

James 2:14-26 (PART 5)
Notes

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” James 2:14-17 NIV

Does the book of James contradict the writings of Paul?

“For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from works” Romans 3:28 NIV

James isn't comparing salvation by faith plus works vs. salvation by faith alone. James is comparing dead faith vs. alive faith. We are saved by faith alone but not by faith that remains alone.

James' concern is that there are people in churches' who think they are saved because they have good doctrine or because they sound spiritual when they talk. He wants us to know that we don't have “saving faith” if our faith doesn't express itself through love for God and others. Abraham trusted God so much he was willing to do the unthinkable. That kind of faith is based on a long-term friendship with God. Rahab trusted God, even though she knew very little about Him. Though she lived a life that is considered sinful. Yet her faith is as an example for us of what faith over fear looks.

1) **CHILDREN OF THE KING HAVE _____ FAITH.**

“But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. James 2:18-19

Demons have a lot of faith. They have been in heaven and they have seen God's glory. They respect the power of God and they live in fear and anxiety of judgement. Demons have better doctrine than the people that surrounded Jesus while He walked the earth and they shudder in fear.

Many people live with a “shudder” type of faith. They live in fear of God's judgement or of losing God's love or approval. They try to alter their behavior to measure up to God. Their spiritual confidence is dependent on their own measure of what a spiritual life looks like. A life of expiation or living in emotional debt to God and others leads to a jaded spirituality- a loss of spiritual vitality. Dead faith is not saving faith. Children of the King have saving faith because faith has to do with trust for one's salvation on the cross of Jesus Christ.

2) **CHILDREN OF THE KING HAVE A _____ With GOD.**

“Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.” James 2:20-23

Abraham was God's friend. He had a life changing relationship with God that caused him to trust in God's faithfulness and goodness. He trusted God so much, he was willing to offer his only son on an

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altar. About sixty years earlier, God promised him that he would have a son and through that son, his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky (Genesis 15). So, Abraham must have thought that God would raise his son from the dead. How could he have that much faith? Something happened to Abraham during the fifty or sixty years after he was first declared righteous by his faith. Abraham developed a personal relationship with God. Abraham's faith grew in light of the goodness and faithfulness of God that he experienced those five or six decades.

Brene' Brown in her book *Dare to Lead* uses an illustration called the "Trust Jar". We all have a trust jar for each person we know. And through time, people are removing marbles or adding marbles to our trust jar. I think this illustration holds weight in how we relate to God as well. While God is worthy of all of our trust, it is up to us to fill that trust jar so that our faith in God increases.

Here is some ways we inadvertently empty our "Faith Trust Jars":

- a) Too much media.
- b) Too much complaining.
- c) Considering yourself a victim (i.e. Why does this always happen to me? God has abandoned me)
- d) "Hanging around" people who are negative or have a cynical view of life.

Here are some ways to add marbles to your "Faith Trust Jar".

- a) Renew your mind in the scriptures (Romans 12).
- b) Remember and dwell on how God has been faithful to you in the past.
- c) Be thankful.
- d) "Hang out" with others who testify to the goodness of God.

As our faith and trust in God grows, we never live our lives in fear or a "s". We learn to look at the cross and see the loveliness of God.

3) CHILDREN OF THE KING ARE A _____ TO OTHER PEOPLE.

"You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead." James 2:24-26

NIV

Did you see that coming? James wanted to use two people as examples of what "alive faith" or "saving faith" looks like. So, of course Abraham makes the list, but the prostitute Rahab? She didn't know the greatest commandment. She didn't know the "Golden Rule". She did not know one commandment. What did she know? She knew that God was The God of the universe (Josh. 2:11). So, what did she do? With faith and courage, she hid the spies? She lied to the King of Jericho. She sent the spies a different way. Though others may have looked on her with shame and contempt, she put her faith in a God who declares her RIGHTEOUS because of her faith and courage. How much are we like Rahab?

"I glory in the cross of Christ: the world is crucified to me and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14-15)

When the world is crucified to us and we no longer find meaning, glory, comfort or approval in worldly things, our faith is like Rahab's. When our hope for true life is in Christ, then He is our life- our love. When that happens, a miracle occurs inside of us. God changes us from the inside out. We are the most generous people on earth because we know that we were poor spiritually and God made us rich in Christ. Our faith is alive and vital. Our faith is proven in the presence of the poor and needy. Our faith can't help but come out of us when we have opportunities to be kind and generous.

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“The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” Gal. 5:6 NIV

CONCLUSION:

We are not true children of God when we have sound doctrine or add works to our faith. We are true children of God when we have a relationship with God that actively glories in the cross of Christ. While the world around us tries to empty our “Faith Trust Jars” through a belief system void of hope, we choose to have a relationship with God that gives Him glory by adding “marbles” to our “Faith Trust Jars.”

You see, the work has already been done at the cross.

When Jesus was asked what work must we do? Jesus answered by saying that the the work we must do is to believe in the One whom He sent (John 6:28-29). Our salvation- our hope, is not in our works but in our Savior Jesus Christ (Hebrews 11:1). It is His work on the cross that saves us. His perfect obedience is credited to us. His love for others is credited to us. Do you trust in that? Do you see how loving He is? Do you see how much He loves you? Does that not fill your “Faith Trust Jar” to the rim?

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19We love because he first loved us.”

1 John 4:15-19

Fill in the blank answers:

- 1) Saving
- 2) Relationship
- 3) Blessing