

"Living Faith or Dead Faith?"**James 2:14-26****Part 2**

Introduction: Last week in our study of James we looked at James 2:14-20. This is a section in which James expresses a deep concern which he had for all who would read his letter. As I told you before James had a concern and wanted to be sure that his readers had a true saving faith. The Words which Jesus spoke at the Sermon on the Mount never stopped ringing in the ears of James.

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Jesus had sent out a warning that day on the mount and it was for the purpose of causing all who heard it to take a deep look into their heart to be sure their faith was a true saving faith. Jesus said that there was coming a day when many people would be shocked when they stand before Him for on that day there will be many who will believe with all of their heart that they are saved but will find out their faith is not a saving faith.

Jesus also made it very clear in this passage that a true saving faith will manifest itself in a life of obedience to the Word of God.

Matthew 7:24-27

*²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and **doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

*²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

These words were in the mind of James and as he wrote the letter we are looking at His we see he was able to grasp what Jesus was saying.

Now as we read through James there are subjects which James addresses which seemed to be a part of the lives of these people and it was these "practices" that caused James to maybe question the faith of some of these people. Let me give you some examples of what I mean:

- a. The way they handled trials.
- b. The way they handled temptation.
- c. The partiality they showed toward the rich.
- d. The problems they had with the tongue.
- e. The problems they had with worldliness.
- f. The disputes which were showing up among these people.

This is a few of the issues and you can see what I mean. There was a concern and James needed to address the subject of True saving faith. Last week we looked at 3 points:

I. The Principle

Notice James 2:14

II. The Illustration

Notice James 2:15-16

III. The Reasoning

Notice James 2:17-20

Now James is going to point to Biblical characters to prove that True saving faith will manifest itself in works.

The Faith of Abraham

Notice James 2:21

Now we must be very careful with this verse. There have been many who have completely misunderstood what James is saying here.

The word "justified" means "to be declared righteous". This verse tells us that Abraham was declared righteous when he offered Isaac upon the altar. Let me show you what Paul says.

Romans 3:23-28

²³ *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

²⁴ *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

²⁵ *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*

²⁶ *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

²⁷ *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*

²⁸ *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Then Paul says something in the next chapter of Romans.

Romans 4:1-3

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

² *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.*

³ *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*

Many people say that Paul and James were in disagreement here but that is not the case.

Let us now look again at what James says.

Notice James 2:21-23

We cannot stop at verse 21. We must include the entire text in which James is talking about Abraham.

Now listen to what I am about to say: James quotes 2 different Old Testament passages. There is one in verse 21 and there is another in verse 23.

Notice James 2:23

This verse points to the salvation of Abraham. This is from Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:3-6

³ *And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.*

⁴ *And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*

⁵ *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

⁶ *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

This is the salvation of Abraham.

Notice James 2:23 again.

James tells us that the fulfillment of what is recorded in Genesis 15:6 is seen when Abraham offered his son on the altar in Genesis 22.

The event in James 2:21 happened about 30 years after the events in James 2:23. The point is, the event in James 2:21 is living proof that Abraham's faith was a true saving faith.

Notice James 2:22

Abraham's faith was made "perfect" or "complete" by his actions in Genesis 22.

Now I want to take you back to Genesis 22 and show you what True saving faith looks like up close.

Turn to Genesis 22.

I want to read the account and then I will point out to you some distinct points about True saving faith.

Notice Genesis 22:1-18

Now let me show you the characteristics of True saving faith from Genesis 22.

1. True faith puts the will of God before self desire.

Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. This was the son he had waited so long for. It was the will of Abraham to have a son of his own and now he was commanded to sacrifice him. Abraham was willing to set his will aside so as to follow the will of God.

2. True faith is willing to give up whatever it is that God asks for.

Notice Genesis 22:2

3. True faith follows God and asks no questions.

Notice Genesis 22:1-3

4. True faith believes in the power of God.

Notice Genesis 22:5

5. True faith is obedient to God's Word.

Notice Genesis 22:18

6. True faith trusts God in the darkest situations.

Notice Genesis 22:14

Conclusion:

Notice James 2:24

This verse points back to the 2 questions that were ask in the beginning of this section.

Notice James 2:14

So let me ask you, "Is your faith a saving faith?" You better be 100% sure. The signs all around us are pointing to the Tribulation period and before that is the Rapture of the church. If you miss the Rapture you are doomed.

Listen to this:

"Faith begins in conviction, and there are many who halt at this stage. They have heard the evidence, examined it, and are clearly, fully persuaded of its truth. But they never get

beyond that. They are like the tide as you have seen it rolling in from the sea. It comes with a demonstrative rush as though it would carry everything before it, but when it reaches a certain point there it stops, and with all the ocean at its back it does not exceed the mark where it is accustomed to pause. It is possible to reach the half-way point of conviction and not be saved.