

James | Faith and Works (James 2.14-26)

Outline

Introduction

Main Idea: As believers in Christ we are called into a saving faith that produces good works and has a future hope.

Table of Contents

- Dead Faith (vv. 14-17)
- Deceiving Faith (vv. 18-19)
- Authentic Faith (vv. 20-24)

1. Dead Faith (vv. 14-17)

- God saves us by grace but has work for us to do (Eph 2.8-9)
- Real faith does not consist of mere words, but action as well
- We need to get out of our comfort zones
- The Christian life should produce fruit (John 15:1-6)

2. Deceived Faith (vv. 18-19)

- Knowing what is true isn't enough
- True faith consists of trust and leads to obedience

3. Authentic Faith (vv. 20-26)

- Abraham and Rahabs actions proved (completed) their faith
- He isn't saying that our works save us. They are using the word "justification" differently. Paul is pointing to the moment we are saved (justification). James is talking about us proving our salvation (sanctification).

Conclusion

- If there is no evidence of a new life, then there was no genuine, saving faith and there is no future hope.
- We must evaluate our faith to see if it is true (2 Cor 13:5)
- We must persevere in faith and keep growing and abiding in him that he might bear fruit in us.

Discussion Questions

1. James begins by pointing out that saving faith is a living faith that does good works.
 - a. Where have you seen Jesus producing fruit (i.e. good works) in your life lately?
 - b. Where is fruit lacking?
 - c. How are you tempted to substitute words for action?
 - d. In what ways can you be more faithful to live in a manner that is more consistent with the faith that you profess to have in Jesus?

2. Using the demons as an example, James also points out that knowing facts about God isn't good enough. That kind of belief cannot save us.
 - a. What's the difference between the belief that the demons have and the faith that a true believer has?
 - b. Can you think of ways that we confuse false faith for true faith in the way we practice our faith?
 - c. How can you identify when or how you are substituting knowledge *about* God (factual knowledge) for knowledge *of* God (personal knowledge)?

3. James points to both Abraham and Rahab as examples of saving faith because their trust in God lead them to be willing to sacrifice what they held most dear for what God was calling them to do.
 - a. What have been the defining moments in your life where your faith was tested?
 - b. How are you being tested right now and how is it challenging you to grow and step out in faith?

4. The challenge of walking in authentic faith is a great example of why we need to be in community.
 - a. Who has been the most obvious example of true faith in your life? How has God used them to teach you about what it looks like to really trust Him?
 - b. How can we better help one another have an accurate view of our own spiritual condition and to grow in our faith?
 - c. Who in your life can you encourage that you might allow God to use you to strengthen their faith?
 - d. What does it look like to do this regularly?