

James 2:14-26

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

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. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham

our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Summary

This is the famous passage in James, where he argues that faith without works is dead. Whilst many seem to think James is saying something contrary to Paul (Romans 3:21-26), we see very plainly that his argument is simply that any faith that does not result in actions is not true faith. James explains this one point in three sections. Firstly, that faith without works is dead, in which he distinguishes between faith that is alive and faith that is dead. Secondly, James shows that we cannot choose either faith or works (by saying "I'm more of a faith kind of person" or "I'm more of a practical kind of person"). Finally, James shows that true faith is completed by works, meaning that good works are the natural outcome of true faith. The aim of the sermon is to help us see what we truly do believe and whether or not our faith is real. I trust that as a church we will respond by truly putting our faith in Christ which will lead to good works.

Final Thoughts

True faith is a root deep into the character of God that gives life to our bodies and shape to our actions.

Questions

1. How is true faith different from dead faith?
2. Why is it not correct to say that one person emphasizes faith and another emphasizes works?
3. The demons 'belief' leads them to tremble. What about the demons belief in God is insufficient?
4. James says that faith is 'active' along with works, and then that works 'complete' faith. What does he mean?

One major point, or the sermon in one sentence:

Genuine saving faith is evidenced by good works.

RHC Core Values

Gospel-Centredness – To have the gospel in the centre of our ministry, and for everything we do to find its root in the gospel.

Experimental Faith – To actively seek the modern day work of the Holy Spirit, expecting him to move in our midst in signs and wonders, and to lead us to the will of God.

Theological Depth – To pursue a deep and soul satisfying knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible.

Community on Mission – To recognise that we are not here for ourselves, but are on a mission to bring the gospel to the world.

City Renewal – To see the gospel change every aspect of the city we are living in by doing social justice, integrating our faith and work, and seeing the city renewed culturally, socially and spiritually for the glory of God.