

# Show Me Your Faith

James 2:14-18

## 1. **An Undemonstrated Faith Is Not A Saving Faith (14)**

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?*

## 2. **An Uncompassionate Faith Is Not A Living Faith (15-17)**

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## 3. **An Unproven Faith Is Not A Meaningful Faith (18)**

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

### **Conclusion:**

1. How do you know your faith in Christ is genuine? How do we know we aren't just going through the motions of religion and church?
2. How do others see your Christian faith?
3. How could you live out your Christian faith in this Covid19 era?

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## Introduction:

- Trash talking in Basketball: "You got game?" "Show me!"
  - Those that did have game didn't need to talk – they would just beat us
  - Those who did talk had other issues they were trying to cover up with their boasting
- Missouri is nicknamed the "Show Me" state
  - The origin of the slogan has been disputed, but the most popular story has a congressman Willard Vandiver (MO) addressing a Navy banquet in 1899 saying, "I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."  
<https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/history/slogan.asp>
- In Lerner & Lowe's musical "My Fair Lady," Eliza Doolittle, frustrated by Freddy's tepid commitment, sings and pleads: "Show Me"  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WbRyU8uuNk>)

Words! Words! Words!

I'm so sick of words!

I get words all day through;

First from him, now from you! Is that all you blighters can do?

Don't talk of stars Burning above; If you're in love,

Show me! Tell me no dreams

Filled with desire. If you're on fire,

Show me!

- James, the ½ brother of Jesus, is growing weary of the religious words of legalistic religious leaders. He calls them to prove the reality of their faith. Show me!

**James 2:14-18** <sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup>So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

## 1. An Undemonstrated Faith Is Not A Saving Faith (14)

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

- We just saw James repudiate the judgmental legalism of religion that does not love
- The legalism of the Pharisees were to add man made laws to bring God's law to absurdity

- The Talmud added 39 man made laws on how to keep the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment of keeping the Sabbath holy
- Pride is a dangerous enemy at work, with friends, in a team and certainly in religion.
- These religious leaders took pride in their religion of comparing themselves to others who didn't keep the law as perfectly as them.

**Matthew 23:23** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

- James is railing on the judgmental religious leaders
- They have a religious faith that doesn't have works demonstrating justice, mercy or faithfulness
- Justice, mercy and faithfulness are things to be done in a true religion that serves widows and orphans
- Then James asks: **"Can that faith save him?"**
- **"that"** is an important word – the definite article distinguishes from a general faith (KJV caused confusion "Can faith save him?")
- **That** kind of faith, not faith in general
- That kind of faith that is pride base, not Christ base
- Also faith is not just an **intellectual understanding** – v. 19, even demons believe but aren't saved

**James 2:19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

- The demons can even comprehend the monotheistic God – they know there is no atheism or polytheism, but they aren't saved or safe.
- They know God is powerful and fear Him, but they didn't obey Him
  - Ie/ There are people who believe Donald Trump is our president factually, but don't believe in him (have trust or faith in him)
  - Ie/ Others will acknowledge the existence of Gavin Newsome as our Governor, but some won't believe in him
  - Ie/ Some will believe we were created, but not place their faith in the Creator
  - Ie/ Some will understand the arguments
- **Faith In An Intellectual Truth Or Historical Fact, But Not A Salvation Faith.**

**Acts 26:27-28** Paul to: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do **believe.**' Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'"

- **Faith In Religion And Religious Things, But Not A Salvation Faith.**

**Luke 8:13** "But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who **believe** for a while and in time of temptation fall away."

