

DEEPER BIBLE STUDY

LESSON NOTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 24 | DEAD FAITH VS LIVING FAITH (JAMES 2:14-26) | PASTOR ADAM AZIZ

THE DEMONSTRATION OF A LIVING FAITH IN LOVING ACTION

James 2:14 (NKJV)... What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

- It is impossible for someone to genuinely have saving faith without works.
- James is writing to Christians from a Jewish background that had discovered the glory of salvation by faith. They were thrilled to be free from works-based righteousness and began thinking that works didn't matter at all.
- James is not contradicting Apostle Paul when he said: *"Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done..."* (Ephesians 2:9, NLT) He is clarifying the kind of faith that saves.
 - Faith alone saves. But the faith that saves is not alone, it has good works with it.
 - Paul knew the necessity of works in proving the character of our faith...
 - *Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*
 - *Titus 3:8 (NKJV)... 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.*
 - Our faith response to His grace is good works.

AN EXAMPLE OF DEAD FAITH

James 2:15-17 (NKJV)... If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 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? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- Real faith and the works that accompany it, are not made up of only spiritual things, but also of a concern for the most basic needs of others...
 - **Adam Clarke** - *“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.”*

- This is the first time James speaks of a dead faith...
 - The mark of living faith...
 - looks to Jesus Christ, not self.
 - agrees with God’s word, both inwardly and with words.
 - does not try to impress God, but simply takes Him at His word.
 - grounded in what Jesus did on the cross and by the empty tomb.
 - naturally be expressed in repentance and good works.
 - 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.”
 - wants others to come to the same faith.
 - says more than “Lord, Lord”.
 - *Matthew 7:21-23 (NLT)... “Not everyone who calls out to Me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to Me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in Your name and cast out demons in Your name and performed many miracles in Your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from Me, you who break God’s laws.’*
 - not only hears the word of God but does it.
 - *Matthew 7:24-27 (NLT): “Anyone who listens to My teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. 26 But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. 27 When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”*
 - We must be like Paul, and have a faith that presses on: *Philippians 3:12-14 (NLT)... I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on*

to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

A LIVING FAITH CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM WORKS

James 2:18-19 (NKJV)... 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. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe— and tremble!

- James knew someone might try to say that some have the “gift” of works and others have the “gift” of faith, and he wasn’t going to let them get away with that kind of thinking.
- We can’t “see” someone’s faith, but we can see their works.
- James uses demons as an example someone who might believe but has no works.

ABRAHAM AS AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING FAITH

James 20-24 (NKJV)... But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 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. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

- James now uses the Old Testament to demonstrate what he has already said about the character of a living faith.
- Abraham was justified by faith long before he offered Isaac (**Genesis 15:6**). His obedience in offering Isaac demonstrated that he really did trust God.
- Faith and works cooperated perfectly together in Abraham. If he had never believed God, he could have never done the good work of obedience when he was asked to offer Isaac.

- When James says, “FAITH ONLY,” he is referring to a faith without works.
 - *2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)... anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

RAHAB AS AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING FAITH

James 2:25-26 (NKJV)... Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- **James used two examples of a living faith...**
 - Abraham (the father of the Jews)
 - Rahab (a Gentile and a prostitute)

- **Rahab demonstrated her trust in the God of Israel by hiding the spies and seeking salvation from their God (*Joshua 2:8-13*).**

- **The lesson from Abraham:** If we believe in God, we will do what He tells us to do.
- **The lesson from Rahab:** If we believe in God, we will help His people, even when it costs us something.

- **Just like a body without a spirit, so is faith without works.**