

JAMES 2:14-20
FAITH IS PROVED BY WORKS!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to James chapter 2 as we continue our study through this letter that James wrote to Jewish Christians who had to flee Jerusalem because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

And James wants them to grow up, to mature in the faith. Which tells me that they were immature, that they needed the encouragement to forge ahead. And, maybe it was the persecution that they were facing for their faith that held them back. And thus, James wants them to understand that God is in control and He will see them through all these things. Thus, “... count it all joy when you fall into various trials.” James 1:2.

And all of James chapter 1 focuses on *THE BELIEVER AND SUFFERING*, as we have seen in our study so far.

And last week, as we began looking at James chapter 2, we saw the focus change and James is speaking on *THE BELIEVER AND SERVICE*. In other words, how we are to live out our faith or faith in action you might say!

In our last study we looked at how our *FAITH IS PROVEN BY LOVE!* And what we saw was that we are to live out our faith in such a way that it draws people to Jesus and it doesn't push them away from Jesus! Less of me and more of Him, more of Jesus in my life so that people can see Him through my life.

And think about it. If you have come to saving faith in Jesus, then the nature of Jesus should flow from your life. And we know that God's love for us is unconditional, the Greek word that is used is *AGAPE!*

Thus, that same love should flow from our lives and touch the lives of others. If there is not that love, then something is wrong in your walk with the Lord. If you are prejudice, if you put another person down for the way they look, the way they dress, the color of their hair, the money they make or don't make, their occupation or whatever, is the love of Christ seen in your life? No, it is not!

This morning, as we continue on in James chapter 2, we will be looking at *FAITH IS PROVEN BY WORKS!* Now this is a hot topic today and many, as they read James come to the conclusion that we are saved by faith and works.

Even Martin Luther struggled with this and that is one of the reasons he believed that James was not part of the Holy Scriptures, the Bible! He believed that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and so do I.

But, please understand that James is not contradicting what Paul is saying about our faith, as we saw in our first study of James. If you are confused at all by that, then go back and read the notes or listen to the study on-line from our web page.

Remember what I have taught you over the years. If something that you are reading in the Bible seems to contradict what other parts of the Bible are saying you are misunderstanding what is being said. And, as you will see this morning, what James is saying is very clear. Our faith is seen in what we do, the good works that we manifest in our lives, the fruit that is produced in our lives. Not for salvation, but to identify us as Christians.

Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

An old boatman painted the word “faith” on one oar of his boat and “works” on the other. He was asked his reason for this. In answer, he slipped the oar with “faith” into the water and rowed. The boat, of course, made a very tight circle.

Returning to the dock, the boatman then said, “Now, let’s try ‘works’ without ‘faith’ and see what happens. The oar marked “works” was put in place and the boatman began rowing with just the “works” oar. Again the boat went into a tight circle but in the opposite direction.

When the boatman again returned to the wharf, he interpreted his experiment in these strong and convincing words, “You see, to make a passage across the lake, one needs both oars working simultaneously in order to keep the boat in a straight and narrow way. If one does not have the use of both oars, he makes no progress either across the lake nor as a Christian.

- Source unknown

How true that is, and we will see that this morning in our study.

I have broken these verses down here in James into five points. They are as follows:

DOES FAITH ALONE SAVE US – JAMES 2:14

EXAMPLE OF EMPTY FAITH – JAMES 2:15-16

DEAD FAITH/LIVING FAITH – JAMES 2:17-18

DEMONIC FAITH – JAMES 2:19

CONCLUSION – 2:20

With that said, let’s begin our study in James chapter 2, starting in verse 14 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic, ***FAITH IS PROVEN BY WORKS!***

JAMES 2 **VERSE 14**

The first point is, ***DOES FAITH ALONE SAVE US?*** And as you read this verse it seems like James is saying that it does not. That it is faith plus works that save us!

Please understand that this is a rhetorical question by James in the Greek and the answer is negative. That is where some get confused. That would mean that James is saying we are saved by faith and by works. Not exactly!

