**HIS FAITH AND HIS ACTION WORK TOGETHER**

James 1:19-2:26

Key Verse 2:22

“You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.”

**Introduction**



 In the previous lesson, we learned about faith overcomes trials and temptations. In today’s passage we’ll learn how faith is shown through our deeds. As the key verse reads, Abraham’s faith and actions were working together and his faith was made complete by what he did. May the Lord help us to have faith and deeds as well, so that our faith may be complete in God’s eyes. Amen.

1. Read verses 1:19-27. What does James ask us to do to accept the word humbly? (19-21) Why is it important for us in order to practice what we hear? (22-25) Why should we keep a tight reign on our tongue? (26) What is true religion? (27)

1-1, Read verses 1:19-27.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, **20** because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.**21** Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

**22** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. **23** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror **24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **25** But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

**26** Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. **27** Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

1-2, What does James ask us to do to accept the word humbly? (19-21)

***19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.***

* In this letter James writes to Jewish Christian churches scattered outside of Jerusalem. This letter was written around 45 AD.
* These were the newest converts to the faith. Their faith was being tested through trials and temptations, but James writes this letter to strengthen their faith. In addition, he instructs them on how faith is revealed in action.
* In their struggles, they could be tempted to be angry with one another, or to blame God for their predicament.
* James says everyone should be quick to listen. Listening is very important, and it is a skill that some people may need to work harder at than others.
* Listening to others means giving your full attention to them, and even waiting for them to speak first, before you do. So is the same with listening to the word of God.
* James also adds that everyone should be slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.
* Most human anger comes from 2 sources: pride and an unbelief. James doesn’t say to get rid of all anger but rather to be slow to anger.

***21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.***

* The prevalent evil referred to here is malice, a hatred toward someone, with an intense desire to hurt them.
* Do you feel this way towards anyone at all? Do you dislike somebody, or wish to see them suffer? Get rid of this.
* Like dirty laundry, we must put away this sin, and clean it up. In our own power and ability, this might be an impossible thing to do.
* We need to humbly accept the word. This is in contrast to the pride we have when we’re angry.
* The word is the word of God, and this word is to be accepted with meekness – with no resistance, no defiance, no rebellion, or argumentation against it.
* This word of God is the gospel, and we should not resist the gospel, because it has the power to save.
* The gospel was planted in our hearts through a servant of God, just as it was planted in these early Christians through the apostles and disciples of Christ.
* This word planted in us is also the word of Christ, the very word that gives life. Jesus told his disciples, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you – they are full of the Spirit and life (John 6:63).”
* “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (John 6:68).” The word of God is the word of life, so let us humbly accept it as it was planted in us.

1-3, Why is it important for us in order to practice what we hear? (22-25)

 ***Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.***

* Some people seem to think merely listening to the word is enough. If we merely hear, but do not do what the word says, we deceive ourselves.

Ezekiel 33:30-33 reads,

 “As for you, son of man, your people are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, ‘Come and hear the message that has come from the Lord.’ **31** My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice. Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. **32** Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.”

 ***23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.***

* James gives another illustration of what someone is like who does not put the word into practice.
* The word of God is like a mirror for us to see our spiritual condition. It shows us what our sins are, and what needs correcting or repenting. It also instructs and trains us in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16).
* But if you don’t put it into practice, you forget the lesson, and you walk away – not changing what needs to be corrected, and not growing in Biblical understanding.

Matt 7:24-27 reads,

 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

* When we put the word into practice, it strengthens us in times of trial, and enables us to stand through it.

***25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.***

* Here again we see that this person looks intently into the perfect law. To look intently is not a superficial reading.
* Rather it’s reading to learn something. It’s reading devotionally. It’s reading with a desire to know God, to honor God, to obey God, and to seek the purpose of our life in Him.

2 Cor 13:5 says,

 “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?”

* Let us come to the word of God every day, and look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom.
* The perfect law is the gospel. It gives freedom because it sets us free from the bondage of sin. Sin is lawlessness, and we cannot help but to break God’s law.

1 John 3:4-6 reads,

 “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that Jesus appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.”

* Through the gospel, the law can no longer condemn us, and faith alone in Jesus Christ saves us. Although we don’t follow the letter of the law, in Christ, we fulfill the law through obedience to him.
* We are not saved to be lawless, that would be going back into sin, but we are saved by the gospel, so that we can look into the perfect law, and obey it!
* When we look into the perfect law we can continue in it, and James tells us how to continue in it: by not forgetting what we have heard, but by doing it.

