

Epistle of James IV Profession of Faith without Works is Dead!

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James 2:5: “My beloved brethren...” All the way through, whenever James talks to the people in the Church, he calls them *brethren; my beloved*, in this case.

“...listen. Did not God Himself... [middle-voice verb] ...choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor *man*.... [by saying, ‘come and be under my footstool.’] ...Do not the rich oppress you, and do they *not* drag you into *the* courts? Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called? If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well” (vs 5-8).

That’s the whole theme of this epistle; love your neighbor as yourself, take care of your life in doing the things you need to do based upon faith.

Verse 9: “But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘You shall not commit murder.’ Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* Law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave... [as compared to breaking the law] ...as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom. For the one who has dealt without mercy *will be* judged without mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment” (vs 9-13).

Verse 5: “...Did not God Himself choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him?”

Again, I want to emphasize that, especially in the general epistles, and especially in the Epistles of 1st, 2nd, & 3rd-John, this aspect of the present tense, *loving Him*. Now that is a present tense participle: *who are loving Him!*

Verse 6: “But you have dishonored the poor *man*....” Why? *Because you do not accept him as someone that has been called of God*, the greatest thing in the world that could happen to someone.

“...Do not the rich oppress you, and do they *not* drag you into *the* courts?” (v 6).

Let’s stop here and add a little bit something concerning the Jewish synagogue. They had courts

in the synagogues. Remember the Apostle Paul got orders from the high priest and went to the synagogues to get any of them who were of that way, who were Christians. So, we have even in the synagogues that were Christian, we still had those who were non-believers.

Remember, as I pointed out in the first section of this that it says here in v 2 ‘synagogue,’ but back in James 5, it says, ‘If any is sick, let him call for the elders of the Church.’ So the Church was a secondary thing within the synagogue. What he’s actually talking about here, are not only brethren, but also those they come in contact *within* the synagogues. Remember that James was honored and accepted by a lot of the Jewish leaders of Judaism, because of his righteousness. What was happening here, they were dragging the poor ones into court, the synagogue court, and of course, you’re going to have as it were a ‘stacked’ court.

Verse 7: “Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called?” That means *denying Christ!* This was an *inner synagogue problem* that was taking place. Who are the ones who would be blaspheming but the rich Sadducees, the rich Pharisees, the ones who rejected Christ, but would still come to the synagogues?

And I’ll just call your attention to the fact that wherever the Apostle Paul went and preached in the synagogues it ended up sooner or later in a riot. They split the synagogue and in some cases, as in Corinth they went and met in the house right next to the synagogue. It was the house of the leading rabbi, who had a house right next to the synagogue. They would meet there on the Sabbath and the Jews who didn’t believe would meet in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Now, you talk about dividing the line. That is really it!

So, here you had this interplay within the synagogues, v 7: “Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called?... [actually or realistically] ...If you are truly keeping... [Present tense active verb] ...*the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well” (vs 7-8). You’re not looking down on people, you’re not pressing people, you’re not talking about them, etc.

Verse 9: “But if you have respect of persons, you are **practicing sin**...” That is *doing, missing the mark*. I could have translated it: *you are missing the mark*.

But then the next phrase: "...being convicted by the law as transgressors" (v 9)—'hamartia'—which means a *sinner, a transgressor*. So what he is talking about here is the **severity of the law that Christians experience when they see themselves sinning**. To them it becomes a **greater** thing because they understand the love of God, whereas just people in the world and their carnal ordinary way wouldn't mean that much to them.

"...being convicted by the law as transgressors... [and then I retained the word *sin* instead of *missing the mark* because]: ...for if anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all" (vs 9-10).

Let's look at some of the laws that relate to this. First of all, 1-John 3:4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness."

Now, let's understand something here concerning the rich man and Jesus (Matt. 19). Here is a perfect case of a test to respect a rich man or not. The rich man came and said to Him, 'Good Master, what good thing should I do to have eternal life?' What was the first thing that Jesus said? '*Do not call Me good. There is none good but one, and that is God!*' He wasn't allowing Himself to be ingratiated by the rich man, was not respecting persons.

Jesus said, '*If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.*' And the rich man said, 'Which?' So, He named off the commandments and all of those who were super sharp say, 'Well, He didn't mention the Sabbath, so therefore, we don't have to keep the Sabbath.' That's not the question. So then, after Jesus said, 'Honor your father and mother, shall not commit adultery, shall not steal, shall not do murder'; the young man said, '*I have done these from my youth up.*' Jesus said, 'You lack one thing, yet.' Why did He say that? **Because He knew the young man was trusting in his riches, his status, his importance!** Jesus said, 'Go sell everything that you have and come and follow Me and you shall have riches in heaven.'