Remember, if something seems to contradict what the Scriptures teach, as I have said, then we need to look closer at what this verse is saying. And we know for a fact that faith or grace and works do not mix.

You cannot mix the Old Covenant and the New Covenant together. The New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant completely. And the reason being is that the Old Covenant could never save you, the Law could never save you.

All the Law could do, and it still does, is show you how far short from perfection you are. It is a mirror reflecting where you stand before God in your own righteousness, which is like filthy rags!

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 2:20-21, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**

First of all, let’s deal with verse 21 of Galatians chapter 2. Paul’s point is simple. It is all the grace of God because if righteousness comes through the Law, even part of it, then what is the point of Christ dying for me sins? It is useless because I can accomplish this righteousness on my own. It is what I have done and not what Christ has done. And Paul is saying that in no way are we saved by our goodness, our righteousness, obeying the Law.

I think we are all in agreement on that. Now let me add this and look again at verse 20 of Galatians chapter 2 where Paul said, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

In other words, I am saved by grace and because of what God has done, He is living in me now, my life will reflect that new nature that I have. My life will reflect the new man that I have become.

Not that I am perfect, but there is a change in me. You see, I am saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone by that faith that I have I live! That is exactly what James is saying here!

Again, James is not saying that faith plus works equals salvation. Not at all! But he is saying that a faith that works is the evidence of our salvation.

Let me paraphrase what James is saying and I think you will see what I mean. ***“If you claim to be a Christian, (‘has faith’)” and yet you have no works in your life (the fruit or evidence of a changed life, the new life in Christ) to back it up, is that the kind of faith that can save you?”*** And, of course, the answer is ***NO!***

Do you see how clear that is? I hope so.

How can you say that you have faith, that you are saved if you continue doing all the things you did before you were saved? You can't and that is the point that James is making here. Now we can't know a person's heart and yes, some wheat look like tares and some tares look like wheat or some saved look like they are not saved and some who are not saved look like they are saved.

All we can do is look at the fruit, the things that they are doing, and we can come to some conclusions based on that.

Keep in mind that James is writing to Jewish believers who were immature in their faith and he wanted them to grow. And James not only wrote this letter early on in church history, but he was writing to Jews who were struggling with this idea of faith or grace and not of works or the Law! And James is explaining that true faith will have good works, not for salvation but to identify the person with Christ, who is living in them!

You see, what flows from your life will show who is on the throne of your heart and it is important for us to examine our lives and then do those things that the Lord is calling us to do.

In Paul's letters, they were written latter than this one. And Paul's focus is the work of Christ in relation to faith. And Paul was writing to Gentiles and thus, this idea of the Law was not a concern for them, they understood that they were saved by grace alone!

Thus, James is speaking of a person who is all talk and no walk – their actions show they are not saved.

And the way this is structured in the Greek, a negative response is anticipated, like I have said! In other words, ***“No, if they don't have works, if their life is not manifesting the nature of Christ, they are not saved!”***

Think of it like this. If I told you there was a bomb in this building that was to go off in just two minutes and I said that I was 100% sure of this happening but then I just continued talking, saying, “And in conclusion,” which means who knows how much longer I am going to go. But the point being I am not running out of the building, then my faith is empty, it is not real because my actions reflect that.

Faith alone saves but a saving faith is never alone, it is reflected or manifested in our actions, the things we do!

Again, this is so important because many are becoming confused by this. And we talked about this before in our studies of James, but I think it is important to drive this point home again.

Yes, Paul said in 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 of works, lest anyone should boast.”**

That is how we are saved, by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through Works. Again, I think we are all in agreement on that.

But then, remember, that saving faith is worked out in our lives, in the things that we do as Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 2:10, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

Also, notice what Paul says in Titus 3:8, **“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”**

May our faith in Christ be manifested in our outward actions as we minister to people, as we show them the love of Christ! That we are **“careful to maintain good works.”**

In I Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul made this point, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”**

That was the lifestyle of these believers before they were saved. Not pretty, but it was just the way they lived, and they stood guilty before God.