1 John 3:7-10 reads,

 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. **8** The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. **9** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. **10** This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

* James ends verse 25 with, “they will be blessed in what they do.” Sometimes, it might seem like a struggle just to obey, doesn’t it?
* But the promise is that in doing what the word says, we will be blessed. To be clear – this is not saying “if you obey now, you will be blessed later,” but this verse is saying “you will be blessed in what you do” – as you do it.

2 Peter 1:3 reads,

 “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness”

1-4, Why should we keep a tight reign on our tongue? (26)

 ***Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.***

* Acceptable religion, that is, the true religion and practice of life that God accepts has both parts: doing good to others and keeping spotless from the world.
* We see that someone can deceive themselves if they do not keep a tight rein on their tongue.
* People allow their tongues to slander, boast, or speak ill of someone. Their tongue may also gossip, and speak careless words that may dishonor the Lord.
* Their religion is worthless because even with all the outward show, their hearts still have sin, as evidenced by the words they speak, like a Pharisee. (Luke 18:11)

1-5, What is true religion? (27)

 ***Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.***

* Orphans and widows were the most needy class of people in Biblical times. To look after orphans and widows, then, was a display of true sacrificial love.
* And it wasn’t just money, but it included the time they spent doing good towards them. We should be ready and willing to love our neighbors as ourselves.
* The second part of this acceptable religion is to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. This means that we should not gratify the lust of the flesh.

1 John 2:15-16 reads,

 “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. **16** For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. **17** The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”

* We may have good works, but if we are polluted by the world, then our religion is also worthless.
* We glorify God by imitating him, because what he does is good. When we care for orphans and widows (and do good to our neighbors) and keep from being polluted by the world, we are imitating Him by being holy. In this way, we glorify God.

2. Read verses 2:1-13. How do people show favoritism? (1-4) What does God promise to those who are rich in faith and to those who love him? (5) How might the rich harm us? (6, 7) How can we do right? (8-11) Why is it important to be merciful? (12-13)

2-1, Read verses 2:1-13.

 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.**2** Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. **3** If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” **4** have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

**5** Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? **8** If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30302a)] you are doing right. **9** But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. **11** For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30305b)] also said, “You shall not murder.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+2&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30305c)] If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker **12** Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, **13** because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

2-2, How do people show favoritism? (1-4)

 ***My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,”***

* Displaying wealth, social status, power, style, beauty, physical appearance, or talent is important in our society.
* Apparently the believers receiving this letter were guilty of showing favor to some people more than others.
* They gave the rich person a good seat where everyone could see them and talk about them. They gave the poor person standing room only or a seated them by their feet, as though that person were lower than them.
* Favoritism in the world isn't pretty. Favoritism in the church is worse and is is one of the pollutants of the world that James warned us about.
* As believers, we are called to be like Jesus, and Jesus never would have shown favoritism. Jesus loved all people – the rich and the poor.

***4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?***

* From this verse we see that when we discriminate like this, we have evil thoughts and are being guided by wrong motives.
* When we honor someone because of their outward appearance or status, we make appearance more important than their inner character.
* We can never harbor evil thoughts, for we never know what’s in a person’s heart, only God can. Therefore we can never make judgments only God can.

1 Sam 16:7 reads,

 “But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.””

Acts 13:22 reads,

 “I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.”

2-3, What does God promise to those who are rich in faith and to those who love him? (5)

***5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?***

* Jesus’ first followers were common people. God chose the poor in this world to be rich in faith.
* Poor people may not have mattered in that society, but they mattered very much to God. They would inherit the kingdom of God.
* However this doesn’t mean that the rich are excluded from God’s Kingdom; just as the poor are not “chosen” just because they are poor, but because they recognize their need of God.

1 Cor 1:27-29 reads,

 **“**But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. **28** God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, **29** so that no one may boast before him.”

2-4, How might the rich harm us? (6, 7)

***6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?***

* Poor people did not have the means to persecute Christians while the rich did.
* Paul preached in Ephesus and was persecuted by the wealthy. When people began to believe in Jesus, it damaged their businesses. (Acts 19)

2-5, How can we do right? (8-11)

***8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right.***

* Love is the basic and fundamental resource from which our attitudes toward others should flow. This royal command is a law given to us by the King of kings.

John 13:34-35 reads,

 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

* James was calling his readers to obey the royal law of love that would forbid them to discriminate against anyone who entered their fellowship.
* We are to show favor to everyone, whether the person is rich or poor. We are called to love unconditionally just as Jesus loved us. Amen!

