



The Coin Has Two Sides (James 2:14-26)

Faith and Works Working Together

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says **he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?** 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? 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." James 2:14-26 NKJV

James 2:14-26

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

☑ **Can faith save you?**

☑ We enter an area of Scripture which may be one of the most misunderstood.

☑ Paul taught us in his letter to the Ephesians, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**" Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV

☑ So, it would seem that Paul answers this question. Can faith save you? Yes, it is NOT OF WORKS.

☑ **Romans further clarifies this idea!**

☑ In Romans, Paul clarifies that it is faith, not works that is accounted for righteousness.

- ☑ “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say?
“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness [Gen. 15:6].” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
Romans 4:1-4 NKJV
- ☑ Can faith save you? The answer is yes; don’t get caught up in works! But wait until we get to James 2:21-22!
- ☑ **Clarification: back to Ephesians—work follows faith**
- ☑ Paul clarifies with this nuance: *“For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**”* Ephesians 2:10 NKJV
- ☑ You see, you are saved by faith, and works **MUST** then follow. Works to save you? No! Works because you are saved? Yes!
- ☑ **Clarification: what you are will be known by your fruit...**
- ☑ **“You will know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, **every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.** A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a

bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**" Matthew 7:16-20 NKJV

- ☑ Works can't save you...
- ☑ Works are a response to being saved...
- ☑ If you are saved you will have works...
- ☑ If you don't have works you are not saved...
- ☑ **Clarification: Doing vs. Works**

<p>Doing the Law: "<i>for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;</i>" Romans 2:13 NKJV</p>	<p>Works of Law: "<i>Therefore by the deeds [works] of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.</i>" Romans 3:20 NKJV</p>
--	---
- ☑ It becomes obvious when you see these ideas side-by-side that "doing the law" and "works of law" cannot mean the same thing. Doing implies action that must be related to faith—you are saved by faith to do work. We will call this grace-empowered-faith-based obedience. Work then, must therefore imply you are doing or taking action without faith, which can save no one. This is called legalism.

☑ *“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.**” James 2:15-17 NKJV***

☑ **Object Lesson: it’s not real faith if you don’t do the work as a result!**

☑ You fancy yourself a man or woman of faith and you see someone in desperate need, and all you do is hand out some verbal blessings—you are of NO FAITH at all. Why? Because you were saved by grace through faith for works! No works—no fruit—no faith!

☑ *“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 2:18 NKJV*

☑ **The proof is in the pudding!**

☑ *“The proof is in the pudding is an expression that means **the value, quality, or truth of something must be judged based on direct experience with it—or on its results.** The expression is an alteration of an older saying that makes the meaning a bit clearer: **the proof of the pudding is in the eating.**”*

☑ Let's read Paul's words from Ephesians again...

☑ You tell me you have faith, let me see the proof!

☑ *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand **that we should walk in them.**"*

Ephesians 2:8-10

☑ *"**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?**" James 2:19-20
NKJV*

☑ It's never good to be placed in the demon-class!

☑ Let's see. We have now established without any doubts, that we are saved by grace through faith alone. We need not add a single thing.

☑ We have also clarified that we can't leave it at that! You see, even though faith is all that's required to have an authentic born-again experience, it can't stop there. Demons also believe there is one true God. And this is where it gets very sketchy. Believing in God is one thing; living as if what you believe is true is altogether different.

Faith alone will bump you up from **atheist-class** (there is no God) to **demon-class** (there is one God but I am not going to do anything about it!)

- ☑ To bump up to the save-by-grace-through-faith-class, there must be proof! And that proof is in the works! *“By their fruits you will know them.”* Matthew 7:20

- ☑ *“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.”* James 2:21-23 NKJV

- ☑ **Justified by works!**
- ☑ Abraham was justified by works? When conflated, these ideas can be hard to keep clear in our minds. Again let's read these Scriptures...
- ☑ **Doing the Law:** *“(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but **the doers of the law** will be justified;”* Romans 2:13 NKJV

- Works of Law:** “Therefore **by the deeds [works] of the law** no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20 NKJV
- How was Abraham justified by works? James is simply helping us see the other side of the coin. He is showing us that the ACTION Abraham took by leaving his land by faith, and by placing Issac on the altar by faith are proof of his faith.
- The other side of the coin...**
 - Abraham was not justified by works!
 - “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? **For if Abraham was justified by works**, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness [Gen. 15:6].” Now to him who works**, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” Romans 4:1-4 NKJV
 - The confluence between how Paul presents Abraham and how James presents Abraham is here!
 - “The doers of the law will be justified...”*

