

## Faith in Action - James

[James 2:14-26](#)

"Faith That Saves" – September 13, 2020

### **Introduction**

Peter writes, "if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6-7) When life hurts, it's natural to put getting out of the trial as our top priority. But learning what a trial reveals about our faith is even more important since the consequences of faith are forever. How can you know if your faith is authentic? Thankfully, James helps us differentiate counterfeit faith from saving faith.

### **Pray**

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

### **Sermon Outline**

- I. What counterfeit faith does. ([2:14-20](#))
- II. What saving faith does. ([2:21-26](#))

### **Read & Discuss**

- 1) Read [2:14-20](#)

Faith by itself, without works is dead. With the example of the poor, James shows us how counterfeit faith fails to love others. It seeks to gain the world but loses the soul. When Jesus in [Matthew 19](#), called to the rich man to give his possessions to the poor and follow Him, he refused because his faith was in money...not in God. Do you hold onto money and possessions with a closed fist? Do you find security in God's good gifts over God himself? If you detect materialism in your heart, it's hard to break that grip. The Bible teaches us to look to the end of it all to help rearrange our perspective ([Matthew 6:19-24](#)). In the end, money and materialism fades. When we stand before God we will not regret giving more to those in need.

Counterfeit faith not only affects our relationship with others (making us stingy), it robs us of our peace with God. James reminds us how the demons believe but live in terror – they 'shudder'. People with counterfeit faith often look very religious or moral because in trusting self, they try to prove to those around them

they're good enough. However, we are all guilty when we judged by the standard of God's perfection as shown in His law. Our hope, the way we find peace with God is not in our self-effort but trusting in Christ who fulfilled the law ([Romans 5:1](#)). It's in knowing His saving grace and being filled with His Spirit we find ourselves at peace with God and *wanting* to obey – finally free to obey.

2) Read [2:20-26](#)

After showing us what *counterfeit* faith does, James then encourages us with what *saving* faith does. His example of Abraham shows that the fruit of saving faith is peace with God – we, like Abraham, are called His friend. At first, it can sound shocking to hear James say we are justified by works, but the context of chapter two makes it clear that when James 2 talks about being *justified*, he means to say one's faith is *demonstrated* or *shown* to be true and saving. Abraham was declared righteous by faith in Genesis 15:6. Decades later, when his faith was tested in Genesis 22, his actions *demonstrated* that his faith was indeed true. Though God sees what's in the heart, we are limited in our perspective. For that reason, we're to look at the fruit in a person's life for we can know a tree by its fruit ([Galatians 5:22-25](#)).

Saving faith also affects our relationship with others. Saving faith creates a love for others even when loving them is risky. James shows us this in the example of [Rahab](#) when she risked her life to protect God's people. How might your love for others be risky? What are some ways you could love others more sacrificially this week? Jesus himself is of course our supreme example. God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us ([Rom. 5:8](#)).

### **Additional Reading This Week**

Read through Genesis [12](#), [15](#), [16](#), and [22](#) this week as a case study of saving faith that endures and response in obedience.

### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <b>Matthew 12:33-37 "You Know a Tree by Its Fruit."</b>
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