But then, in I Corinthians 6:11 Paul said, **“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”**

Did you hear that? **“such were some of you.”** You no longer practice those things. Why? Because you were washed in the blood of Christ and your sins were forgiven. You were sanctified and that is the finished product because that is a work in progress for us. And our sins were forgiven. Thus, we live accordingly.

Then Paul speaks of how we are to live out our faith as he tells us in I Corinthians 6:12-20, **“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For ‘the two,’ He says, ‘shall become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”**

God has called us to be holy people and thus we need to live accordingly. Now some of you may not agree with me on this, not sure why if Christ is in you, but maybe you don't. Our bodies, our lives were purchased by Christ when He died for our sins and when we asked Him to

be Lord and Savior of our lives. Therefore, we need to live for Him! Our body and spirit are His and thus, if He is Lord and Savior of our lives, why are we not living in holiness?

Paul also made this point in I Thessalonians 4:1-8 as he wrote, **“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”**

Did you get that? Paul said, **“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.”** That is what God desires of our lives. And if you reject this walk, if you live in sin, then you are rejecting what God has said and the big question is, are you really saved because your walk does not line up with your talk!

The seventeenth-century English Preacher Thomas Brooks wrote the following words in regard to this issue. He wrote,

Christ hath freed you from all your enemies, from the curse of the law, the predominant damnatory power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell; but what is the end and design of Christ in doing these great and marvelous things for his people? It is not that we should throw off duties of righteousness and holiness, but that their hearts may be the more free and sweet in all holy duties and heavenly services. . . . Ah, souls! I know no such arguments to work you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services, like those that are drawn from the consideration of the great and glorious things that Christ hath done for you.

- Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices, Banner of Truth Trust, 1984, pp. 123-124

And Paul sums this up for us in Romans 6:1-4 where he wrote, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”**

Christians have said in regard to sin and continuing in it, ***“It is all covered by the blood!”*** Paul refutes that idea, not that all of our sin is covered by the blood of Christ, it is. But if that is your thinking, are you living for God or for yourself? Are you using that as an excuse to continue on sinning? What nature is flowing from your life, the nature of man or the new man in Christ?

So, the answer to the question, ***DOES FAITH ALONE SAVE US?*** Yes, it is Sola Fide or faith alone, but true faith, saving faith is never alone. So, I guess it is ***YES*** and ***NO***, and I think you understand the point that James is making. You see, the things we do and the things we say are the evidence of where we stand, either in Christ or apart from Him.

And that will lead us to the next point that Paul makes, ***EXAMPLE OF EMPTY FAITH!***

VERSES 15-16

Again, this is just an ***EXAMPLE OF EMPTY FAITH***, what empty faith looks like!

The picture that James is painting for us is as follows. There is this person who is **“destitute of daily food.”** They are starving to death and have no means to get any money or food. They are in real trouble here.

And you come by and say, **“Hi brother. I see you are in need. I will pray for you!”** And you go on your way. You have the means to help out and yet you do nothing. That is empty faith!

Now I am not saying that we are to help people that are using the system for their gain, that they can work, and they just refuse to. But those who are truly in need, we are to help out if we can.

And here’s the thing. If our faith is living, if it is real, then it will have life to it, it will be seen in the things we do for people.

And there is truly a balance, yes, we need to share the Gospel message with people but if they are hungry, cold it is hard for them to even think in that direction.

So, as we meet their physical needs, as they see we love them unconditionally, then a door is open to share Jesus with them.

Now, dead faith is just that, it does nothing. James says that this person may use some spiritual jargon to make themselves look good, but it is a dead faith, there is no life to it, just words!

Clarke put it like this, “Your pretending to have faith, while you have no works of charity or mercy, is utterly vain: for as *faith*, which is a principle in the mind, cannot be discerned but by the *effects*, that is, *good works*; he who has no good works has, presumptively, no faith.”