You need to think on that in relationship to this chapter, because this is where the Apostle James is making the differentiation between the rich and the poor, because the rich want to come in and always leverage their position somehow and their wealth and their riches. And Jesus made it absolutely clear that doesn't 'cut any mustard' with God, because after all, **you have nothing that God didn't give you in the first place!** So, if you sell it and give it all to the poor, in reality you haven't lost anything, because you have found eternal life. For those of us who want more, look at the prospect of having someone like that give up all that they have. We end up with the same conclusion that the disciples did,

which was, 'Lord'—after the rich man walked away—'how is it that anybody is going to be saved?' What did Jesus say? '*How scarcely, how difficult, how severe it's going to be for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God,*' because they themselves were looking at it from just a physical point of view. And yet, what happens? *That same thing happens!*

Lev. 19—James is quoting that section of the Bible in reference to 'loving your neighbor as yourself.' We will see that there are many aspects that we've covered in the previous verses, such as judging; such as not bridling your tongue; and not bridling your tongue becomes a very important thing.

I think that's one of the biggest and most difficult problems within the Churches of God, especially those that are involved in character assassination, because someone leaves them.

I talked to a man last night who said that he talked to an elder who is in their Church and the elder said that the elder says that he 'knows' Fred Coulter; he's involved in palm reading. I said to that individual, I said, 'You tell him he owes me a phone call and if I don't get one in two weeks, I going to call him,' because I never have been involved in palm reading at all. He's not controlling his tongue—is he? And his religion is vain—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* If he won't come and confront the person directly... What does Matt. 18 say? *If you have a fault against your brother, you go to him between you alone and get it resolved.* If that doesn't work, take one or two more. If that doesn't work, then tell it to the Church. But don't carry the thing on and let your **uncontrollable tongue plow** through the universe.

We find all of that here in Leviticus 19:13. "You shall not defraud your neighbor nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not stay with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God. I *am* the LORD. **You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment...** [see how this follows right along with what James is writing] **...you shall not respect the person of the poor...** [you are not to respect persons, rich or poor] **...nor honor the person of the mighty...** [or the wealthy; that's exactly what we're talking about in James 2] **...but you shall judge your neighbor in righteousness. You shall not go as a slanderer among your people...**" (vs 13-16).

'Whosoever does not bridle his tongue that man's religion is in vain.' It is absolutely amazing how that just leaps off the page.

"...you shall not stand idly by the blood of

your neighbor. I am the LORD” (v 16). *To have him convicted of something worthy of death for which he is not worthy!*

Just like this law that they have, and now they arrested this man in San Jose, the grandfather. It wasn't even his gun. He wasn't even home. He didn't even know where it was, but they have a law, child-endangerment law, that if a child gets a gun and has an accident that you are liable, and the sentence is three years in jail. *No law was ever designed anywhere to prevent accidents!*

It says, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Don't stand against the blood of your neighbor. That's exactly what's happening here. Don't you think the grandfather is already broken up enough? Don't you think the family has already suffered enough? *Oh yes, but the district attorney says, 'If I couldn't get a conviction, I wouldn't do it.'* I looked at that district attorney and I thought, because I just studied this one here where it says *mercy triumphs over judgment*. Just like in our little town of Hollister. I tell you that district attorney is out to make himself a name, trampling over everybody's rights to get as many convictions as he can, so he can make himself politically a 'wonderful' man, tough on law and order.

Verse 17: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart..." Same with James, you're judging people and you have evil opinions. That's why James is so fantastic. *It is day-to-day living, comparing our motives and actions with loving our neighbors as our self and with the proper expression of our faith!*

Brethren, just as you, I find myself falling way short of those things. I have to confess before God, I do. So don't feel bad if you do. This is typical of all Christians. That's why it is there, because *we cannot have any perfection without Christ!* Don't feel bad if you look at this and you find that you are imperfect. That's what the mirror of looking into the law is all about; you see how imperfect you are.

Verse 17: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall always admonish your neighbor, that you may not bear sin because of him. You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people..." (vs 17-18). The anger of man does not equal the righteousness of God.

"...but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself.** I am the LORD” (v 18). There we go; *the whole theme of the book of James*, right there. You could go through and study other sections in the Old Testament and see how it just absolutely fits it to a 'T.'

Does this mean you have the power to

forgive or do you have to ask God to help you forgive? *I would say, both!* You have the power to forgive, but there are times when you have to ask God to help you forgive.

