

The Real Deal! James 2:14-26 “Faith Works”

This morning – I want to begin our time together
– Little test.

A) You are at an Event – where there are only -
Two Beverages being offered - not even water --
{ Neither

B) All that is available is Coke Or Pepsi – How
many Pepsi?

1) How many Coke ? - Yes

C) Coke Slogan: It is the Real thing. Jingle – it’s
the real thing

It seems if you put the word "real" in front of
anything it sells more.

A) There is Real TV.

B) Real Coffee - Real leather.

1) We’re interested in the genuine article.

C) Today we are going to talk about Real faith:

1) **Faith that is the Real Deal!**

Big Idea: Faith without works is Dead!

A) Is James Contradicting Paul?

B) Paul said: Ephesians 2:8-9 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.

C) James says: Faith without works is dead!

Contradiction?

Griffith Thomas wrote: “It has been said that St.
Paul & St. James are not soldiers of different
armies fighting against each other, but soldiers
of the same army fighting back to back against
enemies coming from opposite directions.”

Paul’s Enemy is How we are saved!

James’ Enemy is the Evidence that we are saved!

A) We will see how these two are brought
together in our passage today.

B) Someone said **Faith is like calories** – you can’t
see them, but you can always see their results!

C) That is the theme of this Letter – definitely
what James is driving home in our passage
today.

Real faith is: 4 insights

A) **#1 More than words V.14-17**

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone
says {**Words profession**} he has faith but does
not have works? Can faith save him? –
Illustration 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.

B) James illustration – See a Brother in need –
don’t help him there is a problem with your
Faith

1) Faith HAS TO BE more than words
Faith will be accompanied by works.

C) Works? – Right away some think – give me
the list

1) Talking the 10 commandments? Torah – Law
of Moses

2) Getting up at 5am read my Bible.

D) Many think that way: Give me the list – get on
it!

E) Define Faith and works

➤ Faith Defined: **Trusting God and Obeying
God!**

➤ Works Defined: **Loving God and Loving
People.**

**SAW this last week – Royal Law – Love God and
love your neighbor as yourself!**

A) **TRUE FAITH is EVIDENCED BY
COMPASSION AND ACTION.**

B) Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the
SHEEP AND GOATS Matthew 25:40-43

C) **Jesus comes in his glory** – people are brought
before him – Separated like Sheep from Goats

1) Sheep on right – Goats on the left –

D)The Distinction between the two is how they cared for His people.

Jesus said to the sheep – **I was Hungry – Food – Thirsty – Drink – Stranger – Welcomed me – Naked – Clothed me.**

A)When? Did it to the least of these my brothers – did it to me.

B)Goats on left – Depart: Why? Hungry –NO Food – Thirsty – NO Drink – Stranger – NOT Welcomed me – Naked – NOT Clothed me.

C)WHEN SEE YOU? – Didn't do it to the least of these my brethren.

James and Jesus use the term brothers – Jesus Jews – James – Believers

A)We have a Spiritual obligation to take care of the household of faith.

B)Not saying that to give us an out – relates to the Homeless – The Spirit has to lead us in each situation

C)But there is an obligation to the Household of Faith – Believers in need!

Can I just say something about - Strangers Welcomed?

A)Email – Most of the time pretty good – But reminder - **Especially those who have been around a while –**

B)Faith Defined: Trusting God and Obeying God!

➤ Works: Loving God and Loving People.

C)More than words – Not **perfectly executed** all the time –

1)Some people can be hard - but there is progress

D)James is teaching us – Christian life is about **Progress not perfection – Growing**

E)Faith is like a muscle – Building and getting stronger

1)FAITH/WORKS – it is producing something in us.

**Real Faith is #1 More than Words
#2 Real Faith can be Seen! V.18**

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.**

A)James is saying: Don't Just tell me you have Faith – SHOW ME!

B) **Beyonce – Put a ring on it!** – Don't just tell me you love me - Show me!

1)DON'T BE PLAYING WITH MY HEART!

C)Serious about me – PUT A RING ON IT BRO! - Single sisters - AMEN

D)Real faith CAN BE SEEN!

Now understand James is not suggesting that we need to **add works to our Faith** in order to GET SAVED!

A)Negate the Cross – **Everything that we needed TO GET SAVED –**

B)Needed for Forgiveness / Redemption/Salvation was accomplished By Jesus

1)Through His: Death/Resurrection - **We are called to - Just believe!**

C)On the Cross – Jesus – yelled out Finished – **Not Phase 1** – now you do the rest.

Who wants to move into a house: Phase 1 – slab, roof – windows and front door

A)Now you do the rest – you have to build out the rooms and put in the plumbing

B)**APPLIANCES – Floors, Carpet** – I am not stoked by that – My time – long time/

1)My skill – probably never is that place going to be livable

C)Jesus didn't say: **Phase 1 He said – Finished!** – Done – Complete

As your Pastor – I so desperately want you to know the peace and delight that comes in knowing that JESUS DID IT ALL!