If this is the way we live out our faith, seeing the needs of people and not helping them, something is radically wrong. And I am not just talking about helping them out financially but with our time, with our love!

One commentary had this to say regarding someone who talked how wonderful he was, but his life did not manifest that love towards anyone but himself. He wrote,

The inconsistency between what one claims to be and what one actually is, is typical of those outside of Christ. Historian Paul Johnson says Rousseau was the first intellectual to repeatedly proclaim himself the friend of all mankind. Rousseau said he was a man born to love and in fact taught the doctrine of love more persistently than most preachers. He once said of himself, whoever “examines with his own eyes my nature, my character, morals, inclinations, pleasures, habits, and can believe me to be a dishonest man, is himself a man who deserves to be strangled.” [I just feel that love!]

But how did Rousseau actually relate to humanity? His father meant nothing to him but an inheritance. His only concern for his long-lost brother was to certify him dead so he could get the family money. All five of his children were unnamed and were placed immediately after birth in the Hospital des Enfants-trouvés where two-thirds of all babies died the first year and only fourteen out of every hundred lived to the age of seven. It is believed that none survived. Rousseau, the self-proclaimed lover of mankind, did not even record the dates of their births!

Rousseau’s conduct, horrifying as it is, is at least comprehensible in terms of his antagonism to Christianity and cosmic egoism [vanity]. But similar conduct in the church, such as the pious disregard for the poor brother James describes, gives the lie to any claims to real faith. The Apostle John affirms this in a different context saying, “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has not pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and truth.” (1 John 3:17, 18).

True faith requires compassion and action. . . .

If we tend to talk about our faith in Christ and the truth of his Word, but do nothing, or very little, we may be in spiritual trouble. If we refuse to get our hands dirty, or if we are cheap and grudging with other people, we must take inventory of our souls. . . .

- R. Kent Hughes, James – Faith That Works, pp. 109, 110

And Martin Luther put it like this,

Insist on it - inwardly, in the spirit, before God, man is justified by faith alone, without works; but outwardly and publicly, before the people and himself, he is justified through his works. That is, he thereby becomes known and certain himself that he honestly believes.

Call the one a public justification, the other an inward justification, in this sense that the public justification is a fruit, a result, a proof of the justification in the heart. Accordingly, man is not justified by it before God, but must previously be justified before Him.

In the same way, the fruits of the tree proclaim the obvious goodness of the tree, which follows and proves its inner, natural goodness. This is what James means in his epistle when he says: “Faith without works is dead.”

The fact that works do not follow is a certain sign that there is not faith, but only a dead thought and dream, which people falsely call faith.

- Martin Luther

And so, we see James give to us an **EXAMPLE OF EMPTY FAITH!**

Next, he speaks of **DEAD FAITH/LIVING FAITH!** Let’s read on and see what James has to say to us.

VERSES 17-18

As you can see, James gives to us both sides of the spectrum you might say as he shows us what **DEAD FAITH/LIVING FAITH** are all about!

And what I see James doing here is that he is anticipating what some might say. It may go something like this, “**Hey, wait a minute. I have the gift of faith and you have the gift of works, so what is the problem with that?**”

Simply, it is not Scriptural and that is exactly what James is saying.

You can’t have faith without works!

Again, how can that be? Simply, a living faith is a real faith. If we really believe something we will follow through and act upon it. If we really put our faith in Jesus then we will do those things that Jesus is showing us, like caring for those in need and-so-on.

Poole put it like this, “He doth not say, faith is dead without works, lest it should be thought that works were the cause of the life of faith; but **faith without works is dead**; implying, that works are the effects and signs of the life of faith.” Absolutely!

Think about it like this. Imagine I have two pots up here with dirt in them and in one of the pots I planted some seeds. The other pot just has dirt in it. Would you be able to tell me which one has seeds in them right after I put the seeds in one of them?

Not at first, they both look identical. All you can see is the pot and the dirt.

But what happens over time?

The seeds begin to grow and sprout, there is life in them.