Let's look at it this way: When some little thing is not done at home, especially when your children don't do it—and I'm speaking of myself—it's so simple and you see that they haven't done it, you get all upset and you really crush down on them. But they go out and smash up the car and you're worried if they are alive? Smashing up the car was worse, but in that event you see the magnitude of it and you're more concerned about their life, and they are all worried about the car, because they know that they got *blue-blazes* last time that they did this little ole thing over here and **look at this car**. You'll have it happen to you, it happened to me.

I would say in both cases; in the small instance you have to ask God to give you the power to forgive because it's more, you dump more on them for the little thing than for the big thing. You are more willing to forgive the big thing because they're alive and well and you love them, but the little thing they are supposed to understand that. 'So why didn't you do that?' It could be anything:

- turn out the light
- shut the refrigerator door
- don't leave the heat on at night
- pick up your room
- make it clean

—whatever it may be, a thousand and one different things—

- How many times have I told you to put your dirty clothes in the dirty clothes hamper and not on the floor?
- if you want these things washed, you go wash them yourself
- I'm not your maid
- What's for dinner?
- we just got done eating
- Don't you want to eat when we're ready?

All of those things, in those things you need to ask God to help you to be able to forgive; I do. In the bigger things it comes more easily, because the magnitude that they are living is more important.

James 2:10: "for if anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all." Why? *Because sin is sin!* A person who says, 'I haven't committed adultery,' but then you are a murderer; are you any better than an adulterer? Or whatever and you can take any category you wanted to and go right down the line with it. But if you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. Now, *because* of all of these things

Verse 12: "In this manner speak and in this

manner behave... [How we are to speak? How we are to behave?]: ... as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom.” So that we have our conduct above reproach so we’re not in there sinning right and left all the time. He’s saying *that’s the perfect goal*. We may fall short of it, but we still get up and we go on.

Verse 13: “For the one who has dealt without mercy *will be* judged without mercy. **But mercy triumphs over judgment.**” James is talking specifically about the attitude of judging; *judge not lest you be judged*. And many times when we say things—we say things and there is **no mercy**. I don’t have to elaborate. You know, I know. You’ve done it, I’ve done it.

Example, Matthew 18:21: “Then Peter came to Him *and* said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?... [show mercy and forgiveness] ...Until seven times?’” That seems humanly, a nice thing. You’re going to be generous, seven times.

Verse 22: “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you until seven times, but until seventy times seven.’”

If you consider that on a daily basis that’s 490 times a day, and how many times do we not forgive even seven times in one day and run off all cross-eyed and smoking ears and snorting nostrils, running down in anger, venting our own little wrath. I’ve described myself as well as anyone else. That’s the way it is—but **70 times 7**—now there’s a great lesson for us here.

How many times does God have to forgive us? The whole lesson is we want mercy for ourselves from God, but:

- Are we willing to give that same kind of thing to someone else? *Very difficult, especially when they take advantage of it!*
- Have you ever had your mercy taken advantage of? *Yes!*
- How do you feel? *Miserable!*

You wished you had never given mercy.

Now let’s look at it from God’s perspective. **How many times has God been merciful and held back the hand of wrath and anger, even against the wicked who deserve it?**

Let’s look at the other side of the coin of Sodom and Gomorrah and the episode there in Genesis 18 & 19. He was willing to forego that judgment of destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah if there were just ten people who were righteous. He would be merciful. So, mercy would triumph over judgment in that case, but there weren’t even ten!

And of the four that left, one of them didn’t make it. Lot and his wife and his two daughters and his wife didn’t make it. An example of judgment, not even any room for mercy, *God was willing to give the mercy*.

So he gives an example for us in our behavior, v 23: “Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants. And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents” (vs 23-24). Let’s just use the figure I have here—\$9.25-million. It’s worth about three times that now, so just say \$30-million. He owed someone \$30-million.

Verse 25: But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, **and forgave him the debt.**” (vs 25-27).

That’s a whale of a big debt—isn’t it? I think of all my debts I have, if I could just have all of them just forgiven, I would be happy. Yes, that would be nice.

This is what happens too many times. We get mercy from God. We want mercy from God, but what do we do? *We turn around and we don’t give it to other people!*

Verse 28: “Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins... [a sniveling little \$9.25] ...and after seizing him, he choked *him*...” Sounds like some of these collection agencies. If you ever get any bills in collection you will know what I mean.

“...saying ‘Pay me what you owe.’ As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord *and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, ‘*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?’ And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. **Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you**

does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart" (vs 28-35).

