



Faith & Works

Class Two

*James and Paul complement each other
to complete our understanding of Faith & Works*

- Yesterday we were introduced to the foil in the life story of Jesus
- The Pharisees
- Their legalistic and exclusionary attitude fit in very well with a religion full of strict adherence to laws
- A religion based not on grace and faith, but on laws and works
- When Jesus introduced the Radical & Different concept of salvation by Grace, so began a debate that has gone on for centuries
- **SLIDE**
- Faith **vs.** Works
- One of the great debates of Christianity, and one that still confuses the Brotherhood today
- But, all too often a debate is formed by how the question is framed
- If you word the question incorrectly, you can skew the whole discussion

- I would contend that it is not Faith vs. Works that we need to look at today, but...

- **SLIDE**

- Faith & Works

- **SLIDE**

- **NOT** Faith **vs.** Works!

- It's not about comparing one way to another

- It's not like one of these concepts is right and the other is wrong

- It would be ludicrous to say that we don't believe that we are saved by our Faith

- It would be just as wrong to say that we don't think that our Works have anything to do with our Salvation

- That is the beauty of James...

- **SLIDE**

- James gets it **Right!**

- **SLIDE**

- There has been much debate in Christianity over the years about the **DIFFERENCES** Between **James** and the apostle **Paul**

- Martin Luther even claimed that the Book of James contradicted the writings of Paul, and referred to James as the "Epistle of Straw"

- He went so far as to claim that James wasn't even inspired

- At first glance it does seem that Paul and James aren't "*singing from the same hymnbook*"

- It does seem like Paul teaches that we are justified by faith, while James insists that works are necessary for salvation

- **SLIDE**

- Which one is it?

- Saved by Faith or Saved by Works?

- Which one do you believe?

- Let's take a closer look at each of their teachings:

- **SLIDE**

- Romans 3:28 KJV

28) Therefore we conclude that a man is **Justified by Faith** without the deeds of the law.

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:14 KJV

14) What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? **can Faith save him?**

- **SLIDE**

- Paul seems to be saying that Faith **ALONE** Saves

- **SLIDE**

- A Person is **NOT** Saved by **Works**

- **SLIDE**

- But, James seems to be implying that **Faith can't save you**

- **SLIDE**

- That it is **Good Works** that "Profit" us
- These two verses seem to contradict each other
- Let's look at another set

- **SLIDE**

- Paul confirms that salvation is a gift from God

- **SLIDE**

- Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV

8) For by **Grace are ye Saved through Faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9) **NOT OF WORKS**, lest any man should boast.

- But James seems to directly connect your works to your Faith

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:17-18 KJV

- 17) Even so **Faith**, if it hath not works, is **DEAD**, being alone.
- 18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

- **SLIDE**

- On the one hand, Paul is telling us that we **CANNOT be Saved by WORKS**

- **SLIDE**

- While James is saying that unless you have **WORKS**, **FAITH** won't save you
- So, which one is correct?
- Over the years I've struggled with trying to figure out which one I really agreed with
 - Which one I felt more comfortable with
- And throughout history men have lined up on both sides of this issue, each one speaking louder and louder the opposing viewpoints until very quickly neither one can even hear the other one speak

- **SLIDE**

- But, like in most disagreements, the Answer doesn't lie in a **COMPROMISE** of the two positions, but in a **COMBINATION** of the two positions, for most often both sides are correct they are just saying things differently
- The Truth is only deciphered when you take the writings of both James and Paul and combine them together
- It is only then that you discover that they really are speaking about the same thing

- **SLIDE**

- James doesn't **CONTRADICT** Paul's teaching of **Justification by Faith**

- **SLIDE**

- James **COMPLEMENTS** Paul's teaching on the idea of **Justification by Faith!**

- **SLIDE**

- Take a look at what they are **BOTH** really saying:

- **SLIDE**

- Titus 3:8 KJV

- 8) This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to **maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men.

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:23 KJV

- 23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was **imputed unto him for righteousness**: and he was called the Friend of God.

