

# Faith and Works

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: James 2:14-26

This lesson is the fourth in a series on the book of James. In this passage, we see the necessary connection between faith and works. We cannot choose one and ignore the other. Both must go together in our lives if we are to please the Lord.

## **Claiming to Have Faith Is Not Enough (v. 14-17)**

- James asked: Can faith without works save us? (v. 14) – this is an important question in the religious world; many believe it can
- Faith will lead us to act – again, James returned to a point about helping others (v. 15-16); we must practice “pure and undefiled religion” (1:27); take advantage of opportunities to help (Galatians 6:10)
- Faith without works is dead (v. 17) – faith, as it is defined in the NT, is an active faith; refer back to James’ question (v. 14); a “dead” faith will not “save”

## **Faith with No Works Is Useless (v. 18-20)**

- Many will claim to have faith despite a lack of works (v. 18) – yet works demonstrate faith; without doing good works, there is no evidence of faith; it is an empty claim
- Even the demons believe (v. 19) – examples in Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matthew 8:28-29; Mark 1:23-24); the demons cannot be saved by faith alone; they believe, but do not accept, follow, or obey Christ
- Faith without works is useless – it is “foolish” to think that faith without works is of any value, just as the demons’ acknowledgment of Christ was useless because they did not obey Him

## **Justification by Faith AND Works (v. 21-25)**

- James cited two examples of people who were justified by WORKS – Abraham (v. 21-23) who was willing to offer up his son (Genesis 15:6; 22:1-14); Rahab (v. 25) who helped the messengers who came to spy out Jericho (Joshua 2:1-14)
- Faith works with one’s works (v. 22) – without works, faith is dead/useless; with works it is perfected; Abraham’s actions fulfilled Scripture about God counting him as righteous (v. 23; cf. Romans 4:3)
- Justification is when God recognizes/declares us to be righteous – Abraham was justified by faith (Romans 4:1-5), as we are (Romans 5:1), but not faith ALONE (v. 24); Abraham was justified by works (v. 21), as we are (v. 24); we must obey, not just believe (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9)

## **Faith without Works Is Dead (v. 26)**

- James concluded this section by returning to the point about a “dead” faith – if we have no works, our faith is dead; again, a “dead” faith (v. 17) will not “save” (v. 14)
- He used the illustration of the body and the spirit – once the spirit departs, the body is dead; the spirit animates the body just as our works animate our faith; we cannot have one or the other; they must go together

## **Conclusion**

- We must have faith if we are to please the Lord and be saved by Him
- Yet faith is more than just a belief in Christ – it includes an obedient trust in Him
- We need to make sure we’re serving the Lord according to His word – demonstrating our faith