It has to be from the heart and the heart is that part of the mind which is the thing that *you* have to control and *you* have to use *your will to submit to the will of God*. So, it has to be from your heart, not just to do it. 'Well, I'll do it because I have to or the law says so' or 'Well, I'll do it, because, well I've had mercy so I better do it.' You better say, 'God, you've been merciful to me, help me to be merciful here.' That's how *mercy has triumphed over judgment*.

I'm amazed just going through here how much comes out of the book of Matthew:

- Matthew 5:7: "Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy."
- Matthew 6:14-15—I'll let you study that

What we are doing here with the book of James and which we will do with 1st, 2nd -Peter and the Epistles of John and Jude is that this is meant to be a vehicle for further and deeper study for yourself.

James 2:14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? **Is faith able to save him?**" Now this presents a great controversy when it's misunderstood with the Epistles of Paul, but believe me, there is no controversy between James and Paul. *None whatsoever!*

Verse 15: "Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, 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? In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself. But someone is going to say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works. Do you believe that God is one?... [not that there is one God, but that God *is* one] ... You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe and tremble *in fear*. But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead?**" (vs 15-20).

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? 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. 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 21-26). Is there a conflict? *No!*

Let's go back to v 14, let's pick it up here and we will go through each one of these verses so that we can understand it.

- there is faith, which is profession, without works
- there is also works without faith

I think you are going to find this very interesting and very helpful and that there is no conflict at all whatsoever between James and Paul.

Verse 14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith..." This is a *profession*, an *expression of faith*, if you are saying that you have faith.

- How do you prove faith?
- Can you measure it?
- Can you calculate it?
- How do you prove faith?
- How do you know you have faith?

You can say, 'I love the Lord. I believe the Bible.' Now, we're getting down to *profession of faith*:

- *I believe the Bible*

Do you want to come to Church on Sabbath? *Oh, no!*

- *I believe in doing what God says.*

Do you want to tithe?

- *No, no, we don't need to do that!*
- *I believe that Jesus is our Savior.*

Do you want to keep His commandments?

- *No! He delivered us from the commandments.*

A profession of faith without works is dead!

- What kind of works are we talking about here?
- Works of law as it was in Judaism?

or

- Are we talking about works of faith?
- *We're talking about works of faith!*

I'll show you. We have in Matt. 7 contrasted the two faiths: The *professing* faith and the *working* faith. That's what it's talking about, because if you believe the Sabbath *is the Sabbath of God*—the fourth commandment—you will *keep the Sabbath! A work of faith because you believe!*

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven..." Because that is a *profession: praise the Lord, bless the Lord*. Praise the Lord and pass the pork and get parasites of the brain. I'm being a little facetious here, but some people do that.

I had the occasion the other day that someone gave me something that had some pork in it. I worked around it and took it all out and ate a little bit of the bread around the outside of it and didn't eat any more of that and said nothing. I'm not going to eat it. Since it was a business associate somewhere out there I didn't raise the point to cause a problem.

Verse 21: "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; **but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven.**" There is the *work of faith*. If you believe God, you will do what He says. That's the kind of works it's talking about here. These are *works of faith* to *perfect the faith*.

Let's see how the words get them, v 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.'" (vs 21-23). Your *faith profession* of that faith is not resulting in concrete actions that result from that faith.

Another example, v 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them..." *Works acting upon the faith*, having nothing to do with a work of law to justify you whatsoever, because Judaism's *work of law* is this: **You do it to force God to do something for you!**

Someone sent me something from Rabbi Schneerson, the near messiah of the Orthodox Jews today. He said that 'We are almost ready for the Messiah to come. As a matter of fact, there are two Messiahs: Messiah Ben Joseph, who's going to come and die for the sins of the people, and Messiah Ben David, who's going to set up the kingdom, but we have some more good works to do before God will do it for us.'

That is a work of law to compel God to do something for you because you did it! That is a *work of law*. We're talking about here are *works of faith based upon what God has said for you to do*, not a work of law which you are telling God what He's going to do, because you have done it. And those who do so are called workers of iniquity.

Verse 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built... [actions, work, because he believed, acted upon that belief] ...his house upon **the rock**.... [the Rock is Christ (1-Cor. 10)] ...and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;

but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock" (vs 24-25).

A very good example of your house of faith that is founded on the Rock Who is Jesus Christ, and which the trials and troubles of wind and rain and storm and all these destructive forces come upon you.