- ☑ *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, ... not of works... For we are...created in Christ Jesus for good works...”*
- ☑ Abraham our father was justified by works.
- ☑ Faith was working together with his works.
- ☑ By works his faith was made perfected or demonstrated.
- ☑ Abraham’s faith (as it played out in his actions) was accounted to him for righteousness.
- ☑ **Born-Again NOTE! The “sinners prayer” like never before!**
- ☑ The confession of faith as work, as James would see it: *“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”*
- ☑ “that if you **confess with your mouth** the Lord Jesus and **believe in your heart** that God has raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**. For **with the heart one believes unto righteousness**, and with **the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**” Romans 10:9-10 NKJV
- ☑ **Believe in your heart:** By grace through faith...
- ☑ **Confess with your mouth:** Action / work

- ☑ **With the heart one believes unto righteousness:**
“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
- ☑ **Confession made unto salvation:** *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works...Do you see that faith was working together with his works...”*
- ☑ **The Modern-day Altar Call**

 - ☑ “And I, brethren, **when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.** For I determined not to know anything among you **except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.** I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and **my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom,** but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”** I Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV
 - ☑ **Confession without belief:** is tantamount to a self-help seminar, an exciting sporting event, or musical experience! It’s all exciting, but in the end there is no substance behind it. It’s the equivalent of trying to cook with lighter fluid and no wood. It’s hot and flashy, but nothing really changes!

- ☑ **Belief without confession sounds like this:** *“Oh, I’m not into religion; I’m spiritual. It’s all the same God; everyone has to follow their own path and we should all love and accept one another!”* My admonition: *“Even the demons believe!”*
- ☑ **The chicken and the egg like never before:** What came first, the chicken or the egg? Well, it should be clear to any bible-believing Christian that the chicken came first! In our case, the chicken is the faith and the egg is the confession! You cannot have an egg without the chicken. You can have a chicken without an egg, but that ends in death!
- ☑ **Rush to the Alter!** Preaching with persuasive words of human wisdom causes confusion. A true confession of faith (the work-product of belief in the heart) is often bypassed by being “persuaded” to confess faith absent a change in heart. These are NOT authentic born-again experiences. They are the result of the wisdom of men, not the power of God.
- ☑ This might be, in my opinion, one of the most dangerous mistakes made in modern-day Christianity. Millions upon millions of people are walking around thinking they are born-again because they parroted

some prayer of confession. However, if that confusion was not “the work” that resulted from a changed heart (by grace through faith), then it is simply hot air blowing over vocal cords.

☑ How can you tell the difference? WORKS! You were saved for good works! FRUIT! By their fruit you will know them. No works no faith! No fruit no faith!

☑ “You see then that **a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**” James 2:24 NKJV

☑ **Faith or Faith + Works**

☑ “Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who **sowed good seed in his field;** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **Let both grow together**

until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, **“First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”** ' "" Matthew 13:24-30 NKJV

- ☑ **“Faith” only (tares bear no fruit):** they fill the pews, raise their hands, cry during the songs, speak the Christianese, and then walk out into the world and live as if nothing has changed!
- ☑ **Faith + Works (wheat bears fruit):** All the above, except they go out and work! *“A man is justified by works, and not by faith only...Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?” “By their fruits you will know them.”*

☑ *“Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also **justified by works** when she **received the messengers** and **sent them out** another way?” James 2:25 NKJV*

☑ **Faith and Works**

☑ Received the messengers: Faith

☑ Sent them out: Works

☑ *“For as the **body without the spirit is dead**, so **faith without works is dead also.**” James 2:26 NKJV*

☑ Final Words

- ☑ **The Body without the Spirit:** The body, and in this case the body part is the heart that must be changed by grace through faith, is a heart that has not received the Spirit. Oh, it can be excited with many experiences, but other than a heart changed by the Holy Spirit, it has no shot at a true confession.
- ☑ **Faith without works:** True faith then becomes demonstrated in the doing, the works! If there is no doing there was no heart change and that means you are still dead!
- ☑ Make sense now?
- ☑ *“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?** James 2:21-22 NKJV*
- ☑ *“You see then that **a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**” James 2:24*

NEXT TEACHING

Life & Death (James 3:1-12)