

My Favorite Thing About JAMES

James 2:19-22

January 29, 2022

On to the Book of JAMES

Most scholars believe the author of this letter was the brother of Jesus and was written perhaps as early as 49 AD.

This book has not always been well received. It was the last book to be accepted into the biblical canon and Martin Luther said it was an *"epistle of straw"* because it seemed to contradict the writings of Paul:

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About James ---- The Importance of LIVING your faith**

- **James 2:14-22** - What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 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. ¹⁹ **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that -- and shudder.** ²⁰ **You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?** 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.**

Right away I want to make clear that when I say *"Living your Faith"*, I am not talking about belief in or adherence to a specific denomination or set of religious doctrines. Faith in Scripture has nothing to do with denomination or doctrine. Faith in Scripture is an active, vital, living, belief in the promises of God which find their ultimate fulfillment in the all-sufficient sacrifice of Jesus.

- **2 Corinthians 1:20** - For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.....

It was by acting on his faith that Abraham fulfilled what scripture said of him, **"Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness."** {Genesis 15:6}

Rahab also demonstrated her faith in God by protecting the spies and sending them home by a different route {Joshua 2:1-21 / James 2:25}.

Hebrews 11 – well known by Christians as the *"Faith Chapter"*, shows us clearly that action is a key component in faith:

- **Hebrews 11:4** - By faith Abel offered
- **Hebrews 11:7** - By faith Noah built
- **Hebrews 11:8** - By faith Abraham obeyed and went....
- **Hebrews 11:23** - By faith Moses' parents hid
- **Hebrews 11:30** - By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people marched

All of these people were faith walkers not pew potatoes. What they did demonstrated the truth of their faith claim.

The same is true of us. What **we do** reveals the truth about what **we believe** and the faith we claim to have. It is the external evidence of our saving relationship with God through Jesus.

We don't *"do stuff"* in order **TO BE SAVED**. We *"do stuff"* because we **ARE SAVED**.

Same action. Different motivation.

- **Matthew 7:21-27** - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' ²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against

that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

- **Matthew 25:34-40** - Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' ⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'
- **1 John 2:3-6** - We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴ The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.
- **1 John 3:18** - Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

James is addressing the conflict between a statement of belief and a vital, living, truly saving faith. His argument is that our faith in the substitutionary death of Christ will **dictate how we live**. If we claim, by faith, a saving relationship with Jesus, yet do nothing for the benefit of anyone else or worse yet, are critical, malicious, *"judgy"*, envious, bitter, selfish, self-serving, self-centered, can't control our tongues and are proud and arrogant – than our faith is a lie and it is deadlier than a doornail!! Paul would have completely agreed:

- **Galatians 5:19-25** - The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
- **Francis of Assisi** - Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.
- **Charles Spurgeon** - I would not give anything for your profession of faith unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they shine.

That's why the importance of LIVING your faith is **My Favorite Thing About JAMES**.