

Epistle of James V What it Means to have Works of Faith

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The book of James was written by the brother of the Lord and its amazing how similar that his writings are to the writing of Matthew. This was written to those Jewish believing congregations who were also, at the time that this was written, still a part of the synagogue.

Let's review a little bit what we covered last time on *faith*. Let's understand and realize that everything that James is saying fits in and coordinates with all the rest of the teachings of the New Testament. There are some people who believe that the book of James contradicts Paul's writing on faith because of what James says about works and what James says about faith.

Let's see exactly what kind of faith that Paul is talking about here, when we come to the understanding of God's Word. Paul talks about *a faith that motivates you to obey God!* James is talking about *a faith that will motivate works of faith*. It's exactly the same thing. The difference that Paul is talking about is *a work*, which you do as an individual, which then you go before God and you claim debts God to you; that He must do something for you, because of what *you* have done. That's a *work of law* that Paul says. It's a particularly Jewish problem, because they truly, truly believe that their works compel God to do something for them. They are coming at the same kind of faith from a little bit different point of view.

Paul says, Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing *the Law* through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE!..." The Apostle John says, 'The one who says, he knows Him [Christ] and is not keeping His commandments is a liar and the Truth is not in him.' So they are all speaking the same thing. It's just like looking at a ball or sphere or picture. You can look at it from different angles, you're looking at the same thing, but you explain it in a little bit different way. And that is the only difference here.

"...Rather... [truly, through faith] ...we are establishing *the Law*" (v 31). Now what does that mean? *That means exactly the same thing as James is saying!*

I think it's very important that we do review this and fully understand all of Rom. 4 and James 2 in relation to *faith and works*. It's talking about the same kind of faith, but two different kinds of works.

James 2:14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says..."—professing. There is a

profession of faith, and that's what James is talking about, because his *works of faith* then are the complete faith. Paul is talking about *works of law of Judaism* to compel God to do something. But it's talking about the same faith.

"...if anyone says *that he* has faith..." (v 14).

- I love God, I believe God, *then turn around and swear and curse.*
- Oh, I think the Bible is the Word of God, Praise God for the Bible, *but do you obey the Bible?*
- Well, no I don't want to get into that kind of religious thing, but I believe the Bible is the Word of God.

There are no works to back up that faith, because if you truly have faith and truly believe it is going to give you the motivation to do what God wants you to do. That's the whole purpose of what James is saying here.

"...what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?" (v 14). Those who say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not done this? Have we not done that? Have we not done the other thing?' And that's a *profession!*

Let's review just a little bit differently than we did last time. Here is a *profession of faith*, but that profession of faith is *not faith in reality*.

It's just like as I've used the analogy before of water. Water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen combined. You cannot have water unless it's combined. You can have oxygen over here in isolation. You can have hydrogen over here in isolation. They do the exact opposite of water. They are both flammable; they both will burn. But when you combine them in H₂O, you have water and it does the opposite; it puts out the fire. So it's the same way with faith. If you have a *profession* over here, which is part of faith:

- I love the Lord
- I believe the Lord
- I think the Word of God is the Word of God
- I think the Bible is His Word

Then you have no works of faith to back up that belief. Can that faith save you? *Cannot!* There's no salvation in that *profession*.

Luke 6:46 coordinates with the same account of the Sermon on the Mount given by Jesus

in Matt. 5-7. This coordinates with Matt. 7:21.

Luke 6:46: “And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord’...” There are a lot of people would just go around and say, ‘Praise the Lord, bless the Lord, hallelujah.’ Jimmy Swaggart and how many others you want to name.

“...but you do not practice what I say?” (v 46). If you say, ‘Yes, Lord,’ and you don’t do it, *you have no faith*, so the *profession of faith* is meaningless.

Verse 47: “Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and practices them, I will show you what he is like.” Then he shows us a man that built on a rock and so forth.

The way the Bible was originally put together, the New Testament in particularly, the order of books was this: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts. In most of the Bibles we have that exactly in that order. However, in the inspired version, which is still the same Greek Byzantine text order of the books, after the book of Acts, you have James, 1st & 2nd-Peter, 1st, 2nd & 3rd-John, Jude and then you have Romans. So, when you read the Gospels and the book of Acts, then you come to the very first and perhaps the earliest epistle, which was written by James. It’s telling you very clearly that unless you do what God says, there is no salvation and that ***your life must reflect your profession by your works***. So that’s why it’s important to remember that.

James 2:15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food... [so, he gives a concrete example] ...and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it?” (vs 15-16).