- **SLIDE**

- Paul **AGREED** with James

- **SLIDE**

- James **AGREED** with Paul

- **SLIDE**

- Why the confusion?
- Why approach such an important issue from such diverse positions?
- They were each addressing separate Errors that come up when we talk about the subject of Justification by Faith

- **SLIDE**

- The **ERROR** that Paul Corrected was that Salvation Comes **BY YOUR WORKS**, so that You Can Somehow Earn Your Way Into the Kingdom
- That's simply not the case, and Paul does an excellent job of speaking against it

- **SLIDE**

- The **ERROR** that James Corrected was that **WORKS ARE UNNECESSARY** After a Person has been Baptized Because All we Have to do is Believe

- **SLIDE**

- Paul taught that the **Righteousness** demanded by God **CANNOT** be attained by **WORKS**

- You can't **EARN** salvation
- You can't do enough to be righteous
- Since no one besides Jesus has ever been able to live a sinless life, then all people are unrighteous and in need of God's grace
- Every one of us needs God's grace
- **SLIDE**
- Paul taught that **Salvation is a Gracious Gift of God**, given to those who have **Faith in Him**
- **SLIDE**
- James believed the same things as Paul
- James also understood and appreciated the value of God's grace
- James knew that none of us are sinless and worthy of the gift we have received
- **SLIDE**
- James just wanted to make sure that we understand that if we truly have the **Saving Faith** then we will **FILL** our lives with **Good Works**
- **SLIDE**
- James wants to make sure that we understand that the outward appearance of **GOOD WORKS** in our lives is a testament to the saving faith that is inside our heart
- **SLIDE**
- **WORKS** are **REJECTED** by Paul as the **Means of Salvation**
- **SLIDE**
- **WORKS** are **UNDERSTOOD** by James to be the **RESULT** of **SALVATION**
- Once we come to understand the Grace and the Mercy we have been given by the promise of Salvation, we will not be able to **STOP** doing **Good Works**
- Once we truly develop the faith that believes that we are saved by the grace of God, then our lives will abound with good works
- That is the message of James
- That is what James is writing about

- Unlike Paul's writings that run the entire scope of doctrine, the book of James addresses solely the "**Outward Expression of Inward Faith**"

- Consider the full context of what James introduces in Chapter 2:

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:15-18 NIV

- 15) Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.
- 16) If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?
- 17) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.
- 18) But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and **I will show you my faith by what I do.**

- **SLIDE**

- Actions that we perform that are simply **OUTWARD ACTS** done for the **Purpose of Trying to Receive Merit** are of **NO VALUE** for **Attaining Salvation**

- **SLIDE**

- However, those who trust and obey Jesus Christ **WILL** Produce Works that are Motivated by the Spirit
- That is what makes it so confusing, eh?
- *All dogs have tails, but not everything that has a tail is a dog*
- Just because someone (like a Pharisee) is seen doing good works doesn't mean that they are going to be saved
- But, everyone who is going to be saved is going to be seen doing good works!
- If those works are not evident in the life of a professing believer, then their level of belief is suspect
- But, if you want proof...

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:20 NIV

- 20) You foolish man, do you want **evidence** that faith without deeds is useless?

- James has proof! (you fool!)

- **SLIDE**

- James and Paul **BOTH** turn to the **Life of Abraham** when they want to support the concept of **Faith & Works**
- Paul's introduction of Abraham into the discussion is the foundation and cornerstone of our hope

- **SLIDE**

- Romans 4:2-3 NIV

- 2) If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about - but not before God.
- 3) What does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”**

- Abraham's life is full of many wonderful and inspiring acts of Faith...
 - But he is remembered most in Scriptures for a simple act of Faith...
- The verse we are talking about is found in Genesis Chapter 15
- God had come to Abraham and promised him a son through his wife Sarah
- After all these years of waiting
- After all these years of Sarah being barren
- A son...

- **SLIDE**

- Genesis 15:5-6

- 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**.

- It wasn't carrying out a daring victory against five armies...
 - It wasn't sacrificing his only son on an altar of stone...
- Abraham's Faith is counted for righteousness because he simply believed in the Lord
- Standing all alone in the middle of a field in the dead of night...

