

**Countdown Video - Grunge Cross**  
**Music Video: Friend of God**  
**Slide Background: A Faith without Works**  
**Video Illustration: "Worthless"**

**Sermon Series: Book of James 10/18/15**

**Title: The Proof Is In the Pudding**

**Big Idea:** James began his writing by reminding us that we are going to face trials in life and the trials we must endure the trials and those trials produce patience and patience's leads us down the road to perfection. Yet, James contends that only when the faith that we profess is combined with works are unified in the life of a believer are we truly complete in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul writes in Roman 4:1-5 and Galatians 3 that Faith is absolutely essential to salvation, and while this is certainly true in a believers life that Faith should bring about a change in the way a believer lives. James points out that Faith in word only is no faith at all. It is like saying I have a hammer but I don't use it for anything. I just have a hammer. Or what good are the jars you have on your shelf if you never store anything in them. For a person to say they have faith and they use that faith for nothing but to wear it as a label and nothing is useless. The person who claims to have faith is just giving lip service and their faith has no substance. The title of the sermon today is "The proof is in the pudding" we could restate this old saying in this way "results are what counts". You may be the greatest chef, or the most learned musician but if you don't use your talents in a way that others can see how gifted you may be they are only words. In short "Faith Equals Results".

### **Read Sermon Text**

**James 2:14-26** <Faith without Works Is Dead> (cf. Gen 22; Josh 2:1)

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 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? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 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. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 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. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not

by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. NKJV

### 1. Faith Alone (vs. 14-17)

**James 2:14-17** (cf. Gen 22; Josh 2:1) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 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? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. NKJV

- a. A Sinner is saved by their faith in Jesus. Paul writes that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). When a sinner hears the Word it convicts and brings a sinner to a point where the hearer must make a decision. A decision either accept or reject Jesus as Lord. The results of that decision will determine the eternal destination of the sinner.

**Rom 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. NKJV

**Col 1:4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; NKJV

- b. James questions the decision of a person who does not couple faith and works. He states that if having faith does not cause the hearer to make a change in the way one lives then hearer's faith is dead. Ezekiel 18:31 tells us that when we ask forgiveness for the sin of our lives that God gives us a *new heart and spirit*". Therefore by receiving a new heart and spirit we should live our lives differently.

**Ezekiel 18:31** Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and **get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.** For why should you die, O house of Israel? NKJV

**Matt 12:33** Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; **for a tree is known by its fruit.** NKJV

**Matt 23:26** Blind Pharisee, **first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.** NKJV

**Rom 8:13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. NKJV

**James 4:8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; **and purify your hearts**, you double-minded. NKJV

**1 Peter 1:22** Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the **Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart**, NKJV

- c. James then ask when we see those who are in need and we are not moved by Christ like compassion is our faith really genuine. In the United States in a recent survey 76.5% of the population said they were Christian. God's Word points out that not every person who claims the name of Jesus will see heaven.

**Matthew 7:21** "**Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. NKJV

**Text Illustration:** An old Scotsman operated a little rowboat for transporting passengers. One day one of the passengers noticed that the good old man had carved on one of the oars the word "Faith," and on the other oar "Works." Curiosity led him to ask the meaning of this. The old man being a well-balanced Christian and glad of the opportunity for testimony, said, "I will show you." So saying, he dropped one oar and plied the other called Works, and they just went around in circles. Then he dropped that oar and plied with the one called Faith, and the little boat went around in circles again---this time the other way around, but still in a circle. After this demonstration the old man picked up Faith and Works, and plying both oars together, sped swiftly over the water, explaining to his inquiring passenger, "You see that is the way it is in the Christian life. Dead works without faith are useless, and 'faith without works is dead' also, getting you nowhere. But faith and works pulling together make for safety, progress, and blessing." Source: Walter B. Knight. Knight's Master Book of New Illustrations. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986, p. 195

## 2. Faith and Works Justifies (vs. 18-24)

**James 2:18-24** 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. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his

works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 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. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. NKJV

- a. Just like the old man in the row boat our lives as a Christian will go nowhere if we do not have both Faith and Works. James illustrates this by point us to Abraham as he was instructed by God to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham had waited many years for God to fulfill His promise for a son. And now God was asking Abraham to give Isaac back to God as a sacrifice. God was testing the resolve of Abraham's faith. Had Abraham refused to obey God his life that had been devoted to serving God would have been brought to naught. If Abraham obeyed God Abraham would lose his beloved son. Abraham commitment to God was proved out as he obeyed the request of God.
- b. James ask us if we see the how the faith of Abraham was put in to action by offering his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. God does not want us to sacrifice but to be obedient. As a result Abraham was justified in his faith and made righteous in the eyes of God and called "friend of God"

**Gal 3:6** just as Abraham **"believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."** NKJV

- c. James makes a contrasting statement when he compares faith without works and faith with works. Many people who claim to be followers of Jesus apparently hold to the belief that it doesn't matter what you believe but, you must believe. James states that the demons believe and tremble. Those who claim the name of Christ in word only and do not allow the Spirit to change the way they live are in danger of eternal punishment. James points out that "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (vs. 26)

### **Text Illustration: LOVE ME FIRST, THEN WITNESS TO ME**

In our lesson we have seen that faith without works is useless. It cannot be demonstrated, it cannot change a person, it is not perfected, and it is dead! Our faith does not help us, or others, until it causes us to act.

Once a chaplain walked up to a wounded soldier who had been lying on the ground some time without anyone treating his wounds.

The chaplain asked, "Would you like for me to read to you from the Bible?" "No!" came the angry reply. "Is there anything else I can do for you?" the chaplain asked.

"I'm thirsty!" the soldier said. The chaplain gave him a drink from his own canteen. "Anything else?" he asked. "I'm cold!" came the reply. The chaplain took off his coat and spread it over the soldier.

"Anything else?" he again asked. "My head is uncomfortable!" was his reply. The chaplain took off his cap and arranged it under the soldier's head.

The Chaplain asked again, "Anything else?"

The soldier looked up at him and tears came to his eyes as he said, "I think now I'd like for you to read to me from the Bible." (From a sermon by John Wright, Abraham's Faithful Work, 2/1/2010)

### 3. Life Changing Faith (vs. 25-26)

**James 2:25-26** Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. NKJV

- a. Rahab was a woman who lived in the condemned City of Jericho, She had heard of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. She had heard how God had brought the nation of Israel to the borders of the Promise Land. When two of the 10 spies had entered her city she hid them. Her faith in Jehovah coupled with her works justified her in the sight of God (vs.25). By hearing the Word of God a Faith it brought Rahab to action and that action demonstrated her faith by the helping the messengers of God to escape Jericho.

Heb 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. NKJV

- b. A person without the spirit of God is spiritually dead and James draws the conclusion that without life changing faith we have no hope. If we only say we have faith without works faith is dead and so is the Spirit. Therefore if there is no works there is no faith and if there is no faith there is no salvation and if there is no salvation there is no eternal life with God.

#### Text Illustration:

"It is that kind of faith which would lead a man to take a bottle of medicine from his medicine cabinet. Looking at the instructions on it, he says, I'm sure they're correct. I have all confidence in the source of the medicine. I know who wrote these directions. I believe everything about it. I know this will relieve my headache, if I just take it." But he takes the medicine bottle and puts it back on the shelf. He doesn't lose his headache. It continues on. Yet he can say I believe that medicine. I believe all about that medicine. But still he won't take it. That's dead faith. (James 2:20, Dr. Harlan Roper, Tape on James, Dallas, TX)