You have on the other hand then, those who won’t work, which Paul said, ‘If they won’t work, they won’t eat.’ Then you have by choice and deliberation, those who are lazy and derelict, not someone who is destitute because of circumstances which have fallen upon them, not necessarily of their own making. We have to balance all of this with the rest of the Bible.

This is the indigent problem that we have today in America. ‘Oh, we got to feed the homeless. Oh, we got to feed the poor.’ But, we are creating them faster than we can feed them, because the state, the U.S. government, has legitimized ‘bastardhood.’ By having illegitimate babies, mothers out there whoring around, having children, creating criminals and crooks—not a widow indeed, not someone who has paid into Social Security—our politicians, to buy votes and destroy this nation, have created a whole class of derelicts.

Now the media comes on and says, ‘Oh, you’ve got to do this.’ Well, you see God would not solve it that way. He would take care of them, but He would say, ‘Go work! Stop your crime! Stop your whoredoms! Stop your fooling around! Marry that woman! Marry that man!’ There’s the opposite. ***There are works to help the poor without faith in the Word of God to correct it!*** You’ve got the two kinds.

- you have faithless works
 - you have workless faith
 - you have faith that works
- or*
- you have profession with no works

Verse 17: “In the same way also...” If you just tell them to be warmed and filled and don’t do the things that are necessary, what good does it do? What have you done?

“...faith... [by profession] ...if it does not have works, is dead, by itself” (v 17)—or being alone. *A profession can never accomplish!*

If you have an obligation to do, let’s say you buy something and you get installment payments. And you sign your name on the contract, ‘Yes, I will pay the first of every month.’ So, you don’t pay. After a couple of months they call you and they send you some letters and they call you and say, ‘Are you going to pay?’ *Oh, I’m going to pay. Yes, oh yes, I’m going to pay.* And it goes on and you never paid. Your profession did not result in works to take care of your obligation, same thing with faith.

Verse 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’...” He’s looking at the situation here because that’s precisely what he’s giving here.

“...*My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works... [separate from your works] ...and ***I will prove my faith to you through my works***” (v 18). In other words, he is saying that ‘What motivates him to do the things that he does is *faith in God!*’

Now he gets to the heart of it, v 19: “Do you believe that God is one?... [there are a lot of people out there who believe that God is one] ...You do well to believe this.... [nothing wrong with that, but then he gives this clarification]: ...Even the demons believe... [present tense] ...and tremble *in fear.*”

- Do you have the faith of Jesus Christ?
 - Christ’s very own faith in you?
- or*
- Do you have the *profession of faith*, which is the faith of demons?

They believe that God exists, but they won't do what God says! Now that may sound a little contradictory to say the faith of demons, but just think on that for a minute.

Verse 20: "But are you willing to understand... [Are you willing to comprehend? Are you willing to really put things together in the proper perspective of reality?] ...O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**? Was not Abraham our father justified by works..." (vs 20-21).

This is where the contradiction appears to be with Paul, because Paul says he was justified by faith. We'll go back and review that and see that it was talking about two separate incidences altogether. Abraham was justified because he believed, but he was also justified because *that belief caused him to do what God said*.

Verse 21: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and **by works his faith was perfected**?" (vs 21-22)—completed, made whole, achieve the results God wants.

Verse 23: "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Now, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness'; and he was called a friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.... [profession of faith] ...Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way?" (vs 23-25).

So, you've got Abraham, who's the epitome of the faithful, you might say, the best; then you have Rahab, whom you can say would be the worst. So it's showing that God requires faith from everyone, regardless of your status, regardless of whatever. It's all so interesting when you begin to understand it, that Abraham being a Hebrew—a lot of people think that Abraham was a Jew, but that's not correct; Abraham was a Hebrew, and Rahab was a Canaanite.

This shows a very interesting thing, that even the Canaanite woman, who was a harlot **believed** God! You go back and read the account. She says, 'Oh, I have heard the wonderful things that the Lord did, in bringing you out of Egypt and how He destroyed all those nations before you. And everyone here is afraid and we know we are just going to be like grasshoppers before your Lord.' So there was a lot more to Rahab's situation that just hanging out the scarlet thread to show where her window was, that it would not be destroyed. But she was justified because *she did what God wanted* her to do!

Let's see how that every one of Abraham's actions in obedience to God was **a result of faith**, was **a result of belief**. There was one instance that the Apostle Paul refers to where all Abraham could do was *believe*. There was no action required.

