

Faith that Works **“Genuine Faith” (B)** **James 2:20-26**

Introduction- It is not uncommon today to find people who say “they believe in God” or say “I have faith,” but their lives show no sign that their faith or belief in God is genuine or real. It was for this very reason that James wrote these words.

1. Genuine faith is not an empty claim (vv. 14-17).

- It cannot save (vs. 14)
- It doesn't serve (vv. 15-16)
- It is dead (vs. 17)

2. Genuine faith is not mere acceptance of a creed (vv. 18-19).

- It's a demonic faith (vs. 19)

So far this is all negative, it's not just a verbal affirmation or a mental assent.

What is genuine faith? It's not dead, nor demonic. It's dynamic! (vv. 20-26), shows us by using two old testament characters that a genuine faith produces an obedient life.

Sadly in the lives of many churchgoers today, there is a yawning chasm between profession and action; or faith and works.

James is saying real faith is a walking faith.

The first illustration of genuine faith:

I. The Patriarch Abraham, vv. 20-24

In verse twenty, James asks a question. I like the N.I.V., “You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?”

Study vv. 21-24

1. The evidence of Abraham's faith (vs. 21).
2. The results of Abraham's faith (vv. 22-23).
 - a. The perfecting of his faith (vs. 22).
 - b. The fulfillment of scripture (vs. 23a).

c. The friendship with God (vs. 23b).

3. The conclusion from Abraham's example (vs. 24).

II. The Prostitute Rahab (vv. 25-26)

1. What a contrast between Abraham & Rahab.

Abraham	Rahab
1. A Patriarch	1. A Prostitute
2. A Jew	2. A Gentile
3. A Man	3. A Woman
4. A Friend of God	4. She belonged to the enemies of God

2. Why would James select two people so different?

To show that anyone with genuine faith can be saved. As different as they were they had one thing in common they both had real faith that was seen by their works.

3. Genuine faith in verse 25. In Rahab's life we learn some vital lessons about saving faith.

A. The importance of saving faith. She and her people were condemned.

B. The nature of saving faith.

1. It involved her mind. Josh. 2:11, "we had heard."
2. It involved her emotions. Josh 2:11 "our hearts did melt."
3. It involved her will. She acted on what she believed.

She put her life in great danger. So faith in action. True faith is not believing in spite of evidence, but obeying in spite of consequences. Rahab like Abraham is mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 with great heroes and heroines of faith.

C. The rewards of saving faith.

1. She and her family were saved.
2. She became part of Israel.

The Conclusion (vs. 26)

It's another illustration or analogy. A body without the spirit or life is dead! So faith without works is dead also. It's like saying faith without works is virtually a corpse!

What kind of faith do you have?

1. Is it the dead faith of mere profession?
2. Is it the demonic faith of only believing about God or Jesus?
3. Is it a dynamic faith that truly believes "in" or "on" Jesus?

Two things are perfectly clear in the Bible:

1. Faith alone, in Christ alone saves!
2. The faith that saves is not alone! Eph. 2:10