

**191208-1 Ja 2, 14-26, Faith & Works Fellowlaborers -CThurman**

James chapter 2 concerns faith. First, the error of faith with respect of persons. (vss.1-13) The example James cited for this was the respect one might have for a rich man while on the other despising another because of his poverty. The warning is that *he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.* (v.13) We are to be merciful in judgment. I'd like to remind everyone that we must make judgments often. Some of those judgments are very difficult to make. Remember this: on one hand we should not render judgments without mercy. On the other, when judgments are necessary, neither should we show mercy to the exclusion of judgment.

The second part of James chapter two concerns the error of faith without works. (vss.14-26) Faith and works are here presented as work-fellows or companions. It is true that we are justified by faith & by works which faith produces. The doctrine of the apostle Paul and James is not contradictory; it is harmonious and complementary. In the main, Paul writes of justification by faith as opposed to justification by the works of the law. James writes of justification by works which comes from a living faith. Here are the four points of justification, and each of these are true when understood correctly.

It is God that justifies. (Ro.8.33)

We are justified by the blood of Jesus Christ! (Ro.5.9; 1Co.6.11; Tit.3.6, 7)

We are justified by faith! (Ro.3.28; 5.1, not by the works of the law)

We are justified by works! (Ja.2.21, 24, 25, which come from faith)

Brethren as we can err by having faith with respect of persons, so we may also err by failing to work out our faith.

*Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out (imperative, commandment) your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

*work out, κατεργάζεσθε, 2ppl. pres. imper. of κατεργάζομαι, κατά as, down, + ἐργάζομαι, to minister, work, trade, do, labor; κατεργάζομαι, is tss. to work, do, perform, cause, work out,*

A living faith ought to show itself to others. What kind of faith do we have?

Some believe that there is a God. This kind of faith is religious. It doesn't do anything but what it has ever done, which is nothing spiritually. There's nothing wrong with me. I'm not that bad. I do alright. I can love the world and the things of the world and go to church too.

Some believe God. These understand that Christ died for them. They thirst after Christ. They want to know Christ in life. They want His doctrine to be their doctrine. They live to be changed from what they are and into what He is.

*Joh 8:39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

Can we relate to the question these men asked the Lord one day?

*Joh 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

*29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

If we believe on Him we will do the works of God.

ἐὰν

**14 ¶ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith,**

if (v.15)

3ps. pres. ind.                      aor. infin. act

δύναται    ἢ πίστις    σῶσαι    αὐτόν

**and have not works?**

**can faith save him?**

then

is faith able to save him?

Is there any kind of advantage to a faith which has no work? The first question we must ask is, 'Save in what way?'

When the verb *save* is used in this sense it means to *preserve* one's manner of life. Christ died for the sins of His people so that they might live in Him unto God. Not only did He give them life, but He gave them a manner of life to live.

*Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

In this sense, *to save* means to preserve our time (Eph.5.16, *redeeming the time*), our resources (1Pe.4.11, *that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ*), and our bodies (Ro.12.1, *present your bodies a living sacrifice*) for Christ.

*Lu 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.  
24 For whosoever will save his life (by refusing to come after Christ) shall lose it (shall miss the true life of God which is both now and forever): but whosoever will lose his life for my sake (denying himself to walk after the flesh), the same shall save it.*

*Mt 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it (the man that sets out to discover his own life rather than discovering the life of Christ at this time loses his life): and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

*25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away (be damaged)?*

*26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

*Ro 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

*Ro.8.22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*

*23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

*24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

*1Co.15.1 ¶ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;*

*2 By which also ye are saved (σώζεσθε, 2ppl. pres. ind. pass., or, By which also you are being saved ...), if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

*1Pe 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved (σώζεται, 3ppl. pres. ind. pass., or, are scarcely being saved ...), where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

*1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save (σώσεις, 2ps. fut. ind. act.) thyself, and them that hear thee.*

Faith is greatly misunderstood today. Many act as if it is faith that atones or expiates sin. They suppose that Christ has done all that He can do, and now it is up to us to apply to it by faith in order to be saved. However, faith is not a substitution for or a supplement to what Jesus Christ did for the elect of God when He died on the cross. Faith is a manifestation of prerequisite life. It proves that you have life. It doesn't bring life. (2Ti.1.10, life and immortality is brought to *light*, that is, life and immortality are revealed through the gospel. The gospel doesn't cause it; but reveals it.)

*Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

*Joh 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ... (cf. Jn.6.47; 1Jn.5.10)*

Faith evidences itself by what it does.

*Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence (the conviction) of things not seen.*

*evidence, ἔλεγχος, noun; in 2Ti.3.16, the word of God is profitable for reproof and so 'conviction'; the verb, ἐλέγχω, is tss. to convict, convince, reprove, rebuke, to fault.*

Is there any advantage to a faith that does not work to preserve the life of the Christian. Consider how this kind of faith plays out between two people.

14 Τί τὸ ὄφελος ἀδελφοί μου εἰάν πιστὶν λέγη τις ἔχειν ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχη μὴ δύναται ἢ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν

εἰάν

**15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,**

It is very interesting that James cites a brother or sister. This is consistent with the fact that churches, to which he is writing (again, ref. to Ja.2.2, assembly, συναγωγή, and to 5.14 where James would have them call for elders of their church) are not social organizations charged with resolving the world's social ills. These will never be resolved in this age. Rather, James' first concern is of the brethren. There will be instances when Christians can try to help others outside of the congregation: the neighbor.

*Ga 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

But note this: there is not a single instance recorded in the New Testament where a church or churches acted corporately to resolve social issues. Corporately, a church and churches only acted to help the saints.

*1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye (all the saints which are in Achaia).*

...

*2Co.9.12 For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints (in Jerusalem), but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God ...*

*Ro.15.25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.  
26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.*

*Ac.24.17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.*

15 ἔὰν δὲ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφὴ γυμνοὶ ὑπάρχωσιν καὶ λειπόμενοι ὧσιν τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς

**16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding (δὲ, but) **ye give them not those things which are needful to the body;****

**what doth it profit?**  
then is the advantage?

What advantage was there had by the destitute by our good words and charitable wishes by saying, 'be warmed and filled?' None. And this is what faith is without works.

16 εἶπη δὲ τις αὐτοῖς ἐξ ὑμῶν Ὑπάγετε ἐν εἰρήνῃ θερμαίνεσθε καὶ χορτάζεσθε μὴ δῶτε δὲ αὐτοῖς τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος τί τὸ ὄφελος

**17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.**  
then [faith]

Faith separated from works is dead.

17 οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις ἐὰν μὴ ἔργα ἔχη νεκρὰ ἐστὶν καθ' ἑαυτήν

**18 *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works:***

There are two errors which we should be guarded against. Faith must be accompanied with works or else it is dead, and works without faith is sin.

*Ro 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

Like the earlier lesson, there must be judgment with mercy; not judgment without mercy, or mercy to the exclusion of judgment. So, there must be faith and works; not faith without works or works without faith.

*Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works:*

ἐκ

**shew me thy faith without thy works,**

Put on display or exhibit your faith without your works, which is not possible.

***and I will shew thee my faith by my works.***

*will shew*, δεῖξόν & δείξω, 2ps. aor. imper. & 1ps. fut. ind. act. of διέκνυμι; always tss. with the English, *shew*, and means to present or to display.

Faith works. Faith understands. Faith alters the course of one's life. Faith alters the speech. Faith gives a good witness of Christ. Faith helps others. Faith works by love. Faith translates sinners into the image of Christ. It pleases God. It saves the house. Faith believes God. It moves us from one place to another. It is the substance of our hope. It is the evidence, conviction of unseen things. It offers, blesses, promises, suffers, forsakes, obeys, provide for, subdues, quenches, works righteousness, stands firm, and endures.

*Ga 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

Faith is produced in us because our ears were opened by the power of God to hear the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and coming again.

*Ro. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

18 Ἄλλ' ἐρεῖ τις Σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις κάγώ ἔργα ἔχω δεῖξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου ἐκ τῶν ἔργων σου κάγώ δείξω σοι ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν μου

**19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.***

*believest*, πιστεύεις, 2ps. pres. ind. of πιστεύω.

*believe and tremble*, πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν are both 3ppl. pres. ind. of πιστεύω & φρίσσω respectively.

What is James saying? He is saying that a faith of this kind, that is without works is nothing more than a common or natural understanding which unregenerate men and fallen angels or demons possess. It is only natural reason or even presumption to say that this chair will support my weight, or that I can ascend this mountain, or that God is. These are not what constitutes the faith of Christ. These are not the fruit of the Spirit.

19 σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι ὁ θεός εἷς ἐστίν καλῶς ποιεῖς καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν καὶ φρίσσουσιν

**20 *But wilt thou know,***

*wilt*, θέλεις, 2ps, pres. ind. of θέλω; tss. *to will, desire, to list, to be forward, to be pleased, to rather.*



know, γνῶναι, aor. infin. act. of γίνωσκω; tss. *to perceive, know, understand, resolve, be aware.*

**O vain man, that faith without works is dead?**

empty

*vain*, κενέ, voc. sing. masc. of κενός; *vain* (14), *empty* (4)

*without*, χωρὶς, adv. tss. *without, beside, by itself.*

*dead*, νεκρά, nom. sing. fem. of νεκρός, always tss. *dead*; the Gr. verb, θανατόω, is to put to death, to cause to die, to kill, whereas νεκρός would refer to the lifelessness of a body, a corpse.