Genesis 12:1: "And the LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you.'" Here is *the faith of Abraham!* He and Isaac and Jacob wandered in that land of Canaan all those years and never received the promise of that inheritance to personally have themselves. Now you think about that; that's much like us. We have been promised the Kingdom, but we don't receive it until the resurrection. .

Abraham being *the father of the faithful* and Abraham also being *a friend of God*—and we'll also see that *we are called the friends of Christ*, because we have that same faith—but there is so much here compacted into the teaching, into the whole account of Abraham. At this point he was called Abram and not Abraham. But notice the promise. Here's the promise. 'Do you believe God, what He has promised?' Well Abraham did.

God said, v 2: "'And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.' Then Abram departed, even as the LORD had spoken to him...." (vs 2-4).

What if Abram said, 'Well now, LORD, why don't You prove it to me that You're going to do this? I will do it LORD, when I see You do some work for me.' Now you see how the shoe gets put on the other foot and too many people have it that way. The only one that God ever did that for was Gideon. Remember Gideon said, 'Well, Lord, how am I going to know I'm going to win this battle?' He says, 'I'll make you a proposition, Lord, I'll put the fleece down here and if in the morning that fleece is dry, I'll believe that I'm going to win the battle.' So, he came back in the morning and what happened? The fleece was dry, no dew on it. So he said, 'Well, let's reverse this Lord. Let's have no dew on the ground and all the dew in the fleece and let me check it tomorrow and if it's that way then I'll go ahead.' So, God indulged and did it. But, very seldom does God do it that way.

In Gen. 15 we also find the blessing that God has given here, where He said, 'You will have the seed from your own body.'

Genesis 15:5: "And He brought him outside... [this was at night, took him out outside the camp] ...and said, 'Look now toward the heavens

and number the stars... [count the stars] ...if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’”

What was Abraham supposed to do? *Nothing!* There was no work required. This is why Paul said, ‘That Abraham *believed* God’ and quoted the Scripture, because in this case there was no work. He had to believe God, because God *is* God. He couldn’t count the stars. God didn’t tell him, ‘Look Abraham count the stars and then do this.’ He said, ‘Abraham, I want you to come out here and I want you to look at these stars.’ Quite an awesome thing, no smog then. And I suppose the Middle East is just like Texas. The stars are bigger there. Here it is in the desert night and looking up at all those stars and God says to Abraham, ‘Now I want you to understand Abraham, if you can count all of these—which he could not do—I want to tell you, My promise to you is going to be that your seed will be as the multitude of the stars in heaven.

Verse 6: “And **he believed in** the LORD.... [Not only believed what He said, but *believed* in Him: in His power, in His capacity, and in His ability to do what He said He would do.] ...and He counted **it to him for righteousness.**”

We won’t go through all the story about Ishmael; that created a lot of problems. We won’t go through the story of the promise of the covenant through circumcision; that was done by faith.

Ishmael was then 13-years-old when Isaac was born and Abraham was 100-years-old. When he believed God there in Gen. 15 he was 87-years-old. He had been walking with God 12 years. So that was about half way in-between. Abraham then believed God before he was circumcised. When we get to Rom. 4 we need to understand why that is so important. That’s because you are not going to obligate God to do something for you, because you do something physical. God is going to base it upon:

- the heart
- the faith
- the belief

—not ‘hocus pocus dominocus,’ what you do. That is *a work*. So, circumcision without faith is of no avail.

Gen. 22 is the account that James uses to show that Abraham was justified, made right before God, because his faith produced the action of obeying God and what God said to do under the most difficult and extreme circumstances.

God said to Abraham, Genesis 22:2: “...‘Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him...’”

Heb. 11 shows that by that time, Abraham’s faith was so strong that *he knew* that God would raise Isaac from the dead. If that’s what God said to do and God is Holy, righteous and pure; if God is true and everything about God is right—which it is—then *he knew* that God could raise him from the dead and that what He was asking him to do was within the realm of what God chose to ask him to do and he should act in faith upon that. You know the whole account; just when he was ready to offer him, all of a sudden there was a ram caught in the thicket.

I personally believe that God instantaneously created that offering substitute animal for Isaac, right there. Because Abraham got up and he looked all around before he put Isaac on the altar and there was no offering. Even Isaac said, ‘Father, where is the offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide.’ And He did—didn’t He? By supernatural intervention! But what I want you to understand here is *why this is so powerful* and *why the impact of this with James is so important*. What James is doing, he is filling in the other half of Paul. Let’s put it the other way around, since James wrote first, Paul is filling in the other half of James.

Verse 11: “And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’” I guess I would too, right at that minute ready to put the knife to the throat of my own son, my only son, and being 112-plus-years-old! I’d say, ‘Here I am,’ too.