And that is true of saving faith. Those seeds of faith are in us and they will grow, they will produce fruit and those around us will be the beneficiaries of that fruit.

Now, what are some of the marks of saving faith? Let me give you a few.

It is faith that looks not to self, but to Jesus Christ.

It is faith that agrees with God's word, both inwardly and with words.

It is faith grounded in what Jesus did on the cross and by the empty tomb.

It is faith that will *naturally* be expressed in repentance and good works.

It is faith that may sometimes doubt; yet the doubts are not *bigger* than the faith nor are they *more permanent* than the faith. This faith can say, "Lord I believe; help my unbelief."

It is faith that wants others to come to the same faith.

It is faith that says *more* than "Lord, Lord" as in Matthew 7:21-23.

It is faith that not only *hears* the word of God but *does* it, as in Matthew 7:24-27.

Now, what does dead faith look like? Just that, it is dead. It does nothing. There is no fruit. There is no change in a person's life. It is just like a corpse, lying there and doing nothing. I don't know if you heard about this true story, but it is like some today, as you will see. We are told,

Harry Truman enjoyed telling about the man who was hit on the head at work. The blow was so severe he was knocked unconscious for an extended period of time.

His family, convinced he was dead, called the funeral home and asked the local undertaker to pick him up at the hospital, which he did.

Early the following morning this dear man suddenly awoke and sat straight up in the casket.

Confused, he blinked several times and looked around, trying to put the whole thing together. He thought, "*If I'm alive, what in the world am I doing in this soft, satin-filled box? And if I'm dead, why do I have to go to the bathroom?*"

- Source Unknown

And here is the danger of that empty faith or dead faith. We just don't care.

Dead faith is just that, it is dead! Living faith is just that, it is living. There is the evidence for what we believe.

Now, some may argue, "*I have faith. I believe that Jesus is Almighty God! I am saved by my faith in Jesus!*"

As true as that is, if the evidence for your faith is not there, you are deceiving yourself! That is what James said in James 1:22, "**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**"

You can have all the right information but if there is no transformation, if your life has not changed since you were saved, or I should say that point you said you were saved, I doubt if you were really saved!

Thus, that is what ***DEAD FAITH/LIVING FAITH*** are all about!

Now, just because you believe, does not mean you are saved! And I will show you what I mean as we look at the next point, ***DEMONIC FAITH!***

VERSE 19

James does not pull any punches here. He lays it all out for them to clearly see and he shows them that there are those who believe who are not saved. And James does this by showing them this ***DEMONIC FAITH!***

This is a masterful point that James is making here. He is saying that the demons believe that Jesus is Almighty God and yet they are not saved. That is a powerful point for them to think about. True faith is not passive, it is active.

Let me explain it like this. There is this misconception regarding faith. And it is seen in these demonic beings, these fallen angels.

They have a faith, but it is a dead faith. They believe everything about God and yet, their actions show that they are not saved. They are in the business of destroying lives and God is in the business of restoring lives!

Again, passive faith does not save anyone, just look at the demons!

How does that apply to us today? Think about it. There are many, many people who have grown up in church and they believe the facts about Jesus; his virgin birth, his death on the cross of Calvary for their sins, that He is God, and-so-on. And yet, they are not saved. Head knowledge does not save you. It must sink deep down into your heart and become part of your life. You must live what you say you believe or your faith is empty!

Remember the story of Jesus as He encountered the demon possessed man in the area of the Gadarenes in Mark chapter 5.

When Jesus came upon this man we are told in Mark 5:6-7, **“When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’”**

You see, these demons are fallen angels who sided with Lucifer when he rebelled against God. And Satan took one-third of the angels with him in his rebellion.

Thus, they know who God is, and they know their final destiny, but they are not saved. You see, their faith is empty because they have no works, there is nothing to show that their faith is real! You can't see faith without works is the point that James is making here!

But there is a difference between demons and humans. The demons understand that they are going to face the judgment of God. They understand that their time is short. It does not cause them to change, but they do understand these things.