A)THAT he loves you, that your Creator God who knows **everything about you** hasn't just forgiven you, but that he loves you,

B) **HE LOVES YOU with deep affection** – in fact he even likes you, and not some future version of you,
1) but the messy, goofy, ignorant version of you right now. (No offense.)

C) I desperately want you **anchored in that hope, assured in that hope,**
1) **Unmoved** from that hope, as you live out the days of your life,

D) Because If you get that and you know that, -
Makes all the difference in the World!
1) There's a delight, there's a sense of peace, there's a rest in the soul.

E) It melts away the cold places. It softens the hard places. Creates a JOY

A JOY IN KNOWING - your Creator knows you, EVERYTHING

A) HE HAS forgiven you, loves you, and (I'll say it again) affectionately likes you

B) **CATCH THIS** not because you did anything but rather because **JESUS did everything.**
1) His perfect righteousness imputed TO YOU –

C) His perfect obedience imputed to you, so that when **God looks upon you HE SEES you in CHRIST**

C) **AND** in Christ He sees the righteousness and perfection of Christ and **calls you his beloved**

I SO want you to get that – understand that – embrace that – that is how I pray for you – **Increase your understanding of that – Paul Prays Know the Love**

A) Increase your delight in the Lord

B) Rid yourself of that tendency – Performance based Christianity – trying to earn God's Favor – precious brother/sister – You have it!

C) **THE JOY OF LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH** - the Lord's rejoicing over you is your strength!

D) Believe that and walk in it!

So James is not in any way saying you need to ADD WORKS TO your Faith to be saved!

A) But didn't Peter in his epistle actually say: Add to your faith.... Yes he did

B) But notice how that Passage starts
2 Peter 1:2-4

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

C) He has supplied you with everything that you need: **LIFE AND GODLINESS - It is yours – Found in the Knowledge of Christ –**

1) By reason of the Fact - Partakers of the Divine nature – God's has put his Spirit in your heart!

So that is how Peter Starts that conversation – then He says:

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A) **Add to your faith = Utilize** What is already yours – given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him

B) Another way to think of it is this way: - **Furnish your faith**

Back to my house analogy:

A) **This is what God has supplied:** Completed House! Everything is built!

B) Plumbing is in – the bathrooms are done the Kitchen is done / Flooring DONE -- **Power is on!**

C) Awesome feeling isn't it! –

D)Even Better as a Christian – Spiritually speaking – **NOT ONLY IS EVERYTHING DONE**

1)Garage is full of everything that you need – all the furnishings

E)**You just need to utilize them:** Turn on the stove Start cooking

1)Take the couches, beds, chairs, dressers and put them in the room that you want.

So I come over to the house: Meet you outside – YOUR HOUSE- yes sir

A)Show me- key – you open

B)Power on? Yes – Cool – I brought a DiGiorno Pizza – Lets Eat

C)Real faith can be seen V.18 – Something belongs to you it is evidenced by your life!

D)SO - **James is saying Real Faith can be seen!**

1)**Peter is saying Real Faith is to be Furnished!**

Real faith is:

#1 More than words V.14-17

#2 Can be Seen! V.18

#3 More than intellectualism: V.19-20

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?

James is using a little bit of Shock here: Demons believe!

A)Demons have Faith - they believe in the existence of God;

B)They also believe in the **deity of Christ**. Whenever they met Christ when He was on earth, they bore witness to His Deity

1)They **believe in the existence of a place of punishment** – Don't send us there

C)**They also recognize Jesus Christ as the Judge** (Mark 5:1–13).

1)They submit to the power of His Word.

D)Demons have a Solid Theology!

James' point. Intellectual assent to correct doctrine is not salvation.

A)See it is easy to come across people who know a lot of doctrine.

B)They can argue with you on things for days – they know the Bible backwards and forward.

C)But they don't have any love for people! He's just smart. **CRISPY AND CRUSTY**

1)**LIKE A PORCUPINE** – Many fine points but hard to get close too

Paul said: Knowledge Puffs up – Love Builds up!

A)Real Faith - Trusting God and Obeying God!

➤ Works - Loving God and Loving People.

B)Real Faith is more than Words

➤ Real faith can be Seen

➤ Real Faith is more that intellectualism

#4 Real Faith Does something: V.21-26 - Illustrate this with the Life of Abraham and Rahab.

A)Abraham we get – Father of Faith – Hero to the Jewish people – We have songs – **Father Abraham had many son, many sons.....**

B)No one is singing songs about Rahab though: **Rahab the Prostitute turned many tricks ...**

C)James is going to use these two very different people as examples that Real Faith does something –

1)He starts with Abraham!

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.

James Combines two events in the Life of Abraham to make His point.

A)V.23 Refers to what took place in Genesis 15 – God came to Abraham said: **Leave and I will make you a great nation. STARS**

B)Scripture said: **Abraham believed God – said – ok – left – Called the Friend of God!**

1) Paul keys in on this story in Abraham's life in Romans 4. Building the doctrine of Salvation is by grace through faith – Alone

C) Abraham was Justified by faith – Declared righteous – because he believed.