- Looking up at the stars in the Heavens above him...
- God promises a 100 year old man that although his 90 year old wife had never had a child her whole life, that he is going to be the father of an innumerable host
 - And Abraham believed it
- Even though the evidence opposes it
- Even though history argued against it
- Even though it probably didn't make any sense to Abraham
- He simply believed God

- **SLIDE**

- It is this **SIMPLE ACT OF FAITH** that God wants from Each of Us
- God doesn't expect greatness from us...
 - He doesn't call on us to fight battles or sacrifice our children...

- **SLIDE**

- He simply wants us to **Believe Him**
 - He simply wants us to trust Him
- As a matter of fact, it is specifically NOT our great acts that save us...

- **SLIDE**

- It is **NOT** our Works that bring us Salvation
- Paul continues on with this explanation in Romans 4...

- **SLIDE**

- Romans 4:4-5 NIV

- 4) Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.
 - 5) However, to the man who does not work but trusts **God who justifies the wicked**, his **faith is credited as righteousness**.
- It was obvious to Abraham that he was unable to solve this problem on his own...
 - They had waited all their life to have a child, and to no avail...

- Abraham trusted in God

- **SLIDE**

- Abraham realized that **God Would Solve His Problem**
- This simple act of giving your life over to God is what he wants from us
 - This illogical, almost counter-intuitive act of acknowledging that we are incapable of resolving the issues in our own lives...
 - That we are unsuccessful in fighting the battle against our own personal sins
 - Acknowledging that in the end... We can't make it.
 - No matter how strong our will-power...
 - No matter how quick our wits...

- **SLIDE**

- In the end we **ALL** need to turn to God for Salvation
- This is the simple Faith of Abraham
 - This is the Faith that we need to fill our lives with
 - God has promised us that he has given His son to remove our sins, and that we will be saved

- **SLIDE**

- All that is asked of us is that we have the **Faith to Believe** that this is **TRUE**

- **SLIDE**

- *Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness...*
- Do we?
- James continues where Paul left off
- James continues the rest of the story of Abraham
- James refers to the same event in Genesis 15 to confirm that he is also speaking about the Faith that Abraham showed...
- He quotes the same phrase

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:23 NIV

23) And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “**Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,**” and he was called God’s friend.

- But James speaks of another, completely different story...

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:21-22 NIV

21) Was not our ancestor Abraham **considered righteous for what he did** when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

22) You see that **his faith and his actions were working together**, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

- I don’t think that James is disagreeing with Paul’s teaching

- James also believed that Abraham was justified by his simple act of Faith when he looked up at the desert sky, and believed God when God told him that he would have as many descendents as the stars in heaven

- The real message here in James is what we see in Verse 22

- Abraham’s Faith **AND** his Actions working together!

- **SLIDE**

- What James wants to show us is **What Happens in a Person’s Life** when they have that kind of **Faith**

- **SLIDE**

- What James wants to prove is that if you **Really Do Believe in God**, so strongly that God would count it as Righteousness, then your life will be **FILLED** with **Works of Faith**

- James isn’t trying to tell us that we can receive Eternal Life through our works...

- James is saying that Faith is not living unless it is outwardly shown and demonstrated

- **SLIDE**

- It is **NOT** Faith **ALONE** that Saves Us

- We can’t believe like many Modern-Day Christians do that:

“all we have to do is accept Jesus Christ as our Personal Savior” and we are saved “once and for all”... Regardless of our actions...

- Look at verse 24:

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:24 KJV

24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith **ONLY**.

- Faith is important, but it is just the beginning, the foundation of a life in Christ
- Faith is what saves us, but what do we do out of gratitude for that great gift?
- THAT is the question that James asks...
- Do you really have Faith at all, if your life is not full of good Works?

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:18 KJV

18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: **shew me thy faith without thy works**, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

- **SLIDE**

- “Yes,” James is saying, “we are all **Dependent upon the Grace of God** for Salvation”
- Sure, it is Faith that saves us...

