

Faith Without Works Is Dead  
(Jas 2:14-26)

Even in the early church many claimed they had saving faith that were not saved. Where ever there is the true you find the counterfeit. Jesus warned in Matt 7:21. *"Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."*

How do you know dead faith from true faith?

People with dead faith substitute words for helpful deeds. They may know all the vocabulary for prayer and doctrine and may even be able to quote scripture, but their work does not measure up to their talk. But words are no substitute for works. Authentic faith is revealed with real deeds

- I. The Issue Under Discussion is introduced in v. 14, *"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?"*
  - A. There were those claiming to be Christians, claiming to be saved, but who did not obey the teachings of Jesus.
  - B. For example vv. 15-16, *"Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?"*
    1. Meeting each other's immediate physical needs is taught throughout scripture:
      - a. 1Jn 3:17-18 *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*
      - b. Good Samaritan
        - (1) Priest & Levite - knew the truth, saw opportunity, passed by
        - (2) Samaritan - genuine faith, stopped, bandaged, animal, inn.
    2. Understanding needs & knowing what you should do means nothing w/out tangible acts of mercy.
  - C. James says in v. 17 *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

- II. The absurdity of separating faith from deeds.
- A. V. 18a, *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."*
    1. Hard to translate (*one has faith another deeds*)
    2. A quibler trying to separate the two as independent.
  - B. V. 18b, *Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.*
    1. Where there are no works, there is no faith.
    2. True obedience grows out of faith in Christ.
      - a. John 15:5-8 *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*
- III. Saving Faith is not intellectual agreement.
- A. Not enough to have true propositions in head. V. 19 *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder.*
  - B. Demons are neither atheists or agnostics.
    1. They believe Christ is the **son of God** (Mk. 3:11 ff).
    2. They believe in a place of **punishment** (Lk . 8:31),
    3. They recognize that Jesus Christ is the **Judge** (Mk. 5:1-13).
    4. They even react **emotionally** to such truths they tremble
  - C. Yet they are far from saved -
    1. True saving faith involves something more,
    2. it involves the commitment of your life to Jesus that allows Him to come in and change the course of it.
- IV. III. Of saving faith - v. 20 *You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?*
- A. Abraham v. 21 - *Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is*

*justified by what he does and not by faith alone.*

- B. Rahab v. 25 - *In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

**The Bible does not teach a salvation by works but it does not teach a salvation that does not work either.** Note, **there are no true works if faith in Jesus alone has not preceded them and if they are not done in the power of the Holy Spirit.** But if there is genuine faith, good deeds will naturally follow.

\*this sermons references material from Warren Wiersbe & Mark Copeland

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