(go to the next track)

Here's the one who has a *profession of faith*, but *no works* of faith, v 26: "And everyone who hears these words of Mine and **does not practice them**..." He's a *hearer* of the law, but *not a doer!* Didn't we just cover that in James? *Yes!*

"...shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (vs 26-27).

This time of year we see a lot of those. On the east coast they've had these waves come in and just wipe out these houses—built right on the sand—right out on the sea coast, even on the pillars raised up 15 feet above the sand. These waves came in and just so much kindling wood. It's gone! Didn't believe!

Or like these people down in Texas, they were told many times, 'Don't build your houses on the Trinity River, below the 100-year-flood-level; you're going to get flooded.' So what do they do? *They build their houses by the river below the 100-year-flood-level!* Guess what? *They got flooded!* And then what do they do to put a guilt trip on all of the rest of us? *They run a picture of a nice little grandma, who just got her house fixed from the flood before* and just had brand new carpet put down and just had all of these things put down and guess what? *It's flooded again* and she says, 'I've been wiped out, I have nothing.' And you look at that and you feel guilty. You know the press and TV do that to make you feel guilty.

The Bible says it was *foolish!* We shouldn't feel guilty. Now, if we are in a situation to help her temporarily, we should. But my first advice would be, 'Ma'am, don't build your house down there below the flood-level.' What good did it do to fix up the house and put in new carpets? *No good!* Likewise, what good does it do to have a profession of faith, but you have nothing of substance behind it? There's another saying, too, which is: *If your religion costs you nothing, there is no faith involved!* Think on that one for a while. **If your religion costs you nothing, there's no faith involved!** Let's see how this goes further.

James 2:14: "My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says... [the profession] ...*that he has*

faith, and does not have works?... [works that back up that faith] ...Is faith... [or is that *profession*] ...able to save him?" *No!* Jesus said it was not. No conflict whatsoever.

These are *works based upon faith*. The others are *professions of faith with no works*. That's why he uses this example:

Verse 15: "Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, 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 14-16). *No good!*

If that is the case, then you are doing just exactly like the Pharisees. They said, but didn't do. Isn't that what the Pharisees said? What did Jesus say? '*Do what they say.*' That is when reading the Scriptures, '*but don't do what they do, for they say and do not.*'

This is the controversy of tradition, Mark 7:3: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly. Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "**This people honors Me with their lips... [mouthing *profession*, mouthing *faith*] ...but their hearts are far away from Me**"' (vs 3-6).

That's what God wants; He wants the heart. ***That is the thing that has to be converted!*** That part of your mind, which the Bible calls *the heart, the will*, that thing that is the unconquerable thing of you and of me, which only the Holy Spirit of God can convict to change, so that we can have the courage and the choice to change.

Verse 6: "...their hearts are far away from Me... [and if it is far from God]: ...But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men" (vs 6-7). ***Profession of faith without the works of faith!***

They had the works of their own dos and don'ts, which they did exercising no faith, but to have faith and then the works that back it up. Do you see the difference there?

There are a lot of people who are afraid to read Rom. 4, because they don't understand Rom. 4

and they don't understand Abraham. You don't have to be afraid. We'll read it; we'll study it.

Here's another example of loving your neighbor as yourself, Luke 10:25: "Now a certain doctor of the law suddenly stood up... [we're going to get tricked here] ...And He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How do you read *it*?' Then he answered *and* said, 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly. **Do this, and you shall live**'" (vs 25-28). You have the faith in what is said to have the works to do what is said.

Here's the difference between *profession and doing*, v 29: "But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' ... [sounds just like a lawyer] ...And taking *it* up, Jesus said, 'A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was encircled by thieves; *and* after they had stripped him *of his goods* and inflicted *him with* wounds, they went away, leaving *him* half dead. Now, by coincidence, a certain priest went down that road..." (vs 29-31).

- representing God
 - the one who offered the sacrifices daily
 - the one who praised God
 - the one who read the Psalms
 - the one who offered the incense
 - the one who put the blood on the altar
- if it were the high priest*
- the one who went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement; he's righteous.

"...and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side" (v 31). Why? *Because he didn't want to get contaminated with the blood of the wounded man!* That's judgment without mercy! All these things become vivid in living.

Verse 32: "And in like manner also, a Levite... [the helper at the temple] ...when he was at the place, came and saw *him*, and passed by on the opposite side. But a certain Samaritan..." (vs 29-33). Hated by the Jews, terrible, rotten, evil Samaritans, and their hatred for them is just bitter to this very day; as bitter as it is toward the Palestinians if you want a modern day example.

