

Series – Part 11: How to Live as a Christian:

Don't Separate Your Faith from Your Works!

James 2:18-24 NAS

Sunday, July 7 at 9:00; Monday, July 8 at 7 PM

7th Sunday After Pentecost / 6th After Trinity – 2013

Our Summer Schedule for July & August:

Sundays: DS 9; Refreshments 10:10; BC&SS 10:30; Mondays: DS 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, last week God, *through James*, laid out this parallel:

Faith without works is dead.

Words without actions are useless.

Today, God calls us to see the *proper* relationship between our faith and our works – we should never ADD THEM TOGETHER, *but neither should we SEPARATE THEM FROM EACH OTHER!* So what is the proper relationship? Our works never save, *but they reveal our saving faith!*

Consider these comments from the Lutheran Study Bible: “James did not believe that we earn the forgiveness of sins... by good works. After all, he is talking about the works of those who have been justified... *who have received forgiveness of sins....* He criticized lazy and secure minds that imagine they have faith, although they do not have it. He made a distinction between dead and living faith.... [James did not] describe the way of justification, *but only the nature of the just*, after they have already been justified.... James praises only works produced by faith...” (LSB, 2139)

1. **Can We Show Our Faith Apart From Our Works?** We can't! Why? Because (*not to God but to people*) faith is invisible! So James gives us an example: ¹⁸ **But someone ~~may well~~ [will] say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without [apart from] the works, and I will show you my faith ~~by~~ [from] my works.”** // Again, faith is invisible so it cannot be shown, but works, *which reveal our faith*, can be shown! The LSB notes: “One cannot have right faith without the response of right works, nor can one do good works without faith.” (2137)
2. **There Is a Huge Difference between Knowledge and Trust:** The holy angels *who rebelled against God and became the demons* are very knowledgeable about God. However, *as their vast knowledge does not help them*, so neither will mere knowledge help people. ¹⁹ **You believe that God is one [that God is God]. You do well [knowledge about God is good, but it's not saving faith]; [even] the demons ~~also~~ believe, and shudder.** // The LORD wants to work *through His Word of Truth* to make us knowledgeable about *our sin* and *His gift of salvation*; then He wants to give us faith / trust / confidence in Jesus alone as our Savior! The demons have knowledge, *but no faith*, so they **shudder** – “the involuntary reaction of the body in shaking, as in a fever, and is frequently used for reactions of fear...” (LTJ, 241)
3. **Faith and Works Work Together:** Remember, we *never add them together for our salvation* – never faith

+ works; instead, Martin Luther wrote: “We are saved by faith alone, *but the faith that saves is never alone.*”

- a. A challenge from James: ²⁰ **But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow** [lit. oh senseless man], **that faith without** [apart from] **works is useless?** // As it does not help the demons, so neither will it help us to have faith without works!
- b. An example from James: Notice in this section (and in the conclusion) that I have added the words, “shown to be.” ²¹ **Was not Abraham our father [shown to be** (corresponding to 2:18)] **justified by [from] works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?** ²² **You see that faith was working [together] with his works, and ~~as a result of~~ [from] the works; [the] faith was perfected;** ²³ **and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called ~~the~~ [a] friend of God.** // In Genesis 15:6 we are told that “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” In other words, *by faith alone* God considered Abraham to be right in His sight. Then, *later*, in Genesis chapter 22, the righteousness which Abraham already possessed was SHOWN to be real “when he offered up Isaac his son...” His action was not added to his faith, *but it revealed his faith!* LTJ wrote: “Faith makes possible the deeds, and the deeds bring the faith to its mature expression.... James sees the offering of Isaac as the *demonstration* of this faith...” (243)

Conclusion: ²⁴ **You see that a man is [shown to be] justified by [from] works, and not by [from] faith alone.** // We know that actions speak... We also know that those who say and yet do not do are hypocrites. Therefore, **by faith alone we are saved**, but our saving faith is never alone *because it is constantly being revealed from our works!*

Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

1. Can we show our faith apart from our works? Y N
Why or why not? _____
2. What is the difference between knowledge and trust?

As our bodies are constantly revealing that we are physically alive, *so may our works constantly reveal that we are spiritually alive through our faith alone in Jesus* – whose precious blood has purified us from all of our sins!

Let us pray together: Dear Father, thank you for sending Your Son! Dear Jesus, thank you for taking away my sins! Dear Holy Spirit, thank you for the gift of saving faith! Amen!

Read, Understand, and Apply the Bible!		
Verse and Key Word – James 2 NAS	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
Notice that “faith” appears 7 times: 3x in 18; 1x in 20; 2x in 22; 1x in 24	πίστις pistis	trust, confidence, faith in the active sense = ‘believing,’ esp. of relation to God and Christ.

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Rd., Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230