Verse 12: “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, for **now I know that you fear God...**’” Did God not know that before? Did Abraham commit a lot of sins, break God’s laws? Well it’s not recorded that he did! Let’s understand something here. From the time Abraham was 75-years-old until a minimum of one 112-years-old, that is 37 years of:

- walking with God
- being a friend of God
- believing God
- keeping His commandments

Genesis 26:5: “‘Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’” For 37 years he did this.

Then He says, Genesis 22:12: “...‘now I know that you fear God...’” God could conclude that after this life of 37 years of living God’s way, walking with God, talking with God.

“...**now I know** that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (v 12).

There are many analogies we can draw on here concerning God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Many different stories we can glean out of this, but we won't take the time to do that. But we need to ask the questions:

- What about me?
- What about you?
- Can God say that of you?

or

- Are you looking for an opportunity to disobey God by weakness and excuse?
- By deliberation and viciousness?

or

- Is your human nature still so much in control of you that God doesn't know that you truly fear Him?

You need to think about that and you need to ask yourself that question, because we are dealing with:

- a personal God
- a personal Savior
- a personal calling
- a personal faith
- a personal salvation

—*and God is testing you personally!* It's not a corporate thing; because you belong to a church salvation is automatic. It's not a corporate thing; because we circumcise our sons on the eighth day that they are all going to be saved. ***It is an individual and personal thing!*** But notice the magnitude of what happened after this. Then he offered the ram in its place.

Verse 15: “And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, ‘By Myself have I sworn’...” (vs 15-16).

God doesn't need to swear, because God's Word is true and God's Word is right. God needs no witness to say that He is true. We as human beings may need to sign affidavits to guarantee something. God doesn't. But to absolutely, profoundly show the irreversibility of what God has promised to and through Abraham, He says:

Verse 16: “...‘**By Myself have I sworn,**’ says the LORD, ‘**because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you,** and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and as the sand, which is upon the seashore. And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because you have obeyed My voice**’” (vs 16-18).

The belief then, which is the faith, which then produces the *works of faith!* You apply that to your Christian life. There are a whole lot more lessons in here that we could go at—we could probably spend just three or four sermons alone just

on the life of Abraham.

Let's see where Paul talking about the same thing. Now, I know this is a little repetitious, but I think it's so profound and I think it's so important and I think it's something that we have to fully comprehend and grasp in order to understand what kind of faith we need to have.

I talked to a person recently who was a Sunday-keeper, and this person said, when I said we ought to keep the commandments of God:

- Oh, but no one can keep the commandments of God!

Do you murder?

- Oh, no!

Do you steal?

- Oh, no!

Are you keeping the commandments of God? Sure you are. Oh, but the Sabbath thing now. You really don't believe God. You want all the good things. You want *your* sins forgiven. See how selfish that Protestant religion is?

- God, we appropriate Your name.

No one appropriates the name of Jesus Christ. He calls you.

You don't have the grace of God given to you because you decide you're good enough to keep Sunday. That is not a work of faith. That is ***a work of disobedience, a work of disbelief,*** because God says, ‘Remember the Sabbath,’ *not Sunday*, ‘to keep it Holy,’ *not Sunday*. For in six days God created the heavens and the earth and all that therein is and rested the seventh-day and blessed it and sanctified it and hallowed it’ and said, ‘Keep the Sabbath Day.’

What do you think Abraham did? As Jesus said when the Pharisees and Sadducees said, ‘We're Abraham's seed.’ He says, ‘I know that. If you were truly Abraham's children you would do the works of Abraham,’ because he had faith.

Romans 3:31: “Are we, then, abolishing *the* Law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE!.... [truly, righteously] ...Rather, we are establishing *the* Law.”

- the Law is kept through faith
- the Law is kept through love

As Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments.’ If you don't love God, you're not going to keep His commandments. If you profess, ‘I love God,’ but don't keep His commandments—what did John say? *You're a liar! You are living a lie!* And what is the lie concerning Sabbath and Sunday? The lie is that Sunday is the day for the New Testament! *That is the lie!* Jesus said, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus

Christ, is Lord of the Sabbath.’ You can apply that to anything of God.

- Is not God Lord of the first commandment? *You shall have no other Gods before Me!*
- Is God not Lord of the second commandment? *No idols to be made or bow down and worship them!*
- Is God not Lord of the third commandment? *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain!*
- Is not God Lord of the fourth commandment? *Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy!*
- Is He not the Lord of all of them? *Yes!*
- Do you **believe** that?