If you went up to Yitzhak Shamir and said, 'You ought to go out and tend to the wounded Palestinians over here on the West Bank.' You would be vituperated with hate, evil and wretchedness, same thing. That's how they feel toward the Samaritans.

"...*as* he was journeying, came to him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. And he went *to him* and bound up his wounds..."

(vs 33-34).

He's talking to a Jewish lawyer—really get this in mind—*who hate the Samaritans with a passion!* I can't overstate it. That's why Jesus used this. So, here's this Samaritan.

Verse 34: “And he went *to him* and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil... [olive oil] ...and wine...” By the way that's very good for wounds, too, very good, especially burgundy wine.

I'll tell you an example of a man up in Oregon years ago. He was working on his truck carburetor. You know how you do these trucks, you stand, you lean right in them. And he was trying to get it going and the carburetor blew up in his face and blew gas on his face and burned it. Now what normally happens if you go to the hospital? *They run you in the hospital and they strip off all the skin.* Worst thing in the world to do! Worst thing! Now they strip it off so you won't get infection, but if you handle it with the wine and the oil. In this case, what they did, they took olive oil—and he was in the Church and was anointed for it—and in the process of his healing, there was a point that he just looked so ugly because the old burned skin was just falling and hanging down and they had to clip it off as it was coming down.

But he healed without a scar one! I personally saw the man. What did they do? *They put olive oil and vitamin E, ran it down—just soaked his head with it.* Then they took gallons and gallons—through the whole thing—of burgundy wine. After the oil would be there for a while, they would pour on the burgundy wine; just let it run down, no bandages, nothing that would contaminate. And they did this 24 hours a day, every two hours for ten days. And **he was completely healed!** That is really something! So, if you get a burn, remember that: *olive oil and wine*, just like this here.

“...then he put him on his own beast *and* brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And when he left on the next day ... [in the morning when he left] ...he took out two silver coins *and* gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him, and whatever you may expend above *this*, I will repay you when I come back’” (vs 34-35).

No credit card, no credit check, no signature, nothing like that, he just said, ‘I'll be back to take care of it.’ Which is saying:

- the Samaritan has more compassion
- the Samaritan is more honest
- the Samaritan, whom you hate, before God stands better than you

That is a powerful lesson!

Verse 36: “‘Therefore, which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor of him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said... [What could the lawyer say?] ...‘The one who showed compassion toward him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘You go and do likewise’” (vs 36-37). In like manner: that's what likewise means. ***Works of faith***, that's what it's talking about.

James 2:17: “In the same way also, faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself.” Or that is, *being alone. A profession of faith without works of faith is dead, being alone!* It's like the proverbial whoremonger who says, ‘Honey, forgive me. I'll never do it again,’ every week. It's like the one who's the alcoholic and says, ‘I'll never touch another drop,’ till I have my next drink. ***Profession without works!***

Now then, you're going to get into a debate on that, v 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works... [separate and apart from works] ...and **I will prove my faith to you through my works....** [works that are *motivated by faith*, because you believe] ...Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this....* [that's fine] ...Even the demons believe—and tremble *in fear*” (vs 18-19).

Did you know there is such a thing as *the faith of demons*, that they believe that God exists. You hear some of these people that everyone looks at awe at them when they say, ‘I believe that God created the universe.’ Well, so do the demons! They haven't done anything.

- Does your belief carry you to obey God?
- Does your belief carry you into doing other things?
- Is that what it is?

There is this lawyer over in Berkeley; he's been on different talk shows. He can prove by legal things that there was not evolution. Legally and philosophically there had to be a Creator, but he doesn't put it in religious terms to obey God. ***Faith without works is dead!*** It is a demonic faith. They believe and they're trembling in fear, yet, these people who profess it are not trembling in fear. Oh no, they are arrogant. That's why he says:

Verse 20: But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Verse 21 talks about Abraham, who is called *the father of the faithful!* Abraham, you could call the best. Rahab you could call, being a harlot, the worst. He's using both ends of the scale here. What

did Jesus say to those Jews who said, 'We have Abraham for our father and never been in bondage to anyone.' What did Jesus answer? *If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.* Because you are descended from someone does not guarantee anything. That's why I use Abraham.

Verse 21: "Was not Abraham our father... [Jesus calls Abraham our father, too.] ...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). He *acted upon that faith.*

Rom. 4—it looks like there is a great and a vast contradiction between James and Paul, but *there is not!* We will show you that James is talking about one instance, and Paul is talking about another instance. There are times when you must act. There are other times when you must believe.

