

The book of James

2:14-26

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of James.
This week James talks about faith.

✠ **James 2:14** *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*

When you read this, the first thing you may be thinking is that James is saying that we are not saved by faith in Jesus, but rather our works.

If you were to stop reading here it may very well seem to be true. But with all scripture, you have to keep reading to get the context of what is being said. Let's continue on, and then we will get back to this verse.

✠ **James 2:15-20** *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*

So reading it in its context, what James is saying is, that if you have faith then it will be evident by the works you do.

I like the way Pastor Chuck Smith puts this.

✠ *Suppose you were in a building and I came in there and said, "There's a bomb in here and it's going to explode in thirty seconds." But then I just stand around doing nothing. You would soon start to think and even say to me, "There's no bomb in here, if there was a bomb in here, you would be running out of here."*

What this shows is that I can say there is a bomb that's going to explode in 30 seconds, and I can tell everyone in the building, but if I do nothing about it, then I really don't believe it.

Now let's go back to our opening verse.

James 2:14 *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*

Let's talk about salvation for a minute here. You say that you are saved. You believe that there is a hell and that without Jesus Christ will go there. You have never seen Jesus or hell, but you believe it because the bible says it. This is called faith.

† **Heb 11:1** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Or as the NLT puts it:

† **Heb 11:1 (NLT)** *What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.*

So you believe in Jesus and hell do you? If you really believed, then who have you told? What about your family and loved ones?

What about your friends?

What about your co-workers or those in your school?

“Yea but Steve, they may make fun of me, and may never talk to me again.”

If you knew there was a bomb in a building and it was going to go off in one minute, would you stop to think about how people would make fun of you as you ran in the building to warn them and get them out into safety?

No, you wouldn't even think about it. Their safety would be all you would care about.

(I warned you ahead of time in the first study in James, that he is straight in your face; this is how it is teaching. I have to admit that it is tough for me also, but the Lord teaches me through these studies too.)

Now you would save those from a physical death, not worrying about who would make fun of you. But it seems we will not run in and save those from a spiritual death.

† **Rev 20:14-15** *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

If you have been here from the first studies on the Holy Spirit, you know I have admitted that I do not have the gift of evangelism. But I have to tell you, over just the last few weeks; the lost have been heavy on my heart. With all that's going on in Israel, I know that the return of Jesus for His church could really happen at any moment. We are so close I have to wonder each week if I will be able to get the study published before Jesus returns.

I have been praying fervently every morning that the Lord would give me the ability to share Jesus with others, or at least warn them of what will happen to them without Jesus and if they are left behind.

If you think about it, there is a bomb ready to go off on this earth, the thing is we don't know when it will go off, but when it does hundreds of thousands and even millions will be gone. Who are these ones that will be gone? If you are a Christian then you will be one of them as part of the bride of Jesus Christ, which is the church.

After this happens, all hell will break loose (literally) on the earth for seven years. It will be worse than anything we have ever read about (but you can read about it in the book of Revelation) or could even imagine.

Now think about just one person that you would not want to have go through these seven years of hell here on earth.

You know who that would be? Ok, what are you going to do about it?

Maybe when you read the question you thought of several people.

What are you going to do about it?

“But Steve, I can’t warn everyone, I know too many people.”

Here are a few suggestions:

Have you ever sent an E-mail to a bunch of people? Well?

Have you ever had a bunch of people over for dinner?

Have you ever posted on social media like Facebook or twitter?

Think about this, if you shared Jesus with a few people, say three. And out of those three two of them accepted Jesus, now you have three (yourself and the two who just got saved) to now tell more. And as more get saved that makes more to tell others about Jesus.

Do you get the idea?

“But what if I tell people and they don’t accept Jesus? Did I fail or did I do it wrong?”

We are not responsible for making people accept Jesus, just as you are not responsible for getting everyone out of that building with a bomb in it.

Sure, some will believe and get out of the building, but even if no one does, if you did all you could do to warn them, then you can rest assured that you did your best.

It’s the same with sharing Jesus.

† 1 Cor 3:6-7 *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*

We are nothing, but God is everything. We share Jesus, but it’s God who saves, not us!

“So this is faith?”

This is faith and if you believe it, then you should live it!

✠ *But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

James goes on with even a tougher statement.

✠ ***You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?***

How many people have you talked to say, "I believe in god" or a god?
If they really believed in the God of the bible, do you think they would really live the way they have been living?
If they believed in the God of the bible, they would also believe in His Son Jesus!