If you do and you act upon that, you are **establishing law because you believe God!** Because God cares for us!

We could take the same example of clean and unclean meats. God says don’t eat these things. Why? God is love; God cares for us! And now we find more and more there are things then, which show that we shouldn’t eat these unclean foods, such as parasites, or disease or toxins that are in these things; which God says are not food, but which people consider food and they are going to eat them, so they get sick and die, because they didn’t believe God. They thought *their works* of refrigeration, of cooking, whatever, is going to undo what God said. *Never happen!*

(go to the next track)

Romans 4:6: “Even as David also declares the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works...” God is going to give it to you and that righteousness is right standing before God. It does not relieve us from keeping the commandments of God. It changes the whole perspective of how we approach the commandments of God.

Verse 7: “Blessed are *those* whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is the* man to whom *the* Lord will not impute *any* sin.’ Now then, *does* this blessedness *come* upon the circumcision *only*, or also upon the uncircumcision? For we are saying that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness.... [so, he quotes it again]: ...In what condition, therefore was it imputed? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision...” (vs 7-10).

Gen. 15 is where he believed God, was before circumcision. As a matter of fact, 12 years ahead of time. Now this becomes very galling to the Jews. Oh, they in their arrogance think every other person besides a Jew is unworthy of anything. That’s

why they’ve suffered all that they’ve suffered through these years. And very simple for the Jews—just believe God. Don’t trust in your works. Same way with you as a Christian, just believe God. Don’t trust in your works. Let your works be a reflection of your trust and faith in God!

“...but in uncircumcision. And *afterwards* he received *the* sign of circumcision, *as* a seal of the righteousness of the faith that *he had* in the *condition* of uncircumcision, that he might become *the* father of all those who believe, though they have not been circumcised, in order that the righteousness *of faith* might also be imputed to them” (vs 10-11).

This is the whole thing, which upset the whole New Testament Church. What a terrible situation they went through with this argument of circumcision and uncircumcision. WOW! You think you have problems in today’s faith, you think you have problems in today’s world. There are problems in any generation of Christians, in any age, as we are going to see when we get to James 3.

Verse 12: “And *that he* might become *the* father of *the* circumcision—not to those who are of the circumcision only, but also to those who walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had during *his* uncircumcision. For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be **heir of the world...**” (vs 12-13). Notice how that whole promise was expanded, not just the land, but “...**heir of the world...**”

“...*was* not *given* through law; rather, *it was* through *the* righteousness of faith; because if those of *the* law *be* *the* heirs, *then* faith is made void, and the promise *is* made of no effect” (vs 13-14).

In other words, if you compel God to do something *because of what you do*, there is no faith involved. Now what about those who believe God? God does not, has not, will not ever operate on that basis whatsoever—Old Testament or New Testament. It has to be on belief. It has to be on faith and you have to have the works of faith. You cannot have faith without works.

Verse 15: “For the Law works out wrath...” The Law tells right and wrong. It doesn’t make you do anything. The Law only corrects you when you break it. But since, as human beings, we need God’s forgiveness. You can’t forgive law-breaking with law-keeping. It must be an act separate and above and beyond, that’s called:

- forgiveness
- justification
- made in right standing with God

That’s what he is saying here, “...because where no law is, *there is* no transgression” (v 15). We see that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Verse 16: “For this reason *it is* of faith, in order that *it might be* by grace, to the end that the promise might be certain to all the seed...”

In you shall all the nations of the world be blessed! What seed do we have? Be we Jew or Gentile? The seed of the begettal that comes from God the Father! Are we not the children of Abraham? Are we not heirs of the promise? Yes!

“...not to the one who is of the law only, but also to the one who is of *the* faith of Abraham, who is *the* father of us all, (exactly as it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’) before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; *and* who against hope **believed in hope...**” (vs 16-18). ***There are times when you just have to believe in hope!***

- there’s nothing concrete there
- there is nothing you can put your hand on
- there is nothing you can hold and hug

But you believe in hope because God said so!

That’s what it was with Abraham. Look at him, he went 25 years before Isaac was born and the older he got the more hopeless from a physical point of view it became for him to have children, *but he still believed God!* That’s the kind of faith we need to have. Not that God is going to do our will, but that kind of faith that *He is going to do His will.*

Imagine when Abraham is resurrected and God says, ‘This is just the first resurrection Abraham, but I want you to see all the spiritual sons of God that are in the Kingdom of God, because of the promise that I gave to you, because you offered your only son Isaac, ***because you believed My promise.*** And furthermore, all of those that come into the Kingdom during the Millennium are going to be your seed. All of the nations from this time on are going to be of your seed, and by the time this whole great plan of God is finished, how many are going to be the seed of Abraham? That staggers the mind! Can we not then believe God?

