

“First Steps: Faith that Works”

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Scripture

James 2:14-26

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.**

But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**”

You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and **as a result of the works, faith was perfected**; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God.

You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, **so also faith without works is dead.**”

Introduction

What is Faith?

What do you have faith in?

Faith in Electricity

Faith in Family or Friends

F/A/I/T/H Forsaking All I Trust Him

The Fall of Faith

The Hall of Faith -> Hebrews 11

Faith Is...

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

It is complete assurance in the promised, yet unseen.

John 20:24-29

“But **Thomas**, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So, the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “**Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.**”

→ Did Thomas Have Faith? With the Lord for 3 years?

After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “**Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**”

1 John 5:4

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith”

Positive Faith

Matthew 15:21-28 (Jesus with the Syrophenician woman)

“Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.” But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.” But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus said to her, “**O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish**” and her daughter was healed at once.”

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 (about future earthly “death”)

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— **for we walk by faith, not by sight**— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, **“BUT THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”**

Little Faith

James 1:6-8 (concerning prayer)

“**But he must ask in faith without any doubting**, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Matthew 16:5-10 (The disciples after Jesus fed the five and four thousand)

“And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, “He said that because we did not bring any bread.” **But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? “Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? “Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up?”**

Matthew 8:23-26 (Jesus asleep in the boat)

“When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, **“Save us, Lord; we are perishing!”** He said to them, **“Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?”** Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.”

Matthew 14:28-32 (Peter walking on water)

“Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” And He said, “Come!” And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately **Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”** When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.”

Luke 8:25 -> “WHERE IS YOUR FAITH???”

No Faith?

John 6:63-65 (Jews who were not destined to believe)

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. **“But there are some of you who do not believe.”** For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

John 10:37-38 (If not believing His words, should believe His works)

“If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, **though you do not believe Me, believe the works,** so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

Hebrews 11:6 (No future hope without Faith)

“And **without faith it is impossible to please Him,** for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

Living or Dead Faith?

James is not contrasting little or great faith. He is contrasting REAL faith and NO faith or a living faith and a dead faith.

Saving Faith: Oxford English Dictionary -> “Practically operative”

James 2:14-17

“What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you

says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.**

Faith spoken of but not confirmed by works is dead...

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 as a result of works**, so that no one may boast.”

You cannot earn your way into Heaven. It is a gift of grace alone that you believe in Jesus.

Five Solas of the Reformation:

Sola Gratia; Sola Christos; Sola Dei Gloria; Sola Scriptura

Sola Fide: **By faith alone** are you saved

Yet, James wrote, if it is JUST your words that you’re standing behind...that’s shaky ground to stand on.

“Words are cheap” in essence.

James 2:18 (works are evidence of true faith)

“But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**”

The emphasis here in the sentence is on the word BY. It is the equivalent of “**Prove it**” or “put your money where your mouth is”.

To show (“shew” in the KJV) is “**to demonstrate** or put on display”.

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Jesus had His “prove it” moment.

Where are our “Prove it” moments?

James 2:19

“You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

Reference to Shema – Deuteronomy 6:4-5 -> The most basic doctrine of the Old Testament

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Even the Demons have Faith!

And they were kicked out of Heaven...

James 2:20-23

“But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?”

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and **as a result of the works, faith was perfected**; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God.”

Foolish -> meaning “empty or defective”

James is saying, “Your faith is a sham, worthless, fraudulent, useless”

Abraham’s Example (in offering up Isaac) **to his Jewish audience:**

His willing offering of Isaac demonstrated his faith in God.

His faith was “perfected” -> made to be complete...and revealed to God.

Genesis 22:11-12

“The angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; **for now I know that you fear God**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”

Rahab’s Example

James 2:24-25

“You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

Joshua 2:11-12

Rahab said, “For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. "Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth,”

Justified -> "Demonstrated faith on display for the world to see"

James's Summary

James 2:26

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, **so also faith without works is dead.**"

Where is Your Faith? Is it alive and working? Or is it dead?