***9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.***

* Back in James’ day, the religious leaders had a concept of some laws being more important than others, or some sins being worse than others.
* On Aug. 11, 2017, thousand of people, so called white nationalists rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia, which is known as a college town. It was one of the largest hate-gathering in decades. They gathered at the University of Virginia and marched, holding torches throughout the campus.
* Most people think that they are at least better than these white nationalists. But James’ point here is that if you broke one part of the law, you might as well broke all of them because even if you only broke one of them, you are still considered a law-breaker.
* People thought that if I can uphold one of the laws really well, then maybe my “good deeds” will cancel out my “bad deeds.” But it doesn’t work that way. So the sin of favoritism is just as bad as adultery and murder.

2-6, Why is it important to be merciful? (12-13)

***12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,***

* Our speech and actions must match. When he says “speak and act,” that pretty much covers everything we do.

1 Jn 3:18 reads,

 “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

* Believers will be judged on the basis of their obedience to God’s will as expressed in his law.
* Although God has accepted those who believe in him, we are still called upon to obey him.
* But his law is not a burden; instead, it sets us free because we are obeying out of joy. God has given us freedom from sin’s penalty and empowers us to do his will.

***13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***

* We should be merciful towards one another and not judgmental. Mercy is exactly what the believers weren’t showing when they insulted poor people.
* If they continued to discriminate, they would be in danger of facing their own judgment without mercy.
* Here we find a good picture of New Testament ethics: What we do to others we actually do to God, and he will return it to us.
* We stand before God in need of his mercy. We can’t earn forgiveness by forgiving others, but when we withhold forgiveness after having been forgiven, we show that we don’t understand or appreciate God’s mercy towards us.
* Not showing mercy places us under God’s judgment, but showing mercy places us under God’s mercy in the midst of His judgment.
* Those who have experienced mercy can also express mercy to others. If we really want to win people over to Jesus, we must be merciful and not judgmental.

3. Read verses 14-26. What kind of faith should we have? (14-16) Why is one’s faith dead if not accompanied by action? (17-19) How is Abraham a good example of faith in action? (20-24) What made Rahab righteous? (25) What is James’ conclusion? (26)

3-1, Read verses 14-26.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. **20** You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? **21** Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.**23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. **24** You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. **25** In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? **26** As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

3-2, What kind of faith should we have? (14-16)

***14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?***

* A saved life is different from an unsaved life. The things that you do are different before you are saved and after you are saved.
* Here James did not contradict the Apostle Paul, who insisted that we are saved not of works (Ephesians 2:9, Galatians 2:16).
* But Paul also understood the necessity of works in proving the character of our faith.

Titus 3:8 reads,

 “This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.”

Ephesians 2:10 reads,

 **“**For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

 ***Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?***

* If you saw somebody who was in desperate need in that they were naked and starving, would you simply just say, “God be with you” or “I’ll pray for you”?
* Think about what James wrote. In response to seeing a naked and hungry person, he wrote that someone might say to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed.”
* It’s like if you got really sick with the flu, and a doctor tells you to keep your temperature down, stop sneezing, and don’t be so fatigued.
* The doctor has told you how things should be, but hasn’t done anything to help you get better. That’s a pretty useless doctor. What good is he?

3-3, Why is one’s faith dead if if not accompanied by action? (17-19)

 ***In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.***

* This is the first time James speaks of a dead faith. Faith alone saves us, but it must be a living faith. We can tell if faith is alive by seeing if it is accompanied by works. If ones’ faith doesn’t have works, James says it is dead.
* A living faith is simply real faith. If we really believe something we will follow through and act upon it. If we really put our trust and faith on Jesus, we will care for the naked and destitute as He told us to do.
* So works are the effect and sign of a living and real faith. Men and women of faith will act in faith, obeying whatever Jesus commanded us to do.
* James wants the person who supposedly only has faith to prove it. Real faith will be demonstrated by works.
* We can’t “see” someone’s faith, but we *can* see their works. You can’t see faith without works, but you can demonstrate the reality of faith by works.

***19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.***

* But there is another problem with that. “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”
* To believe in the existence of God is no great achievement. As James points out, even demons believe in one God. Demons recognize that God exists.
* On second thought, demons are better than you if you just believe in God. At least demons know to shudder at the mere thought of God.
* People who merely “believe” in God. Those people don’t care about his judgment and wrath. That makes them worse than demons.
* What, then, makes us better than the demons? How can we show that we do believe in God and that we love God?
* Jesus said, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.” (John 14:23) Obedience to Jesus is what separates believers from demons. Obedience requires action and that action requires faith.