Verse 19: “And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah’s womb; and he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; for he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able ... [had the power, the ‘dunamis’] ...to do” (vs 19-21).

Now there are a lot of people who have *profession of faith* and they don’t act upon that profession. They want to be Christians by profession, but not in deed, *not in works of faith.* If

you don’t have that *works of faith* and we’re going to see, just like the body has no spirit is dead, so *the mouthing of faith is worthless, being alone!*

Let’s see that we are all the children of Abraham.

- the more that we study the Word of God
- the more that we drink in the Word of God
- the more that we really get in and let the Word of God dwell in us richly

as the Apostle Paul said

- with the Spirit of God
- the more there is for us

—because the Word of God is so profound. The Word of God is so absolutely magnificent that we can be fed continuously to the very depths of our being and beyond that capacity as God gives us His Spirit to understand God’s way.

So, we can’t count on our works by saying, ‘Oh well, I know the Word of God, yeah, I studied that. Yep, yep! I’m preaching the same thing I did 34 years ago.’ Well, that’s fine, but what about today? That’s why we have to grow in grace and knowledge. We can’t ever be at a point where we say we know God’s Word. We cannot ever be at a point that we say as long as we are living in the flesh that ‘I am perfected.’ No we are not! We are being perfected, but that completion of perfection is *at the resurrection!*

Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of *you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (vs 26-27).

That’s what we need to have. Just like Abraham had to count the cost concerning Isaac, Jesus said that *we have to count the cost.* We have to put everything aside for that belief and the precious promise of being the very children of God. And that’s what the baptism of Christ is all about.

Verse 28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” That is, as you stand before the throne of God. Living in this physical world we’re still male and female, and whatever we may be gives us no special standing before God. What gives us the special standing before God ***is God’s choice of us in Christ!***

“...for you are all one in Christ Jesus.... [that’s why James says, ‘Brethren, my beloved brethren,’ etc.] ...And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise.” (vs 28-29). That’s why the faith of Abraham is so mightily, mightily important.

Let’s go back to John 15 and let’s see also

something else that is applied to us by the very words of Jesus. Not only is Abraham called the father of the faithful, but he was also called a friend of God. Now that's a special relationship and you need to understand that.

John 15:7: "If you dwell in Me... [living and dwelling in Christ] ...and My words dwell in you..." That's what's so important. The words of Christ have to be living in you and that's what James is saying! If the Spirit of God is in you, if the words of Christ are living you, how are you going to conduct your life? That's the whole book of James.

"...and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you" (v 7). But what does our will have to be? *Not my will be done, but Your will be done!* Then we can ask what we will, because it's according to the will of God and it will be done.

Verse 8: "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear **much fruit**... [*works of faith*] ...so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love" (vs 7-9).

John 14:15—where Jesus said 'continue in My love. "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely **My** commandments" How?

- based on love
- based on faith
- based on the Word of God living in you
- based on Christ living in you
- based on you living in Christ

Quite a different thing than to say, 'Here's a Law of God if I do it, God is going to have to do something for me.' You don't obligate God to you. I hope you see the difference in *a work of law*, which people create to enslave God to themselves, which He will never be.

John 15:10: "If you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love." The whole motivation of what you do then is based upon love and faith.

Verse 11: "These things I have spoken so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love en to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 10-14).

- Do you want to argue with Christ?
- Do you want to pick and choose?

This is a broad definition: "...whatever I command you." But the point is, just like Abraham, we are the friends of God. And if we are the friends of God and if we love God, will we do anything contrary to that love? *Not willingly! Not in hypocritical premeditation!* That's what James is saying all the way through here.

Now let's go back to the book of James 2. There are many other Scriptures we could bring out, but we could perhaps preach a whole year just on faith alone. We see that James is talking about the faith of the mouth by profession vs the faith of the heart because you believe. And when you have the faith of the heart because you believe, you will have **works of faith** to do as Abraham did!

James 2:23: "...he was called a friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only... [or profession only] ...Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way? For as the body without *the* spirit is dead, in the same way also, **faith without works is dead**" (vs 23-26).