- James is not criticizing the biblical teaching of salvation by faith alone.
- James is criticizing a religious faith that is based on pride, not Christ
- A Christ-less faith does not save

<b>Faith Involves:</b>	Understanding	Knowledge of Facts
	Emotional	Confidence in the Truth
	Will	Commitment through Trust

- "Saving faith is composed of information, intellectual assent, and personal trust." (R.C. Sproul, *Essential Truths*, p. 187)
- "This [act of faith] may be defined as an understanding of and mental assent to certain basic facts concerning the person and work of Christ culminating in a committal of one's entire being to the person of whom those facts testify." (Charles Horne, p. 49)
- Berkhof describes the 3 elements as:
  - 1) Intellectual (*notitia*)
  - 2) Emotional (*assensus*)
  - 3) Volitional (*fiducia*)
- Genuine saving faith includes **Repentance**
  - The will turns from sin to Christ
  - **Faith is action oriented, not merely intellectual**
  - **If our faith stays merely intellectual, why love sacrificially?**
  - **When we understand our salvation is because of the sacrificial love of Christ, we will be prone to imitate it.**
  - **Repentance is lives out faith by submitting to His Lordship**
  - **Christ is resurrected and alive – thus our Lord**
  - **We don't work for our salvation – it's totally free to us**
  - **But we work after we're saved because we know how gracious He is to us**
- There is confusion with some about James because he doesn't speak in the same way about justification as the Apostle Paul does in his writings
- Martin Luther cast his doubts calling it "a rather strawy letter" (*eyn rechte stroern Eplistel*) because it did not declare "justification by faith alone" with the same vigor as Romans, Galatians or Ephesians. Yet he still accepted James as part of the biblical canon.
- **But Paul is looking at the front end of justification and James is looking at the back side**
- **Paul looks at the initiation of justification through faith.**
- **James looks at the manifestation of justification through works**
- **Justification means to be made right with God. Faith depends on Christ's work on the cross. Work emulates Christ's work on the cross.**

## A Comparison of Paul and James on Justification and Works

<b>Paul</b>	<b>James</b>
Justification <i>by</i> faith	Justification <i>for</i> works
Faith as <i>producer of works</i>	Works as the <i>proof of faith</i>
Justification <i>before</i> God	Justification <i>before</i> man
Not by works	By good works
<i>Root</i> of justification	<i>Fruit</i> of justification
Against dead <i>works</i>	Against dead <i>faith</i>

(Norman Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament*, Baker Books, 2007, p. 265, 269)



### 2. An Uncompassionate Faith Is Not A Living Faith (15-17)

<sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup>So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- What good is it to tell someone who's cold and hungry to "Go in peace, be warmed and filled" and not help out with someone's physical need
- "poorly clothed" = *gymnos* – which means naked. We get our word "gym" or "gymnasium" from this word because that's how they dressed at the ancient gym. Going to the Olympic games would be Rated R
  - But this word signifies poorly clothed because they are in need
- **Words don't clothe or feed!**
- **Faith that doesn't have works is dead**
- "dead" = *nekros* – we get necrology (the study of the dead) from this, police or doctors will file a necrology report
- Genuine faith is a living faith
- This isn't just some beggar on the street, but a "brother or sister" (15), someone we know and love
- Is your faith dead because you don't have full faith in Christ?



- **Benevolence**

- It was great to know we had some generous donations to our Benevolence Fund which helps those in need
- We've had requests for help in this Covid 19 economic crisis
- Wilson and our deacons are looking out for those in need

- **Barnabas**

- We have a team of 26 folks called the Barnabas ministry – help with meals, home services for those elderly or sick and transportation for medical needs or church
- They have been shopping for the elderly and feeding those who are battling illnesses
- They have put feet on their faith

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- The greatest laws are to love God and love others!
- A faith that doesn't manifest itself in love is **lifeless, dead!**
- A faith that doesn't emulate the living sacrifice of Christ is not impactful!



- **Is church about what's in it for you or what you can give to others?**
- **Are you focused on “What am I getting out of church or Quest or CTF or another fellowship?”**
- **Or are you focused on living out your faith by emulating Christ in serving, not being served?**

### 3. **An Unproven Faith Is Not A Meaningful Faith (18)**

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

- James brings up another hypothetical conversation
- You have faith – but it's only words (say)
  - A lot of people will say they are Christians but aren't really
  - If you are a Christian, demonstrate how Christ has changed you

**Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

- I have works – faith is already assumed, faith is the baseline – works is the evidence
- Jesus isn't talking about works salvation – good works that earn heaven
- But Genuine Believers will **do** the will of God because we are His disciples, His children, His servant

### **Conclusion:**

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