James goes on and gives a few examples of people in the bible and how they had faith and showed it by the things they did.

✠ ***James 2:21-26 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.***

The first example is our good friend Abraham, who we studied in the book of Genesis. Isn't the bible so cool? We studied the book of Genesis, and now when we are here in James, we understand what he is talking about with Abraham because we studied about him.

Abraham was promised a son by which all the nations would be blessed through his descendants. That son was Isaac. But Abraham was told to offer Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice to God. Abraham was obedient to God even though God promised Abraham that through Isaac the nations would be blessed and his seed would multiply. Here is a little of the conversations.

† ***Gen 17:1-4 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."***

† ***Gen 18:10-11 And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.***

- † **Gen 21:1-3** *And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him--whom Sarah bore to him--Isaac.*
- † **Gen 22:1-3** *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
So Abraham rose 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 arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*
- † **Gen 22:7-8** *But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.*
- † **Gen 22:10-13** *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*

For more insight on these verses, go to the study in Genesis.

But we see through this that God had made a promise to Abraham, and Abraham believed God, no matter what the circumstances were.

God and His word were more important to Abraham than his only son born from Sarah. That is where faith comes in. Knowing that no matter what God has given you here on this earth, that it cannot compare to having God as your God!

The next example James gives is about Rahab the harlot. It's interesting that she is called Rahab the harlot and not just Rahab. It goes to show you that God can use anyone to fulfill His purpose.

Even in the New Testament we read of Mary Magdalene who was demon possessed, and ministered to Jesus and his disciples.

- † **Luke 8:1-3** *Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the*

twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities--Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

So who was this Rahab the harlot and what did she do?

Have you ever heard of the story of the walls of Jericho falling, where the children of Israel walked around the walled city for seven days? On the seventh day they walked around the wall seven times, then they fell because God was giving them the city. What's also interesting is this is the first battle for the children of Israel. Who had been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses has died and Joshua was now leading them into this first battle with God's direction.

† **Josh 6:15-16** *But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!"*

"OK, but what does this have to do with Rahab the harlot?"

To find out you have to go back before this to find out.

† **Joshua 2:1-21** *Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate. Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now*

therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way." So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

† **Josh 6:17** *Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.*

† **Josh 6:22-25** *But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

You see, even though Rahab the harlot was not part of the children of Israel, she still believed in God and who He was. She feared the Lord and she helped protect His people because she feared God. In other words, you don't have to be an Israelite to fear and worship God. You just have to believe!

Rahab the harlot showed that belief by not thinking of her own life and protecting the two spies from Israel. By faith she knew that God would protect her and her family also because of her fear of God. It shows us that you don't have to be a mighty man of God like Abraham was. Just a normal sinner like everyone else, but one who believes in God

So, who or what are you fearing? Is it God or the world?
Who created the world and holds it in the palm of his hand?
Who created you allowing you to take every breath?
Who makes the sun rise and fall each day?
Who placed the stars in the sky?
Who is bigger than the bully picking on you?
Who is richer than King Solomon?
Who provides food and water and shelter for the whole earth?
Who knows even when a little sparrow falls?
Who are you putting your trust in?

Are you showing it by the way you live?

✚ **James 2:26** *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

If your works do not show the evidence of God in your life and Jesus as your Savior, maybe it's time to ask the Lord to change you and the things you do.

If you had a million dollars, but didn't spend a penny for food, you would die of starvation.

If you are saved, you have all the riches and power of God working through you, but if you don't use it, then you are dying spiritually. You are starving yourself spiritually by not reading His word daily.

You see, God has provided for your certain things, maybe physical and/or spiritual, for your own needs and also for the needs of others. But if you are not using them, then they are no use to anyone and are going to waist. Just like the million dollars that you may be holding on to because you are afraid of losing it, so you would rather die of starvation then lose what God has given you.

Jesus tells a parable about this.

Matt 25:14-30 *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your*

lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

What has God given you? Are you using it, by faith, or are you keeping it to yourself, because you are afraid to lose it?

Are you dead or alive spiritually? The evidence will be in what you believe and the works that you are doing. That's what proves what you really believe in.

✠ James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Well, we made it through another chapter. Next week we will study the tongue, or the things we say.

May the Lord be with you and increase your faith in Him. May the Lord show Himself through you and the things you do!