On the other hand, how many people today believe that they will be judged by God when they die apart from Christ? I don't think that number is too high. In fact, if you were to ask people when they die will they go to heaven, I think most people will say they will go to heaven. And the reason they will go to heaven, they believe, is that they were good in this life.

In a Los Angeles Times news article, by K. Connie Kang called, “Most believe in heaven and think they'll go there”, an article from October 25, 2003, said,

An overwhelming majority of Americans continue to believe there is life after death and that heaven and hell exist, according to a new study. What's more, most think they are heaven-bound.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans in the national survey said that they believe they will go to heaven. Only one half of 1 percent said they were hell-bound, according to the poll by the Oxnard, Calif.-based Barna Research Group . . .

“We're optimists at heart,” theologian Robert Johnston, professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., said, commenting on the survey's results. “If you really believe in hell, you wouldn't want to be there. By definition, hell is the denial of goodness.” The survey, released this week, found that 76 percent of Americans believe in heaven and 71 percent in hell - same as a decade ago.

Among those who believe in heaven, nearly half (46 percent) described it as a “state of eternal existence in God’s presence” and almost a third (30 percent) said heaven is “an actual place of rest and reward where souls go after death.” One in eight said heaven is just “symbolic” (14 percent), 5 percent said there is no afterlife and 5 percent weren’t sure.

Researchers found two popular perspectives of hell.

Four out of 10 (39 percent) believe that hell is “a state of eternal separation from God’s presence” and one-third (32 percent) “an actual place of torment and suffering where people’s souls go after death.” One in 8 believe that hell is just a symbol of an “unknown bad outcome after death” (13 percent). . . .

Millions of Americans mix secular and various religious views to create their personal belief systems, said David Kinnaman, vice president of Barna Research Group. “Americans don’t mind embracing contradictions,” he said. “It’s hyper-individualism. They’re cutting and pasting religious views from a variety of different sources - television, movies, conversations with their friends. Rather than simply embrace one particular viewpoint, and then trying to follow all the specific precepts or teachings of that particular viewpoint, what Americans are saying is, ‘Listen, I can probably put together a philosophy of life for myself that is just as accurate, just as helpful as any particular faith might provide.’ “

Pollster George Barna, a former Protestant minister who founded the research group, noted that one out of 10 people who describe themselves as born-again Christians — those who believe entry into heaven is solely based on confession of sins and faith in Jesus Christ — also believe that people are reincarnated in another form after death, which violates Christian tenets. Nearly one in three claim it is possible to communicate with the dead, and half believe that a person can earn salvation based upon good deeds even without accepting Christ as the way to eternal life.

Many who describe themselves as either atheistic or agnostic also harbor contradictions in their thinking, he said. He said half of all the atheists and agnostics in the survey said every person has a soul, that heaven and hell exist and that there is life after death. One in eight atheists and agnostics even believe that accepting Jesus Christ as savior probably makes life after death possible.

- <https://goo.gl/uYX3tR>

At least the demons believe the truth, but American’s are all over the place and we see that their faith is dead! You see, the Bible tells us that there are none who are good, not even one! So, your goodness will not get you in, you are not good enough!

So, I guess you can have this **DEMONIC FAITH** where you know the truths of God and yet, you live like the Devil, your lives are not changed! **YOU ARE NOT SAVED!**

Now let’s move to the **CONCLUSION** in James 2:20.

VERSE 20

That is the **CONCLUSION** in a nutshell – **“But do you want to know O foolish man, that faith without works is dead”!** It is not a question, it is a fact! And I guess the question really is, **“Are you ready to accept that truth?”** That really is the question James is asking them!

You know you’re truly born again when you find yourself obeying God. We’re not saved by obedience. But our obedience proves we’re saved, for true faith works.

And, as we have seen and will continue to see, James is showing us, telling us to walk worthy of that high calling by which we have been called. To live out our faith.

