

## *James 2.14-26 The Vindication of the Saints*

### **Saving Faith is not just in Words and Knowledge, v. 14-19**

- I. Faith without works is a faith that never bore the fruits and evidences of true faith.
  - A. A faith that saves is a faith that works. Faith will express itself outwardly. It's not just inward transformation.
- II. He exposes their sin of partiality in verses 1-13 and now addresses the issue of their faith working itself out in practice.
  - A. He is judging the quality of their faith based on their actions toward their poor brother.
    1. So, first, true saving faith is **not** expressed just in "saying, speaking or blessing" alone. Faith works through love (Gal. 5.6), if not, it is dead and produces nothing.
      - a) There is assurance of possessing true faith by what we **do** in response to God's word implanted in us. Notice, he has been describing one who is only a hearer (1.22-25) and only a speaker as Jesus did (Matt. 7.21; 12.50).
    2. Secondly, faith is **not** just in knowing things about God, though it is necessary (Deut. 6.4).
      - a) Holding to orthodox beliefs; expressing those beliefs in a pious manner; eloquently blessing others is not a demonstration of true faith if it does not go beyond this. It proves to be false faith when we show no mercy toward the hungry and naked (Isa. 58).

### **Saving Faith is a Faith that Believes and Acts, v. 20-26**

- III. He gives two ironic examples of true faith (Abraham and Rahab), because both of these individuals were known for their mercy and hospitality in receiving God and his people (Gen. 18; Josh. 2).
  - A. Consider Abraham.
    1. He went through a period of testing or trial, as James has been addressing, and his faith was put to the test. Abraham was justified or vindicated as a true believer when he acted (Gen. 15; 22).
    2. His faith was completed, made whole, brought to an end or goal; brought to maturity by his works.
      - a) Consider Eph. 2.8-10.

3. He **believed** God and it was counted as righteousness (Gen. 15.6 completed in Gen. 22). His faith was tested, and he proved to be a true believer. He **trusted** God and acted upon that trust.
4. Just like Jesus' disciples (John 15.14-17) he is called a friend of God.
  - a) There is a loving fellowship between the two parties (Gen. 18). He received God and his people.
- B. Consider Rahab.
  1. Her faith was demonstrated in her work of love, mercy and goodness toward God and his people, much like Abraham.
    - a) Good works flow out of genuine faith, resting and trusting in him.
      - (1) So, trust and act. "Take a leap of faith."

#### IV. Application.

- A. What is dead faith?
  1. Dead faith is in lip service alone (John 14.15). Do we not trust that he will provide the means and the heart of faith to obey?
  2. Dead faith is in mental appreciation alone.
- B. What is true faith? True faith believes God.
  1. And the faith that believes God, trusts God and it is the faith that acts, like Abraham, trusting God will provide the good work to do.
    - a) And true faith will have hands and legs in showing mercy and love.
- C. James gives us the works of individuals who were going through a trying circumstance. Consider their response. Consider the difference between Judas and Peter. Peter had nowhere to run to but to Christ.
  1. Our faith will be tested when the rubber meets the road. For the most part our faith is not tested when all is going well.
    - a) Consider Jesus Christ who was not only the model of true faith, but he is also the forerunner, founder and perfecter of our faith, who put away sin by the sacrifice of his flesh (Heb. 6.20; 12.2; 9.26) for mercy's sake, to set apart saints who would be zealous for good works (Titus 2.14). We shouldn't ask how much works? But how true are our works?