Now this is quite an analogy for us. Have you ever seen a dead body? If you have, is it living? *No!* The same way with faith! If you have faith, you're going to have the *works of faith*. And if you don't have the works of faith, **you are a dead corpse**, Scripturally speaking. Because just as a dead corpse is dead and no life in it, *so your profession from your mouth...* That's why when we get to James 3 it gets right into talking about the tongue, so the book of James is really fantastic when we get to it. But your profession with your lips, your profession with your tongue, **if you don't have works of faith, it's dead!**

This is what Paul is talking about in writing the book of Hebrews and he wrote the book of Hebrews. Luke probably was the one who did the writing for him. People say, 'Well, I don't know if this was written by the Apostle Paul, because his name wasn't there.' Well, they are not smart enough to even realize and understand, remember how he was received in Jerusalem? Do you think that the Apostle Paul could write a letter and say, 'The Apostle Paul to the Jews in Jerusalem?' Why, even those that believed were ready to stone him, because he was teaching the uncircumcised Gentiles to follow God and keep the Passover without being circumcised. That's why his name isn't here. Regardless, it's still the Word of God.

Here is the very foundation of which all of our faith has to be built upon and that foundation is Christ.

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to

lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Here are the steps on how that is laid, Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles... [going beyond] ...of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection...”

Which is what we need to be doing and that’s what James is writing about here. And as we see when we’ll get into James 3, he’s talking about the perfect man. No one has made it, yet, but we:

“...go on to perfection; not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works...” (v 1)—works without faith. ‘We be Abraham’s seed therefore God is obligated to us.’ **No!** Those are the kind of dead works, the washings of pots and pans and all the things of the traditions of Judaism: ***the works that have no faith!***

“...and *of* faith in God” (v 1). We’re talking about faith with works of faith. Not only faith toward God, but God’s faith *in* you.

Verse 2: “Of *the* doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of *the* resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will do this, if indeed God permits” (vs 2-3).

He was saying to them in Heb. 5, ‘Look! I really want to preach some things to you about Christ, but they are hard and difficult to say and you ought to be able to take them, but now you need someone to come along with a bottle and just feed you the wittle itty bitty milk.’ He says, ‘Strong meat is for them who have had their senses exercised by the Word of God and the faith of God.’ And that’s what we need to be doing. That’s what he’s saying here he wants to do. Go beyond these basic things.

There comes a time we need to get out of the sandbox. There comes a time we need to get out of elementary school. There comes a time we need to get out of junior high school and high school and college. There’s a time when we need to be growing in this grace and knowledge and walking toward the light of Christ in every thing that we do. Listen, no one can ever—and I want you to know this, too, of any of us, including me, none of us can ever say we have ever arrived at anything completely, perfectly in this flesh. That’s why the Apostle Paul says, ‘I count not myself to have apprehended...’ He’s going toward that goal.

Then after this, Paul gives warning of the unpardonable sin and there be some that are on the verge of doing that when you start throwing away the Truth of the Bible, start throwing away the things that the Word of God tells us, start choosing because your faith is not perfected with your works, because you want to do what you want to do:

- put away your wife
- keep Sunday
- eat unclean foods
- keep Christmas
- believe in a 15 Passover

All of these stupid heresies being re-circled into the Church is incredible! It’s just like the winds blowing around. Here it comes back again! ***We need to be rooted and grounded in Christ!***

Let’s see how we can have this righteousness and this faith of God and how it needs to be done in our lives. Very important for us so that we can have *the motivation of faith*, so that we can have the works then which are there because of what we believe. I’ll tell you one thing for sure, every one of your works that you do in your life are essentially motivated by what you believe. You think about that. That is absolutely true! If you don’t believe in Christ totally, how do you think your works are going to be? *Same degree!*

Philippians 3:1: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in *the* Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you *is* not troublesome, but for you *it is* safe.... [or it was necessary] ...Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, **beware of the concision**” (vs 1-2). ***Yes!*** What is the concision? ***The totally cut off ones!***

In other words Paul is saying we’re not dealing with circumcision with these people, because instead of circumcising they like to hack up the faith and claim that through your belief you have no salvation because you are not a Jew and you are not a proselyte. Paul is saying, ‘Beware of the circumcision, concision here.’

Verse 3: “For we are the circumcision... [circumcised with the circumcision of Christ in our minds by conversion] ...who serve God in *the* spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the* flesh; though I might...” (vs 3-4). That’s why God chose Paul, because he was right there at the pinnacle of Judaism, a Pharisee.

Verse 4: “Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more.” He says, ‘I’ve got more reason to.’ Here’s why.

Verse 5: “Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, from *the* tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal, persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless.... [don’t confuse that with sinless] ...Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ” (vs 5-7). That’s how we need to view it. Notice what he says, ‘Yes and

undoubtedly, doubtless.’