D) Paul tells of that event – From God's perspective – Abraham believed and **God DECLARED – HIM RIGHTEOUS**

V.22 James refers to an event in the life of Abraham that happened many yrs after that – where **Abraham's faith was DEMONSTRATED**
Genesis 22 – Isaac the Promise Child has been born – God says – Sacrifice

A) Test: Let's sacrifice the promise on the Altar – ABRAHAM – OBEYED –

B) Wood for the Fire – His Son asks up that mountain.

C) James says V.22 – **Abraham's Faith was working together with his works – and by his works – his faith was made perfect or complete.**

1) James says Abraham was justified by His works

Here is the million dollar question. Solves the dilemma James Contradicting Paul

A) How was Abraham **“justified by works”** (James 2:21) when he had already **been “justified by faith”**?

B) It is all about Perspective: Paul writes from the perspective of God – Who Declared Abraham righteous – because He believed

C) James writes from the perspective of men – as we see Abraham's faith DEMONSTRATED by his willingness to Sacrifice Isaac on the Altar.

3 differences between Paul and James :

[1] **Their Emphasis is different** – Paul deals w/the Root of salvation, James deals w/the Fruit of salvation.

[2] **Their Perspective is different** - Paul looks at life through God's perspective, James looks at life through man's perspective.

[3] **Their Terms are different** – When Paul talks of justification he means “the act of God at salvation whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous while still in a sinning state.” –

James uses it to mean **“validate or evidence”**. We justify or prove our faith...by our works.

C) There is a perfect relationship between faith and works.

1) As someone has expressed it, “Abraham was not saved by faith plus works, but by a faith that works.”

Think about this: Abraham putting the Promise on the Altar – His identity.

A) He was known – Who are you – That guy that left Ur – believes that God is leading him to a promise land – Build a nation

B) How many kids? Sons ? – None! – Crazy dude

C) Suddenly He has Isaac and Story is Validated

1) This is my Boy – Promised Child

Now God says Sacrifice THE PROMISE – what?

A) WHEN Abraham took Isaac up the Hill his whole identity was being put on the Altar.

B) He would go down in History **as the dude who gave up everything** because he believed he got a promise from God.

C) Psycho Dad – He killed the Promise! **20/20 report**

But Abraham – Took his son up that Hill – intention of Sacrificing him.

A) The Writer of Hebrews lets us in on this little secret – Heb. 11:17 – talking about the faith of Abraham

B) Abraham did that Because He believed that even if God had him follow through

1) That God would raise his son from the dead!

C) Abraham was willing to put what represented his identity on the Altar –

1) Because he was confident in the Identity of God!

D) This is a word for some of you – Why I am always encouraging you to get your eyes off of You.

1) Off the Horizontal – off the Situations – **GET VERTICAL**

E) See His Identity – His Love for you! His Faithfulness

1) His Reputation that is on the Line

God is calling some of you today – to Finally put your identity on the Altar – Trust in His

A) **Pool analogy- Dad's threw you in ?**

B) **My Dad Stood there – I did the same with my kids – TRUST ME – I GOT YOU.**

1) WET – YES Go under – Yes – Cold – Yes

C) But I learned to swim – My kids learned to swim

1) Pretty soon – I am 10 feet from the side – they are running and Jumping

D) Confident I would catch them.

God stands on the side of the Pool – I love you look at all I've done for you.

A) Baby – I didn't drown you in the tub did I?

B) Not going to do it now- all these people.

C) Arms are stretched out – Says Jump

1) Question – Calvary – Arms were stretched out

He says Jump – Wet ? Yes – Go under ? Yes ?

A) Water cold at First- Yes ? – So refreshing

B) And you are going to learn to swim.

C) **Refreshed – Faith Grows** – We come to experience everything He has for us!

D) Jump in the pool today – Stop playing it safe

1) Faith Works – TRUST HIM – **Identity Altar**

Now you might be here today thinking – I have been a pretty messed up person – Big Sinner!

A) I don't know if God could love me.

B) James 2nd illustration – Answers that – not just Abraham – Rahab

justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Rahab, one of my favorite biblical characters, is a prostitute in Jericho.

A) No little girl dreams of being a prostitute when they grow up.

B) You become a prostitute because very wicked, evil, demonic, deplorable things happen to you.

C) **You are used and abused, treated like a commodity,**

1) treated like a soulless recreational vehicle.

D) **Normal Women** in that culture were treated less than a second-class citizens.

1) How would a prostitute be treated?

E) **Rahab had a ROUGH LIFE!**

She has heard ABOUT the GOD OF ISRAEL

A) Victory over the Egyptians / Amalekites

B) She believed

C) Spies show up – Opportunity for her faith to be Demonstrated

1) Hides them

2) Scarlet thread

Rahab responded with her mind and her emotions; but she also responded with her will: *she did something about it.*

A) She risked her own life to protect the Jewish spies,

B) and she further risked her life by sharing the good news of deliverance with the members of her family.

C) God Rewards her: She is saved – brought in – and ends up in the Line of Jesus

Real Faith/Works

- Not a List but a Life.
- Not Legalism but Love
- Not Rules/ Response

²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also