The one in James 2 is talking about where Abraham had to act upon that faith because there was something to do. The other one, there was nothing he could do but believe. So, Paul is using one instance in believing God; that His promises are true. And in believing God—that His promises are true—God is going to act upon those promises, and you believe that; that is counted to you for righteousness.

When God says, 'Remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy,' that requires your faith and belief in that commandment, the action to follow through and to do it. The instance here that we're talking about with Paul and Abraham is when God told Abraham, 'Come out here and look at the stars. If you can number all of those, that's what your seed is going to be.' What could Abraham do? Start counting? *No!* That required **no action**; that **required belief**. When later He said, 'Take your only son and go offer a sacrifice,' that required action based upon believing God. So, there's no contradiction whatsoever.

Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the* flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting..." (vs 1-2).

In other words, if Abraham went out and did something and said, 'Lord, look what I did. **You must give me this.**' God isn't going to be inclined to do it. Why? Who can do a great thing for God? What did God say? 'Where is the house that you will build unto Me, for all these things My hand has made?' This is talking about something that you would do which would **compel God** to do something for you. That's what it's talking about.

"...he has a basis for boasting, but not

before God..." (v 2)—because God is greater than a man and there's nothing that Abraham did that forced God to do anything.

Verse 3: "For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.' Now, to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned as a debt*" (vs 3-4).

In other words, *the whole process of doing something where you indebt God to you!* It won't happen! Whatever God does is because of *grace*. In giving that grace and forgiving your sins, He says, 'Do this...' then you have works that perfects the faith. But you can't have works to substitute and create faith. Then you indebt God to you and *God is indebted to no man.*

Verse 5: "But to the one who does not work..." Is not looking to his own works of law, not looking to the traditions, not looking to the dos and don'ts of men, is not working that kind of work.

"...but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness; even as David also declares the blessedness of the man **to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works**" (vs 5-6).

Now let's take the instance again of David and Bathsheba. What if David came to himself and said, 'Ok, I know that I've done all of these things, therefore, now I'm going to do thus and such to undo it.' What could he do to restore Uriah the Hittite to life? *Nothing!* To restore the dead baby to life? *Nothing!* So, you can't go out and do something to force God to wipe away your sin. What is it that you must do? **Repent and believe!** That's what you must do. **Repent and believe!** That's what he's talking about here. Then with that belief you have *works of faith* based upon that later.

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 ... [or calculate] ...*any* sin.' Now then, *does* this blessedness *come* upon the circumcision *only*... [Does it come because of a physical act of circumcision? *No, because it's of the heart!*] ...or also upon the uncircumcision?... [comes upon both] ...For we are saying that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness. In what condition, therefore was it imputed? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?... [Now **this galls every Jew!**] ...Not in circumcision, 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 7-11).

Let’s go back to Genesis 15 and let’s see this account here. Then we will look at the account where then he went to offer Isaac and we’ll see the difference. They don’t conflict, they’re two different accounts of the same thing, the same kind of action based upon what Abraham did. Now let’s notice how this belief started out.

Genesis 15:1: “After these things the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Fear not, Abram... [his name wasn’t Abraham at that time] ...I *am* your shield and your exceedingly great reward.’ And Abram said, ‘Lord GOD, what will You give me since I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?’.... [Think what world conditions would be if that would have happened?] ...And Abram said, ‘Behold, You have given no seed to me; and lo, one born in my house is my heir’” (vs 1-3).

Abraham was really kind of testing God a little bit, saying, ‘Look with these circumstances and I’ve been following You all these years, Lord, and look at this and look at that and you know I want to do what You say, but let’s do it the easy way. Here’s Eliezer of Damascus and you know he’s born in my house, he could be one of my heirs, too; You know the law says that. That’s all right.’

Verse 4: And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, “This man shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.’.... [What could be do about that except believe? *It’s all he could do!*] ...And He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness” (vs 4-6).

There was nothing for him to do but believe. He didn’t say, ‘Oh, come on God, don’t tell me this. I don’t believe that.’ *He believed!* He was uncircumcised at this point.

Then we come to Gen. 17 when he was 99-years-old, some years after the account in Gen. 15. Then we find that that’s when he was circumcised. I’ll let you read the whole situation there.

Here’s the other account that James is talking about, same Abraham, same faith; now there was something to do, which then is a *work of faith*. If you have faith:

- How do you prove your faith? *By doing what God says when there is something to do!*
- How do you count your faith when there’s nothing to do? *By believing!*

And whenever there is that belief then there will always be something to do—*always!*

Genesis 22:1: “And it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love...’” (vs 1-2).

