

Introduction:

We live in a day when everyone claims to be saved.
We live in a day when you cannot tell who is and who is not by their words and actions.
Can you be saved and not go to church?
Billy Graham said 80% of church members are not saved. True?
99% of persons today, expect to go to heaven.
James is here correcting our problem. A necessary correction.

Verse 14 - “Can that faith save him?” (NASB)

-questions a faith that does not have works?
-and so should we

Verse 15-17 - “Suppose” - A hypothetical example

1. He illustrates the folly of faith without works
2. A brother in need - hearkens back to the poor man in church, example (2:1-3)
3. Farewell - depart in peace
 - in the south “God bless you” or “we’ll be praying for you”
4. Faith without works is void of reality
5. “Words, sermons, prayers, confessions of faith, wise advice, encouragement... are indispensable. These only have meaning when people can see actions.” -Moo
6. We get more emotionally moved at the movies than we do in real life.
 - “In our artificial, self-centered world, fantasy, often becomes more meaningful than reality.”
7. We are to help:
 - Luke 10 - the Good Samaritan story says, everyone is our neighbor.
 - Mt. 25:31-41, 45 - does the story of the sheep and goats not say, we will not be allowed into heaven if our faith is not of this type?

Verse 18 - Someone might argue... A Challenge

1. Well, you have works, I have faith
 - that’s just not my gift
2. Today’s version
 - just say the apostle’s creed
 - just baptize them
 - just ask Jesus into your heart
 - after all who are we to judge?
2. Faith is revealed and validated by good deeds

Verse 19 - The Example of the Demons

1. They believe
 - scripture is God’s word
 - Jesus is God’s son
 - salvation is by grace

- Jesus died and was raised
- He ascended to heaven
- there is a literal heaven and hell
- All that knowledge cannot save them
- 2. Perhaps a backhanded slap at the Jews who quoted the “*Shema*” every day. “Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!” - Dt. 6:4

Verse 20 - You are “Foolish”

1. “Vain” - KJV
“Foolish” - NIV
2. “Dead” - KJV
“Useless” - NIV
3. Scriptures re fruit
 - the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22-23
 - pruning the tree - John 15:1f.
 - Israel is fruitless - Isaiah 5
 - Jesus cursed the fruitless fig tree
 - a fruitless tree is cut down - Mt. 7:19

Dead faith - in scripture (examples)

1. Pharisees and Sadducees - John the Baptist calls vipers - Mt. 3:7-9 - bring forth works meet for salvation
2. Not everyone who says “Lord, “Lord” but only those who do the will of my father - Mt. 7:21-23. All who make a profession of faith will are not saved.
3. Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not what I say? - Luke 6:46-48
4. Unbelievers who approached Jesus - “He was not entrusting Himself to them, for he knew all men” - Jn. 2:23-25
5. Nicodemus came to Jesus representing men who believed He came from God - by the works He did. Jesus makes it clear that no matter how sincere, mere acknowledgment of truths about Him does not constitute spiritual rebirth - Jn. 3:2-3.
6. In Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision mean anything but “faith working through love” - Gal. 5:6

Verses 21-26 - Three Examples of Genuine Faith

1. **Abraham** (21-24)
 - his faith was established long before he gave Isaac. His placing Isaac on the altar showed the faith he already possessed.
 - A. *“Justified” has two general meanings - “*diakaioo*”
 - A. Acquittal - declare/ treat a person as righteous
 - we are declared righteous as a gift - Rom. 3:24
 - justified by faith apart from the works of the law - Rom.3:28
 - having been justified we have peace with God - Rom. 5:1; 9
 - B. Vindication/ Validation/ Authentication or proof we have been justified
 - Jesus was revealed in the flesh, “vindicated” in the spirit, seen by angels... - 1 Tim. 3:16

-wisdom is “justified” (vindicated) in her children - Luke 7:35

B. Imputed righteous will manifest practical righteousness

2. **Rahab** (25)

A. Acknowledged the Lord as the true God

B. She knew nothing of salvation as we know it

-her heart was right

-God accepted her faith for righteousness

-God accepted her act of protection as an act of obedience

C. She did not know the four spiritual laws - was not able to quote the apostle's creed

D. Both Rahab and Abraham demonstrated their faith, by putting everything they held dear on the line.

3. **The body** (26)

-the breath of life, not the Holy Spirit

-if the body is alive, there will be evidence to support that claim. If faith exists there will be evidences to support that claim as well.

-no coroner is needed. He talks and talks, but many words about faith do not produce it.

Conclusion:

Genuine Believers

1. How we live our lives proves who we are - or are not.

2. Salvation does not produce immediate perfection, but new direction. A new disposition that hates sin and seeks Jesus.

3. Faith and works are not competing but complimenting principles

-genuine faith is made complete... brought to its goal by works

-as a tree is made complete when there is fruit, so faith brings forth works/actions

-Jesus said you know a tree by its fruit - Mt. 12:33

4. Works are the consistent result/fruit of faith. A fruit tree has not reached its goal til it bears fruit.