

“Is Your Faith Real?”

James 2:14-26

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I. Introduction

- A. Actions speak louder than words!
 - 1. The topic of our text today is the central theme of the book of James
 - 2. Faith and works, or faith that works
 - 3. As it is in our day, so it was in James’ day. There were some who claimed to have faith in Jesus, yet their lives showed no evidence of that faith
 - 4. If you’re saved and you know it, then your life will surely show it
 - 5. James is saying, examine yourselves to see if your faith is real.
 - 6. There are three questions we need to ask

II. Is Your Faith Just an Empty Claim (James 2:14-17)

- A. It cannot save (v. 14)
 - 1. Anyone can say “I have faith” or “I am a Christian,” but if there are no works, it is just an empty profession
 - 2. James is asking two rhetorical questions which demand negative answers (v. 14)
 - 3. Key word “say”
 - 4. Illustration- John Bunyan- Pilgrim’s Progress
 - 5. Does your walk measure up to your talk?
- B. It does not serve (vv. 15-16)
 - 1. James gives an illustration of an empty claim
 - a) “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 truth” (1 John 3:17-18).
 - 2. It is dead faith (v. 17)
 - a) This is the conclusion
 - b) Faith that is just an empty claim is dead
 - c) “Being alone” (v. 17)
 - d) “Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is not alone.” – John Calvin
 - e) Genuine faith is not an empty claim

III. Is Your Faith in Just a Creed? (James 2:18-20)

- A. Real faith is more than believing a creed
 - 1. “An imaginary objector” (v. 18)
 - 2. “I have faith”
 - a) But you can’t see faith
 - b) Illustration- Like calories
 - 3. I will show you my faith by my works
 - a) Illustration- The lame man- “Jesus saw their faith”
 - 4. Can others see your faith?

5. The man with faith but no works says, “but I believe in God”
 - a) So do demons
 - b) It’s just like demons
 - 1) They believe (mind)
 - 2) They believe in one God (true)
 - 3) They tremble (emotion)
6. You can be so close and yet not saved
7. Have you trusted in Christ?
 - a) Christianity is not just a creed; it’s trusting Christ the person
 - 1) Mind
 - 2) Emotion
 - 3) Will

B. Genuine faith is not mere acceptance of a creed

IV. Does Your Faith Produce an Obedient Life? (James 2:21-26)

A. Jesus now gives us two examples of real faith

1. Not a dead faith
2. Not a demonic faith
3. The examples are two Old Testament characters
 - a) One a patriarch (Abraham)
 - b) The other was a prostitute (Rahab)
4. What a contrast!
 - a) One a Jew; the other a Gentile
 - b) One a man; the other a woman
 - c) One was a friend of God; the other belonged to the enemies of God
5. Why?
 - a) To show that anyone can have a real saving faith

B. The patriarch Abraham (vv. 21-24)

1. The demonstration of Abraham’s faith (v. 21)
 - a) His faith was demonstrated
2. The vindication of Abraham’s faith (vv. 22-23)
 - a) It was made perfect (v. 22)
 1. Trials perfect our faith
 - b) It fulfilled Scripture (v. 23a)
 1. (Genesis 15)
 - c) He became God’s friend (v. 23b)
 1. Love, trust, talk
 - d) The conclusion from Abraham’s faith (v. 24)
 1. Because he believed God, he obeyed God
 2. (Hebrews 11:17)

C. The prostitute Rahab (vv. 25-26)

1. The need for saving faith
 - a) She was a condemned person
2. The nature of her saving faith
 - a) Her mind
 1. (Joshua 2:11)
 - b) Her emotions

1. (Joshua 2:11)
 - c) Her will
 1. She acted
 3. The reward for her saving faith
 - a) She and her family were saved
 - b) She became a part of Israel
 - c) In the lineage of Christ (Matthew 1:5)
 - d) In the Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:31)
- D. The conclusion (v. 26)
1. Faith without works is like a corpse
 2. Sometimes a corpse can look pretty good but still be dead

V. Conclusion

- A. Everyone needs a real saving faith
- B. What kind of faith do you have?
 1. Dead faith?
 2. Demonic faith?
 3. Dynamic faith?
 - a) (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - b) (Ephesians 2:10)