

Faith, Real or False?

James 2:14 – 26

- I. A look at our faith.
 - A. First let us define faith true faith.
 1. **Hebrews 11:1** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The word Substance means the support or assurance of things hoped for.
 - a. It speaks of the ground on which one builds their hope.
 - b. One writer said - "Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for." The Holy Spirit energized act of faith which a believer exercises in the Lord Jesus is the title-deed which God puts in his hand, guaranteeing to him the possession of the thing for which he trusted Him.
 2. The word faith is truly defined by W.E. Vine “firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing”. In the NT always of "faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual."
Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 3. Saving faith is faith that causes one to be saved. That faith is in Jesus Christ, His death – burial – and resurrection.
 4. But it is much deeper than that. It is faith in His ability to save you. Faith in who He was, why He came, and what He can do.
 - a. **Luke 1:35** “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”
 - b. **Luke 19:10** “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - c. **John 6:47** “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”
 - d. Faith is believing this, **John 11:25 - 26** “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live...And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this”

5. Faith is in His blood and its ability to cleanse our sins. **Romans 3:25 – 26** “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God...To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”
 6. This is called faith, but it is also called living, God given faith that will save your soul.
- B. But there is a false faith, it is not faith in Jesus Christ but in self. **Please turn to James Chapter 2**
1. Believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God does not save you, the believing is a deeper thing. “the devils also believe” V. 19
 2. James ask this question in verse 14 “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” Not if it is not God given faith. **Gal 5:22** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,”
 3. Simple faith in who Jesus Christ is, is not saving faith, the devils know who Jesus Christ is, lots of lost people know who Jesus Christ is, this is called “dead faith”.
 4. In the early churches there were those who claimed they had saving faith yet did not possess salvation. Today there are churches built on people who have what is called “dead faith”.
 5. Jesus said that many in the day of judgment will profess faith. **Matthew 7:21 - 23** “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven...Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works...And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
- C. Saving Faith is not only knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ but also showing your faith. V. 17 “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”
1. Saving Faith, true faith, comes with a desire to serve God. Not in works of the law, not in works for show, but works in service to God.
 2. God said in James 2:18 “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.”

3. God defined our works this way in verses 15 - 16, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" – words are nothing without action, thoughts are nothing without action. Faith guides our actions. **Romans 10:2 - 4** "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
 4. Listen to the example very closely, faith has actions. Without actions faith is worthless.
 5. Actions is not controlled by judgment. God did not say to only pray for them, God said action is needed. If there is no action, then they are left as naked as they came in, as needy as they came in. Is that us showing faith?
 6. Food and clothing are basic needs of every human being, whether he is saved or unsaved. God said, **1 Timothy 6:8** "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." But they are necessities and to have and not to help the needy brothers and sisters is not showing our faith.
- D. The blessings of our works. As believers, we have an obligation to help meet the needs of people, no matter who they may be, but especially to those who are saved.
1. Serving God should be sufficient reason to help those in need. But the very fact that we are saved should be enough reason to help the needy.
 2. Listen closely to God. **Galatians 6:7 - 10** "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap...For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting...And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not...As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 3. If we have the ability to help and do not help then are not showing our faith, or we may not have faith. See, true faith is not helping our of guilt, but helping because of our Christina heart tells us too.
 4. We reap what we sow.

- E. John reminds us of dead faith, "...though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"
1. Dead faith is faith that has no real substance from the heart. It is like praying to be heard, **Matthew 6:5 - 8** "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward...But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly...But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking...Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."
 2. True faith is shown by the love in your heart. To help a person in need is an expression of love, and faith works by love. **Galatians 5:6** "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 3. Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church these words. **1 Thessalonians 1:2 - 3** "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers...Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;"
 4. Doing things to be seen, or out of any reason of the love of God in your heart is dead faith. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in them? What love is that, is that God's love?
- II. Demon faith. V. 19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
- A. It comes as a shock to people that demons have faith! What do they believe? For one thing, they believe in the existence of God; they are neither atheists nor agnostics. They also believe in the deity of Christ. **Mark 3:11** "And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God."
 - B. They believe in the existence of a place of punishment called hell. **Luke 8:31** "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep."

- C. It is not a saving experience to believe and tremble. A person can be enlightened in his mind and be lost forever. True saving faith involves something more, something that can be seen and recognized by their actions. V. 18 "...I will show thee my faith by my works"