Thus, when trials come your way don't let them make you bitter but let them make you a better Christian. Count it all joy as the Lord is working in you to make you perfect, to make you mature, to complete the work He is doing in you.

If you lack wisdom in what to say, what to do, how to behave in various trials, ask God for that wisdom and He will give it to you liberally and without reproach!

Understand that Satan is tempting you to sin, not God and thus, learn from the testing God is doing in your life so that you can grow and don't be tempted by the Devil to sin!

He calls us to be slow to speak and swift to hear that we may not lash out in wrath towards others.

James is calling for us to be doers of the Word of God and not just hearers, sitting there and listening and not applying these things to your life!

Let the Word of God show you who you are and then let the Word of God transform your life by the Spirit of God!

Love people and don't discriminate because someone is rich, or powerful or this or that. Treat people the same.

And, as we have seen this morning, true faith will be worked out in our lives by the things that we do and the things that we say. They will be done in accordance with God and not apart from Him!

We will see James inform us how wicked the tongue can be. With it we bless God and curse man who was created in the image of God.

Don't let bitterness, envy, self-seeking control your lives. Seek the wisdom from God and live accordingly!

James wants us to live humble lives.

He wants us to depend not on ourselves but on God!

And no matter what, our faith needs to endure until the end because we are awaiting the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And there is much more I can share, but we will get to them as we go through this wonderful letter that James wrote.

The point that James is making, the *CONCLUSION* that he is bringing us to is simple, and I will say it again, "**But do you want to know O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?**"

And here's the thing. Spurgeon summed it up for us like this as he wrote,

You will never find true faith unattended by true godliness; nor will you ever discover a truly holy life which does not have at its root a living faith based upon the righteousness of Christ. Woe to those who seek one without the other! There are some who cultivate faith and forget holiness. These may be very high in orthodoxy, but they shall be very deep in condemnation, for they hold the truth in unrighteousness. There are others who have strained after holiness of life, but have denied the faith, like the Pharisees whom the Master said were 'whitewashed sepulchers.'

We must have faith, for this is the foundation; we must have holiness of life, for this is the superstructure. We need the superstructure of spiritual life if we would have comfort in the day of doubt. But do not seek a holy life without faith, for that would be to erect a house which can afford no permanent shelter, because it is not founded on a rock.

- Charles Spurgeon

So, as we have seen this morning, the answer to the question, ***DOES FAITH ALONE SAVE US?*** Yes, it is Sola Fide or faith alone, but true faith, saving faith is never alone. The things we do and the things we say are the evidence of where we stand, either in Christ or apart from Him. You see, saving faith is never alone!

Then we looked at the ***EXAMPLE OF EMPTY FAITH!*** If our faith is living, if it is real, then it will have life to it, it will be seen in the things we do for people.

Then we looked at ***DEAD FAITH/LIVING FAITH!*** And we saw that dead faith is just that, it is dead! They do nothing, there is no transformation in their life, the old man is manifested in the person's life and all the immoral activity that goes with it!

And living faith is just that, it is living. There is the evidence for what we believe. We are helping people. We are living what we say we believe. We are being transformed into the image of Christ, His nature is flowing from our lives!

Then James speaks of ***DEMONIC FAITH!*** This is a masterful point that James is making here. He is saying that the demons believe that Jesus is Almighty God and yet they are not saved. That is a powerful point for them to think about. True faith is not passive, it is active.

Thus, it is more than having the right information, which is needed. They need to live what they say they believe, as I have said many times this morning.

Then James gives to us his ***CONCLUSION*** on this matter and it is powerful. He said, **"But do you want to know O foolish man, that faith without works is dead"**! It is not a question, it is a fact! And I guess the question really is, ***"Are you ready to accept that truth?"***

You know you're truly born again when you find yourself obeying God. We're not saved by obedience. But our obedience proves we're saved, for true faith works.

And, as we will see next time, James is going to show us the faith of father Abraham and of Rahab, that their faith was seen in their actions. Not that their works saved them, but it was the evidence for their faith! And we will look at that next time.