This kind of faith has no vital, living operation.

20 θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι ὡς ἄνθρωπε κενέ ὅτι ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων νεκρά ἐστίν

ἐξ

**21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**

*justified*, ἐδικαιώθη, 3ps. aor. ind. pass. of δικαιόω; tss. *justified, freed, righteous.*

21 Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ἀνενέγκας Ἰσαὰκ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον

συνήργει

**22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works,  
worked with**

*wrought with*, συνήργει, 3ps. imperf. of συνεργέω, with + work; tss. *to work with, work together, helpeth with, wrought with.*

ἐκ  
**and by works was faith made perfect?**  
from, of, out of faith was made perfect?

*was ... made perfect, ἐτελειώθη, 3ps. aor. pass. of τελειόω; tss. fulfilled, perfected, finished, consecrated.*

Faith worked in conjunction with what Abraham did ... ‘Believing and doing are blood relatives.’ *Rutherford* (cf. J-F-B Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p.588)

*Ge.22.12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. (the Qal pret. יָדָא, yada[g], means to acknowledge, and is tss. sure in Ex. 3.9, ... I am ‘sure’)*

Abraham exhibited a living faith by his action to put his son on the altar to be sacrificed. Faith was fulfilled by his works. What Abraham did was because he believed God. He believed that God would keep his promises to him. Abraham was justified by works. His works were a declaration of his faith in God. Faith and works cooperate.

*He.11.17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,  
18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:  
19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

22 βλέπεις ὅτι ἡ πίστις συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἡ πίστις ἐτελειώθη

**23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God,**

εἰς  
**and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.**

*and it, refers to v.22, faith. Abraham believed God, and [his faith] was imputed unto him for righteousness ...*

Paul says the same in Ro.4.22, 23. It was not the works of Abraham that was imputed/counted/reckoned for righteousness, but his faith. Abraham had no merit of his own before God. Christ was His merit. (Jer. 23.6; 33.16, ... The LORD our righteousness)

*1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:  
31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

The fact that Abraham believed God was proof that he knew he was fully accepted with God. He was called *the friend of God*.

How could anyone know that Abraham believed God except through his obedience to the LORD's commandment to offer his only son?

23 καὶ ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή ἣ λέγουσα Ἐπίστευσεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην καὶ φίλος θεοῦ ἐκλήθη

**24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**  
or, therefore that from

So, a man is justified by a living faith, a faith which works. James is not discounting the necessity of works, but emphasizes the point of the necessity of works that spring from faith, a faith which works by *love*; otherwise faith without works is dead.

*Ga 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

24 ὁρᾶτε τοίνυν ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον

ἐξ  
**25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works,**  
from

***when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?***

Rahab believed in God and acted on what she understood that He was doing.

*Jos.2.9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.*

...

*11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.*

The Lord brought Rahab into the line of David and Christ.

*Mt 1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse ...*

It is certain that since the day that the LORD revealed Himself to Rahab's heart, she was a changed woman, and her faith showed it by becoming confederate with Israel even before the city of Jericho fell.

25 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Ῥαὰβ ἡ πόρνη οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ὑποδεξαμένη τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἑτέρα ὁδῶ ἐκβαλοῦσα

***26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.***

This is the sum of the whole matter. The body is dead without the spirit.

*Lu 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

Like this faith is dead if it has no works. Faith and works cooperate together. Faith is proof of life and works are proofs of faith. Apart from faith we cannot save our lives for Christ.

Do we know Christ? If we just skate by day after day, non-committal, loving the world and the things of the world; I still smoke, chew, cuss, drink; I'm still a hot-head, I lust after women, neglect my spouse and my children; but I do go to church sometimes, I do think a prayer from time to time, but Christ first place in my life (?). Truth be told, He gets what's left over. Family, friends, recreation, Work, and family, friends, and recreation are first. One day I'll do different. Or,

Do we hunger in our souls to be like Christ? Do we groan within ourselves for that day when we shall be changed? It's a good indication that we have everlasting life. Live for Him!

26 ὡςπερ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα χωρὶς πνεύματος νεκρὸν ἐστὶν οὕτως καὶ ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων νεκρά ἐστὶν