3-4, How is Abraham a good example of faith in action? (20-24)

 ***You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?***

* James then points to an example that would be well known by the recipients of his letter: Abraham. Abraham was a man who is considered to be the father of faith.
* God told Abraham to go and sacrifice Isaac. God told Abraham to kill what God had promised Abraham in the first place.
* It sounded to be a horrible thought, for the people surrounding Abraham practiced child sacrifice, but he knew that God hated that practice.
* Yet, Abraham left early the next morning to go to a mountain to sacrifice his son. He tied Isaac to the altar and raised the knife to take action in obeying God’s command.

***22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend.***

* James stressed that it was an act of faith for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham proved his faith by his action.
* Abraham was justified by faith long before he offered Isaac (Gen. 15:6). But his obedience in offering Isaac demonstrated that he really did trust God.
* His faith was proven true and was made complete and perfect by his obedience. If he hadn’t believed God, he could have never done the good work of obeying God, offering Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord..

Hebrews 11:17-19 reads,

 “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, **18** even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” **19** Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”

* Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.”
* Abraham had faith to trust God. He might not have known exactly what God was doing, but he believed in God’s promise.
* He was able to act by faith by holding on to God’s promise that Isaac was the child of promise.
* He reasoned that if God told him to sacrifice Isaac, then God would simply raise Isaac from the dead. He was certain of it and was able to act on that faith.
* James, then, points out that scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”
* The proof that Abraham trusted God was in the fact that he obeyed God, even when something seemed contrary to God’s promise.
* In a tough circumstance, Abraham obeyed God and proved his faith by his actions.

 ***You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.***

* “Considered righteous” means that we can’t see righteousness without the actions of someone who has faith. Actions speak louder than words!
* Actions are the receipt of the fact that Jesus saved you. Jesus paid the price of our sins through our redemption by His blood. What we have to show for this transaction is a life changed by this good news.
* Like Abraham, we hold on to God’s promises and we don’t let fear and doubt reign in our hearts.
* Such faith and action is not only for those who are considered great, like Abraham, but also for everyone who believes.
* “Not by faith alone” - Works must accompany a genuine faith. If there is no evidence of a new life, then there was no genuine, saving faith.

3-5, What made Rahab righteous? (25)

 ***In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?***

* Rahab was a resident of a city called Jericho. Jericho was in the land of Canaan, the land that God promised Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites.
* God promised that he would remove the Canaanites from the land so that the Israelites could take over.
* The Israelites sent spies ahead to scope out the city. While they were there, they met a prostitute named Rahab.
* Rahab had heard that the Lord had given the land to the Israelites. She also heart of what had happened to two kings in the region. She heard about the God of the Israelites and trusted that what she heard was true.
* Rahab helped the Israelite spies to evade the officials of Jericho and her life was spared when the Israelites came to conquer the city.
* Rahab had faith in God and acted on that faith by helping the Israelite spies. She was a prostitute, but she was considered righteous based on her actions.
* Her actions were the proof of her faith. If we believe in God, we will help His people, even when it costs us something.

3-6, What is James’ conclusion? (26)

 ***As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.***

* Faith without actions is not faith at all. Faith is living and growing, but faith that does not cause us to act is dead.
* It is head knowledge of what you know, but not belief that it is true. We don’t truly believe it unless we act on what we know.

Matthew 7:16-20 reads,

 “By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.”

* Fruit is the product of a tree. If the tree is good, it produces good fruit. In the same way, if we have been saved, then we produce a good life.
* We change and act differently than we did before. We don’t act by fear and doubt, but with certainty and absolute faith.

**Conclusion**

 We can think that we are great because we do something, like study the Bible. But, this is not true. Just like faith without action is dead, our faith must be proved by our actions. They are codependent on each other. If you have only faith without action or action without faith, then it is like having only one eye. You can see, but you lack a complete field of vision or a right sense of distance. When you have both faith and actions, then you can see with depth, distance, and correctly perceive all three dimensions. This is what James wrote about in verse 22 when he said that Abraham’s faith was made complete by what he did. We need to have complete faith, and complete faith is shown by what we do. Take this weekend on our blessed conference to think about the condition of your faith. Let us encourage each other to act in faith from now on, starting from this upcoming fall semester. Let us trust God and act.

**One word: Faith and action work together!**