer's baptism & thankfully many take advantage of an altar in their time of need.
- iii. But without faith, specifically your faith in the sacrifice of Christ, all of these are just good actions with empty results.
- iv. And to prove that believing in God is not enough, James goes on to point out ...

### **b. The Demons Have Faith?!**

- i. “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord!” ([Deut. 6:4](#))
  1. This was the daily affirmation of faith of the godly Jew.
  2. James says, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

- ii. This sort of sounds like a crazy & absurd thing for James to proclaim, but the truth is he's right on target.
  - 1. If you go back through the New Testament, you will remember that Jesus on several occasions cast out demons, to prove His power over them.
  - 2. Many foolish people today will claim to be an atheist or an agnostic, but the Bible is clear that the demons believe in the existence of God.
    - a. They understand His power b/c they have witnessed it firsthand.
    - b. They are submissive to His power.
    - c. And as much as it may surprise you, they understand the Judgment of God & realize that they have been defeated.
- iii. Don't be deceived, believing in God is important, but what He demands is our complete faith & trust in Him & the sacrifice that He has provided for us.

### **3. Delivering Faith (vv.20-26)**

#### **a. Involves A Choice**

- i. Dead faith touches only the intellect;
- ii. Deceiving faith involves both the mind and the emotions;
- iii. But Delivering faith involves the will.
  - 1. The mind understands the truth; (which is a start)
  - 2. The heart desires the truth; (which is getting us close)
  - 3. The will acts upon the truth. (This is the obedience that is needed to make our faith real.)
- iv. The Christian faith, the Bible faith, is a living faith b/c God gave each of you a choice as to whether you wanted to believe & trust in Him or deny Him.
  - 1. Now whether you believe or not doesn't change God.
    - a. God is still God.
    - b. God's Word is still God's Word.
    - c. And the blood of Jesus Christ I still the only way.
  - 2. But He gives you a choice whether to believe.

#### **b. Involves A Change**

- i. In this passage, James gives us a comparison of 2 very different people, Abraham & Rahab the harlot.
  - 1. Abraham
    - a. Jew
    - b. Godly man
    - c. Friend of God
  - 2. Rahab
    - a. Gentile
    - b. Sinful woman
    - c. Belonged to the enemies of God
- ii. Yet, when you go over to Hebrews 11, they both are called out by name. How in the world could 2 different people, from 2 very different walks of life, possibly wind up being talked about in God's Word in the same manner? They had been justified by their faith.

iii. Now justification is a huge term, it's a legal term, which really mean to "put to one's account".

1. It means God declares the sinner righteous based on the work of One sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.
2. How in the world can we possibly tell if a person has been justified or not? The justified person has a changed life & obeys God's will.
3. Abraham - Genesis 15:5-6 – "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."
4. Rahab – Joshua 2 (Rahab heard the Word & knew that her city was condemned. But hearing & believing wasn't enough, she decided to act on it & we read in Hebrews 11:31, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

➤ A group of Preacher's were sitting in President George Bush's library when the subject of faith came up and salvation, and somebody asked the question, "Tell us about your faith." He said, "I'll tell you very clearly. I believe that my only hope of heaven is the fact that Jesus died for me on the cross, and I have put my faith in Jesus Christ and I am trusting Him to get me to heaven because He died for me and paid for my sins on the cross." Well, that sounded pretty good so one of the Pastors asked him another pointed question. He said, "No disrespect, Mr. President, but if you were to stand before God and He were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?' what would you say if you were to suddenly die?" The President replied, "I would tell Him, I've trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior, and I would also tell Him that I have endeavored to live by the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount." Well, when he said that, the light went off in a pastor's head and he said, "Now, Mr. President, keeping the Ten Commandments and living by the Sermon on the Mount have nothing to do with it. You're saved by the grace of God." George Bush said, "I disagree with you. Do you mean to tell me that a man can say that he believes in God and it doesn't change his life?" He said, "I believe when a man is saved, when he becomes a Christian, it will show up in his life. You'll be able to see it. It's going to change his life."