

"Living Faith or Dead Faith?"

James 2:14-26

Part 3

Introduction: Today we come back to our study of James 2:14-26. In this section James is expressing his concern for those who would read this letter. His concern was about their faith. James knew that there was a difference between RELIGION and SALVATION. He knew there was a difference between TRUE SAVING FAITH and FALSE DECEPTIVE FAITH.

There are many people who claim to have saving faith. They go to church on Sundays, some are members of a church, and some have been baptized but the sad part is many of them have never been saved. Jesus warned about this very thing when He preached the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

He continued this thought a few verses following.

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.

These were the very Truths which James was concerned about.

Now someone may ask why James touched on this subject in the middle of his letter? I think as James was writing his letter he was thinking about the problems with these believers and he was concerned. What were the problems?

1. The way they handled trials.
2. The way they handled temptation.
3. The way they treated the poor.
4. The divisions within.
5. The sharp tongue they spoke with.

This is just a few problems but they were enough to cause James to be concerned. Therefore he addresses the subject of FAITH. Now James' main point in this section is that TRUE SAVING FAITH will be accompanied by works.

Notice James 2:14

This is the heading for this section. James sets out to prove that saving FAITH will manifest itself by works.

Now last week we looked at the example of Abraham. This week we shall see the faith of another Old Testament saint.

Notice James 2:25

Here James now points to Rahab and he tells us that she also was justified by works just as Abraham was. Now last week I told you that James is not saying that we are saved by faith and works. He is saying that True faith will produce works.

I. The Faith of Rahab

Turn to Joshua 2

Here is the story of Rahab. I want to walk you through the events here and as we work our way through we shall see from her life what True Faith looks like.

Notice Joshua 2:1

Joshua sent out 2 spies secretly. He did not want the same situation which happened the first time under the leadership of Moses. The 2 men came to the house of Rahab and lodged there. Why?

Of all the places to stay why stay at a harlot's house? I have 2 ideas that I want to share with you.

1. God directed them to her house.

Proverbs 16:9

⁹ *A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*

She was the only person in the city of Jericho who had saving faith. This is not a coincidence that these men ended up at her house. God directed these men to this houser because this was where their help would come from.

Application:

Let me just use this and remind you that when we follow God He will direct our steps and put us in contact with people who He will use to meet our needs.

2. This would have been the information center of the city.

This would have been the place where the men spent their time and so it would have been the place of information. It would be like the barber shop or the beauty parlor today. This would be the place where people would tell all that was going on within the city walls. Therefore, to stop here was wisdom on the part of the spies.

Now, when the spies made their way into Rahab's house there were people within the city that were aware of their presence and where they went. These people then sent report back to the king.

Notice Joshua 2:2-6

The Bible does not justify lying and that is not the point here. The point is she did what she needed to do to protect the spies and it was her faith that made her does this.

James 2:25

²⁵ *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*

Not let me show you a mark of True faith from what Rahab did here.

A. True faith puts God before self.

This was a huge risk for Rahab. If she was caught aiding the spies she would have been killed in a moment. But she was willing to die for her faith. She was more concerned for the advancement of God than she was her own life.

This is the mark of True faith throughout the Bible. Remember the conversation between Mordecai and Esther when he wanted her to go before the king and she was hesitant.

Esther 4:13-16

¹³ *Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.*

¹⁴ *For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

¹⁵ *Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,*

¹⁶ *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*

B. True faith puts God before family.

When I read this account of Rahab I realize that she also placed her faith in God before her family. You see we must remember that if she would have been caught they would have probably killed her and her family. But this did not seem to be a deterrent for her. She was determined to protect the spies as a service to God.

Notice the words of Jesus.

Luke 14:26-27

²⁶ *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

²⁷ *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

True faith should not allow family or friends to stand in the way of serving God.

Notice Joshua 2:7-11

When the danger was gone Rahab came to speak with the spies. She began to pour out her heart about how the entire city was aware of the power of God but it was only Rahab who acted upon the Truth which she had.

C. True faith is not ashamed to confess the True God.

Rahab did not have a great deal of information but what she knew she was not ashamed to confess. Let me show you some verses.

Romans 10:9-11

⁹ *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

¹⁰ *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

¹¹ *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Philippians 1:20

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

2 Timothy 1:11-12

¹¹ *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

¹² *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

The point is that when there is True faith there will be a confession of that faith.

Notice Joshua 2:12-13

There are 2 points I want you to see from this verse.

First of all she was concerned for her family. She knew the judgment of God was going to fall on her city but she did not know when. Here concern was that her family would also be safe.

D. True Faith is concerned for the salvation of others.

Let me just say that when someone says they are saved but they have no concern for the salvation of those around them then their faith is not a True saving faith.

John 1:40-42

⁴⁰ *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

⁴¹ *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

⁴² *And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.*

The first thing Andrew did after he met Jesus was find his brother to tell him about Christ.

Notice Joshua 2:12 again.

E. True Faith seeks assurance.

Rahab desired to have a token so that she could be sure of her salvation.

Application:

True saving Faith desires to have that deep down assurance of salvation. True Faith will often do an inward search to be sure of salvation.

1 John 5:13

¹³ *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

Notice Joshua 2:14-21

F. True Faith clings to the promises of God.

The spies told Rahab to tie the scarlet thread in the window when they came to bring judgment but she tied the rope in the window the moment they were gone. I can also

imagine that she checked that rope every single day. She had all of her faith in the promise made to her.

Conclusion:

There is one more point from all of this that stands out about Rahab, she did not seek to hold to her life in the city but she wanted to leave the old life and go with God's people into a new life.

G. True Faith does not hold onto the old practices of this life but desires to enter into the new life with God's people.

There is one more verse in James that we need to see.

James 2:26

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Are you sure you are saved?

If you are not saved you are standing right where Rahab was standing. There is a judgment that is coming.