- **SLIDE**

- But, if you aren't doing anything **GOOD** with your life, then are you Really **SURE** that you have the **Saving Faith**?
- I like how Paul says it to Timothy

- **SLIDE**

- 2nd Timothy 1:8-9 KJV

- 8) Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;
- 9) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, **NOT according to our WORKS, but according to HIS own purpose and GRACE**, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

- **SLIDE**

- God has chosen us **NOT** for our **STRENGTHS**, but for our **WEAKNESSES**... In order to show forth His strength
- It's not because of anything we have done that God calls us, but because of something great and wonderful that He wants to do

- **SLIDE**

- We are saved because **God Desires It**, and **NOT Because We've Earned It**
- Our salvation is not contingent on our own works... No matter how good they are...
- And they are not always good...
- This is the really hard part for us to swallow...
- This is the part that hard for us to **REALLY** believe!
- We are all more comfortable with one side of this equation, than with the other...
- But, we have to believe BOTH SIDES

- **SLIDE**

- We are all fairly comfortable with the idea that we cannot **EARN** our way into the Kingdom **REGARDLESS** of our **Good Actions**...

- **SLIDE**

- But, we are not as comfortable with the idea of being **GIVEN** salvation **DESPITE** our **Sinful Actions**...

- **SLIDE**

- Understanding (and APPRECIATING) God's **LOVE** is a key to understanding the concept of **Justification by Faith**
- That is very hard to do when you really don't feel worthy of such a great gift
- But, that is the point, isn't it?
- God loves us, even though we are sinners

- **SLIDE**

- While **SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL**, God's Love isn't...

- The Psalms tells us that God Hates Wickedness
- Deuteronomy says that God Hates Idols
- Malachi teaches us that God Hates Divorce
- **SLIDE**
- But, over and over in Scriptures we see that **God LOVES Sinners!**
- And I know that is true, because I know that I am one!
- Sure, He loves Righteous People also, but the most amazing thing about God is that He loves the unlovable
- He loves the unworthy
- He loves us...
- Coming to **ACCEPT** this **Love of God** is Hard for us...
 - God wouldn't love you more if you were perfect
 - God doesn't love you less because you are imperfect
- Only when we understand and truly believe this will we begin to accept the idea of being justified in God's sight
- Too often we talk about losing our place in the Kingdom because we've been bad
- Like, we are only going to make it there is we don't sin...
- Do you really think you are going to stop sinning?
- Even just one tiny, little slip-up is all it takes
- Look at how James describes it:
- **SLIDE**
- James 2:10-11 NIV
 - 10) For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at **JUST ONE POINT** is guilty of breaking **ALL OF IT**.
 - 11) For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.
- Thankfully, God didn't wait until we were perfect to call us...

- **“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...”**

- **SLIDE**

- We are Justified by the Grace of God!
 - Our shortcomings are made complete...
 - The fullness of our sins is removed...
 - We look Perfect in God’s eyes!
- God wants us to come to trust in this

- **SLIDE**

- To have Faith in the **FACT** that He **CAN** and **WILL** extend His Mercy to us, and carry us home like the wayward sheep that we are
- God wants us to come to trust in His mercy, His grace, and His love for us
 - To realize that we are unable to earn righteousness through our actions
 - That we all need to have God “*impute*” righteousness to us...

- **SLIDE**

- One of the keys of coming to trust in His Mercy and Grace is to realize that you are in need of that Grace
- We’re at Bible School this week, so we might feel strong and spiritually invigorated here
- It’s after you get back to your regular life that you come back to reality
- When you kneel down to pray at the end of the day and realize just how far from God you are and how your life is not where you want it to be
- That’s when you have to come to have Faith in God’s Grace
- But, as if this great example of Abraham isn’t enough to teach us this lesson
- James has another example that he wants to share with us
- An example that I feel is actually much more powerful when you come to think about what it means
- Let’s continue in Chapter 2:

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:25 NIV

25) In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

- James brings us an example of a person who we probably wouldn't feel very comfortable if she were to join us in the back of hall
- A person who we definitely wouldn't invite over to our house for dinner after Meeting
- A sinner
- One of the worst kinds of sinners
- A prostitute
- A woman who sold her own body for money