Verse 8: “But then truly, I count **all things**... [every single thing is what that means in the Greek] ...to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things”—physical—all the things he trusted in physically he suffered the loss of because he believed in Christ.

“...and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ” (v 8). There are other four letter words which can apply to that, but he says, ‘My whole life was a pile of manure.’ Is that how we view our lives? When Paul was first called he said, ‘Well I wasn’t worthy to be called an apostle.’ And later on he said that he was sinning because he persecuted the Church and then in his last letter to Timothy he says, ‘**A sinner of whom I am chief,**’ which means that as you progress in your Christian life you understand:

- the righteousness of God more
- the mercy of God more
- the love of God more
- the faith of God more

You are going to see yourself in the truer light as James points out here, that you are nothing but walking, breathing sin in mind and body and spirit without Christ. That’s what Paul is saying here. He didn’t want anything of his own.

Verse 9: “And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law...”

You can have a standard that you do. *Remember Job!* Remember Job, the most righteous man besides Christ who ever walked the face of the earth; *for his own works he was unacceptable to God without faith!* That’s the whole trial of Job. Yes, he might have the righteousness of the law. He doesn’t want that, which is his own, but that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness that is of God by faith. And that of means ‘ek’—coming from God. And it’s Christ’s own faith

- in you
- from God
- to you
- in you and through you
- back to Christ

for the just shall live by faith; ***from faith unto faith!*** That’s what that means.

And now he says, v 10: “That I may know Him...” And that’s the whole burning desire of our lives brethren; to know God. If that’s not the burning desire of your life and if that is not the source of your faith and if that is not the belief that is in you,

examine yourself as to why you profess Christianity at all.

- Do you want to be thought well of by people? *You have your reward!*
- Do you want rules and regulations to have a pleasant life? *You have your reward!*
- Do you want eternal life? You do it God’s way!

Verse 10: “That I [you] may know Him, and the power... [‘dunamis’] ...of His resurrection...” To make that dead corpse stand alive by the power and the Word of God!

That’s what we’re talking about. That’s the whole motivation behind everything that is written in the Bible. Not so that we can be sweet and nice and lovely and have a religion and be thought well of in a community and wonderful standing in the world. Paul said, ‘**Dung! Dung! Dung! Dung!**’

“...and the fellowship of His sufferings...” (v 10). We’re going to suffer, guaranteed! Did Christ suffer? You think you are going to waltz into the Kingdom of God? Just strumming a happy tune? *Forget it!*

“...being conformed to His death; if by any means...” (vs 10-11). That God wants me to be there, however it may be, whatever my lot, how it may come to me makes no difference at all.

“...I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [this needs to be our attitude and this is how we can finish James 2]: ... **but I am striving...**” (vs 10-12).

- in faith
- in belief
- by works of faith
- by works of love
- by works of hope

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained... [here’s our concurrent attitude of walking in faith that we need to do] ...but *this one thing I do...*” (vs 12-13). Let’s apply that to us personally. Let the ‘I’ of Paul become the ‘I’ of you.

“...forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13). ***The grace of God covers our entire life!*** Don’t worry what has happened. Don’t worry of the things that have been difficult in your life. If God is with you and for you, nothing is against you at all whatsoever. Paul says “***...this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind...***” In other words, do not destroy tomorrow with the lack of faith by rehearsing the sins of yesterday.

“...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead... [everything that God has called us to] ...I press... [with the work of faith] ...toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (vs 13-14). That’s where our faith and that’s where our hope and that’s where our lives need to be, just like that.

Here is a promise right here, v 15: “So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind....” That’s the only perfection you can have in the flesh, is *be* this kind of minded and perfected by God’s Spirit. And here’s a promise that if you do that, if you’re striving for that as Paul did.

“...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15). So, you can repent of it and be right with God.

That’s what it means to have works of faith and if that is so, then you have the Spirit of God and the body is alive and well.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scripture References:

- 1) Romans 3:31
- 2) James 2:14
- 3) Luke 6:46-47
- 4) James 2:15-25
- 5) Genesis 12:1-4
- 6) Genesis 15:5-6
- 7) Genesis 22:2, 11-12
- 8) Genesis 26:5
- 9) Genesis 22:12, 15-18
- 10) Romans 3:31
- 11) Romans 4:6-21
- 12) Galatians 3:26-29
- 13) John 15:7-9
- 14) John 14:15
- 15) John 15:10-14
- 16) James 2:23-26
- 17) 1 Corinthians 3:11
- 18) Hebrews 6:1-3
- 19) Philippians 3:1-15

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5-7
- Hebrews 11; 5
- James 3

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