

A Living Faith (James 2:13-26)

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1. James continues a discussion which began in Chapter 1 about the necessity of being doers of the word and not mere hearers.
2. Last week, we considered the danger of holding the faith of God with partiality and not doing what God says completely
3. Here, He adds to that by pointing out that we cannot be right with God unless we have a perfect faith, described as a living faith.
4. **Js. 2:22** – by works faith was made perfect
 - Perfect – complete, wanting nothing necessary to completeness.
 - We are called to have a perfect faith by God
 - The opposite is a faith which is incomplete
5. Recall, James is writing to Christians. (This passage is typically used to refute the doctrine of salvation by faith only and is accompanied by a discussion of the necessity of baptism. This is not a misuse of the passage, but the focus of the text is on those already in Christ and is an admonishment to those who were not obeying God completely.)

Discussion:

I. DEAD FAITH (James 2:14-17)

- A. Makes a claim of an imperfect faith (**2:14**) // 2:8 of those claiming to fulfill the law but their actions didn't line up.
 - This is a faith merely in word and not in action
- B. An example to make the point (**2:15-16**)
 - A brother or sister in need (Mt. 25:31-46) and we say be warmed/filled
 - But we do nothing to help provide for those needs. (**1 Jn. 3:16-18** – love in deed not in word)
 - This is of the same profit as faith without works.
- C. This "faith" will NOT save us! It is dead (**2:14, 17, 20, 26**)
 1. Death always describes a separation
 2. Where faith and works are separated, faith is dead
 - Faith w/o works = dead
 - Works w/o faith = dead works
 3. Draws a // to physical death (:26) – when our soul separates from our body we are dead
- D. In order for our faith to be alive and thus pleasing to God, it must be accompanied by works – the works ordained by God (**Eph. 2:10**)

II. FAITH OF DEMONS (James 2:19-20)

- A. Faith lacking in works is no better than the faith which demons possess! –
- B. they believe in one God enough to tremble, yet they do not obey God, because they don't have a perfect faith (**Mt. 8:28-29; Mk. 3:11-12**)
 1. We must believe that He is AND also that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him – **Heb. 11:6**
 2. Example in **Jn. 12:42** – believed, but wouldn't confess

- C. Many attempt to separate faith and works, but our faith is shown by our works (2:18)
- D. A perfect faith does **ALL** God says! (2:10)
- E. Sometimes we think b/c we believe in the truth and are part of the one true church and know denominationalism is wrong, we are okay spiritually. We think because we were baptized into Christ and are a member at the right church, we don't have to worry about obeying every command of the Lord (we are on the fence, between the world and God, we are unfaithful to the assembling, we still have some sin we hold onto, we aren't diligent and devoted to the Lord as we know we should be...) --- IF so, we are no better than the demons, no better than those in denominations. God is not going to judge simply based on the fact we were a part of the right church, God will judge His people us according to the gospel (2:12) – if our faith is imperfect, or dead, we will not be found righteous before Him!!

III. PERFECT FAITH (LIVING FAITH) (James 2:21-26)

- A. James provides us with two examples of what a perfect or living faith looks like to make his point
- B. Abraham (:21-24)
 - 1. Justified (rendered just or innocent) by obeying God in offering Isaac (:21)
 - 2. His faith was made perfect by his works (:22)
 - 3. Genesis 22:1-19
 - a. From the start he believed God and immediately began keeping the command of God (**Gen. 22:1-5**)
 - b. He expressed his faith when questioned about the lamb (**Gen. 22:6-8**) (**Heb. 11:17-19**)
 - c. His faith was made perfect when he went through with all of God's commands and offered Isaac (**Gen. 22:9-19**)
 - d. This is the kind of faith we must have! (**Js. 2:23-24**)
- C. Rahab (:25)
 - 1. She too had faith in God (**Josh. 2:9-11**)
 - 2. Contrasted with those who did not believe (**Heb. 11:31**)

3. James doesn't mention her faith, but says she was justified by works (:25) – we know she had faith, but James is making the point that living/perfect faith is seen through works

Conclusion:

1. We are called not just to faith, but to perfect faith, faith which is made alive through works.
2. We can't pick and choose which commands to keep
3. Our faith needs to be complete; we need to take our faith seriously.
- 4.