Can you imagine how he would love Isaac? By the way, this made Ishmael even madder. Can you imagine how he loved Isaac? Can you imagine if you had no children of your own and you tried and tried ever since you were married, clear up to when you were 75-years-old, and your wife got everything all complicated and you had Ishmael through Hagar and that made things worse? You had that fight and strain going on; finally you had to get rid of him and Hagar, because the household was divided. And then here is Isaac, that *he loved, the son of promise*.

“...‘Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there... [he knew from the minute that he left that he was going to offer his son] ...for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you.’ And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two *of* his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off” (vs 2-4).

There are times when we do things because God says to do them, and if for *no other reason than God says to do them!* We know from Heb. 11 that he believed God would raise him from the dead. Was that not an awful lot of faith in God at that point? Was it not? *Yes, absolutely!* Try and picture it in your mind that if you were Abraham coming up to this mountain and you knew this was the place. And here’s the son you love. Now we figured out one time that he would be as young as 12 and as old as 30. Either way, Isaac had to have a certain amount of belief and faith too. *Yes, he would!*

Verse 5: “And Abraham said to his young men, ‘You stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.’ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son....” (vs 5-6). How about that! Carrying your own wood to your own sacrifice.

“...And he took the fire *pot* in his hand...” (v 6). In other words he had a little pot with some coals in it, took it in his hands.

“...and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and

said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I *am*, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood.... [I can see the fire and the wood] ...But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?'" (vs 6-7).

You talk about walking in faith! I mean, you're walking right up there and you can see where it's going to be.

Verse 8: "And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.'..." If Isaac were all modern and scientific he would say, 'Ahhh,' but he didn't, so Isaac had to have a certain amount of faith.

"...So, they both went on together. And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there... [stone by stone] ...and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar" (vs 8-9).

Now that's quite an experience *for both of them!* Put yourself in Isaac's place, bound and laid on the wood. Put yourself in Abraham's place, with the knife, with the coals, and everything ready to go. When is God going to provide? You've scanned the horizon; there is nothing there.

Verse 10: "And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son." Some of them portrayed he had the knife already up in the air. I don't know whether it was or not. It doesn't indicate that here. It didn't say he raised the knife, but he put his hand forth and took the knife to slay his son.

Verse 11: "And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I *am*.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, **for now I know that you fear God...**'" (vs 11-12).

Think of this for a minute. When you look at all the trials and difficulties you go through. And lot's of times we like to say, 'Boy, it would be nice if we didn't have trials and difficulties. Well, go back and read Abraham's life. He had all kinds of them. And then to have this laid on top of it, right at this point, right to the last minute. And then the message comes from God, '**Now I know that you fear God.**' You stop and think about what is it that we have done in comparison or relationship? *Not very much!*

He says: "...for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me" (v 12).

What is it that God has asked you to do? What is it that God has asked you to do that you have withheld from God, because you don't think

it's fair? I am asking myself, too. None of us have gone through anything like this! And we hope and pray God that we don't have to. Frankly, brethren, we need to ask ourselves: **If it were put upon us like this, would we survive that test?** *It would be difficult, indeed, to say yes in the affirmative, with absolute conviction that it would be so!*

Then you can look at it the other way, what if God didn't intervene and he had to come home and tell Sarah? Can you imagine 'the holy wrath' from his wife? None of these things bothered him. And so then, lo and behold a miracle:

Verse 13: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns.... [I truly believe that *God created that ram, that instant*, right there] ...And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, 'In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.' And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By Myself have I sworn,' says the LORD..." (vs 13-16).

Fantastic blessing comes when? ***After the trial of righteousness; after the works of faith have then perfected that faith by what was done!***

"... '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.**'.... [he believed to do what God had said] ...Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba. And Abraham lived at Beersheba" (vs 16-19).

Probably thanking God for every minute of every of day that he had with Isaac after that!

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 2:5-13, 5-10
- 2) 1 John 3:4
- 3) Leviticus 19:13-18
- 4) James 2:10, 12-13
- 5) Matthew 18:21-35
- 6) Matthew 5:7
- 7) James 2:14-26, 14
- 8) Matthew 7:21-27

- 9) James 2:14-16
- 10) Mark 7:3-7
- 11) Luke 10:25-37
- 12) James 2:17-22
- 13) Romans 4:1-11
- 14) Genesis 15:1-6
- 15) Genesis 22:1-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 2:2
- Matthew 19
- Genesis 18 & 19
- Matthew 6:14-15
- 1 Corinthians 10
- Genesis 17
- Hebrews 11

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