- **SLIDE**

- **RAHAB**

- When you talk about the "good old days", you aren't talking about the 15th Century BC
- You aren't taking about the age of the Phoenicians and the Canaanites
- Canaanite culture was utterly despicable
- We know that their religion involved Temple Prostitution
- And Rahab wasn't even at the level of Temple Prostitute
- She wasn't doing it because of some misguided religious belief
- She was a woman of low position
- We all have that distant relative that no one really talks about
- The one that got carried away with drugs or succumbed to a homosexual lifestyle
- The one that has had some trouble with the law or is currently working (unsuccessfully) on their fifth marriage
- The one that we don't feel very comfortable around
- The one that we would cringe if we saw them walk through that door

- Are they a **prostitute**?

- Rahab was...

- **SLIDE**

- Most Christadelphians would feel uncomfortable if Rahab were to come walking into their Ecclesial Hall on Sunday morning

- **SLIDE**

- And yet God has nothing but **GOOD** to say about **Rahab**

- Only two women appear in Hebrews 11

- If you were writing the letter and you had to choose the two, who would you pick?

- Sure, Sarah is easy – She is the “Mother of the Faithful”

- Who would you choose next?

- I’m partial to Esther, but maybe you would vote for Ruth or Naomi. How about Deborah or Miriam? Hannah is a good choice, or how can leave out Mary?

- But, God chose Rahab

- You know what Hebrews 11 says:

- **SLIDE**

- Hebrews 11:31 KJV

31) By **FAITH** the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

- God gives us Rahab as an example of a real, living faith

- **SLIDE**

- One of the messages of James is that it is possible to have intellectual agreement concerning the Truth, without having **REAL FAITH**

- **SLIDE**

- The lesson from Rahab is that if you have **REAL FAITH** it doesn’t matter where you came from or what you’ve done

- God accepts you even if you’ve had a **shady past** or **sordid history**

- **SLIDE**

- God is more concerned about what we are **GOING TO DO** after we come to Him than what we **HAVE DONE**
- James is really trying to prove a point to the Jews he is addressing, when he includes Rahab as an example of Faith

- **SLIDE**

- Consider the word the James used to segue between the two stories...

- **SLIDE**

- James 2:25 KJV

25) Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works...

- **SLIDE**

- Likewise = *homoios* = in the same way
- Abraham, the father of the Hebrew faith is offered as an excellent example of faith and good works

- **LIKEWISE...**

- Rahab, a woman, a prostitute, and a pagan is seen in God's eyes the same way that He sees Abraham
- In God's eyes we are all raised high
- James wants us to know that the lowly are just as important to God as the mighty
- We may not feel that we are comparable to the Father of the Faithful
- But, God wants us to know that he loves us even if we are more like Rahab than Abraham
- We are all like Rahab
- We are all sinners when we come before God
- And we can hold Rahab as an example to us...
- Because Rahab was changed
- She was transformed by her association with God and her new faith

- Rahab's Faith produced in her the same result that True Faith produces in everyone
- Works of Goodness
- Works of Kindness
- Works of Love
- Simple works of Faith
- And look at the blessings that God showered on Rahab after she practiced her new found faith

- **SLIDE**

- She gets a new husband in the Truth, Salmon
- Matthew 1:5-6 NIV
 - 5) Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was **Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse,
 - 6) and Jesse the father of **King David**...
- And she becomes part of a royal household as four generations later King David comes from her family
- She is one of only four women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ
- The person who we would least expect to find sitting next to us at a Bible School
- Is the one that God chooses to help bring His son into the world...

- **SLIDE**

- Because of her **Faith & Works!**
- No matter where we are in our life, God can work with us also
- No matter what we've had happen to us in our past
- No matter who our parents were, or how our kids turned out
- God has a purpose and plan for each one of us
- He doesn't ask us for great things
- He doesn't want us to kill 100 Philistines or sacrifice our only son on an altar
- He simply wants us to have Faith and believe that he has saved us

- And he wants us to be motivated by that belief to do good things to our Brothers and Sisters and to those around us
- He wants us to have **Faith**
- **SLIDE**
- **AND** to do **Works**
- Both
- Not one or the other, but, **BOTH**