

## Faith That Works

### Introduction and Review

- We have already addressed the sin of partiality – making a judgment about someone based on external appearance (v. 1-4).
- We learned that partiality is sin because it violates God’s law of love on the basis of outward appearance (v. 5-11).
- We also learned that we can overcome partiality with the 2<sup>nd</sup> great commandment from Jesus – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 8).
- And finally we learned believers who showed love & mercy to others will have victory at the great Day of Judgment (v. 12-13).
- Today we will see how James exhorts us to apply what we have learned and be “doers of the word”.

### I. Two Kinds of Faith (v. 14)

#### A. Faith that does not save

*One kind of faith is distinguished by words only – religious, impressive, deceptive words, empty promises, etc. The bible repeatedly warns & shows the danger of this kind of faith or lifestyle (Mt. 6:7; 7:21-23; Lk. 6:46; 2Pe. 2:17-20). “What good is it” means what profit or gain comes from this kind of faith = NONE (rhetorical). “Can that faith save him?” = NO (rhetorical). This kind of faith does not save now or at the final judgment (v. 13).*

#### B. Faith that saves

*The other kind of faith is distinguished by actions that are consistent with words – this is biblical faith (Heb. 11:1). Biblical faith is based on God’s truth – convictions, words & actions (Rom. 10:9-10, 17; Eph. 2:8-9).*

### II. Proof of Biblical Faith (v. 15-26)

#### A. Faith proves love for your neighbor (v. 15-17)

*James describes a situation where a desperately poor Christian comes to another Christian for help – food & clothing. Rather than providing tangible needs, the poor Christian is given religious words of blessing or prayer – still hungry & poorly clothed [empty, useless words]. The*

*refusal to meet the needs of the poor reveals the quality of a person’s faith & love – dead (v. 14, 17; Mt. 25:42-43; 1Jn. 3:17; 4:20). This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> great commandment (Mt. 22:39).*

#### B. Faith proves love for God (v. 18-26)

*Three examples of faith are given: demons, Abraham & Rehab the prostitute. **Demons** (like false Christians) have good theology, but live in rebellious terror rather than obey God (v. 18-20). **Abraham** proved his faith in & love for God was genuine by offering his only son for sacrificial death (v. 21-24) – *sacrificed someone precious*. **Rahab** the prostitute proved her faith in & love for God by protecting God’s spies (v. 25-26) – *risked her life*. They both obeyed God’s command & will (Jn. 14:15). This is the 1<sup>st</sup> great commandment (Mt. 22:37).*

**ILL:** In sports, referees must reexamine a play to determine what actually happened. They are looking for specific details that they may have missed the first time the call was made.

**APPL:** Likewise in the Christian life, God requires us to reexamine certain details in our lives to see if we have reached the correct judgment about ourselves (1Co. 11:28a, 31-32; 2Co. 13:5). Some people are reluctant & even fearful of taking a medical exam or physical because they don’t want to know the truth about themselves. We must know the truth because only the truth will set us free. Be honest with what you see in your life today. This is a case where ACTIONS truly do speak louder than WORDS!

## CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brothers & sisters we have learned today that the life of genuine faith is determined by more than our words, commitments, promises and even prayers. We have learned that our words that are used to bless and comfort people & even our prayers can be useless if we do not follow through with godly actions. Our words & actions actually reveal our relationship with God & people. *Is your concern for people (particularly other Christians in need) serious enough for you to give tangible help? Are you personally willing to sacrifice the time & provisions to genuinely meet someone's needs that God has brought into your life? Are you willing to make any sacrifice that God requires of you without exception? Have you made genuine sacrifices for God when you did not know the outcome?* God actually tests us as He did with Abraham & Rehab to reveal where we are in our Christian journey & maturity. The tests reveal the contents of our hearts & not simply the words that come from our mouths. I sincerely hope that each Christian here today will take a serious look at your actions & responses under pressure to determine where you are spiritually!

*If you are not a Christian, your actions will reveal your spiritual condition for you today also. Your actions have been revealing that you are not a Christian perhaps for a long time. But my friend it's time to do something about it! And you know that you must believe in Christ for your heart to be radically changed...*

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