

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **James 2, James 2** for our scripture reading today... We are in **James 2:14-26** for ...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

James 2:14-26

¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can ^[n]that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is ^[p]dead, *being* by itself.

¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that ^[l]God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and ^[s]as a result of the works, faith was ^[t]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 friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Introduction:

Good Morning...Thank you for being here this morning...If you do not know my name is Byron Bradshaw and I am the fortunate preacher of Calvary Bible Church...

Friends, every week that goes by here at Calvary I am increasingly optimistic about Calvary's present and future...

One of the reasons I am very optimistic about our present and future is because we here have a **GREAT** deacon and elder board...Both boards are filled with great, Godly men...Filled with leaders and servants of God...

To tell you a quick story, this past week I had a long time elder/deacon of Calvary come up to me after our elder's meeting and say, "Byron, this is the healthiest elder's board I've ever been part of..." He continued, "We trust one another, we listen to one another, we are not suspicious of one another..."

I believe I gave him a really weird grin in response...Friends we are members here at Calvary at a good time...Now is the time to bring others here and to spread the Gospel to our friends...

Before we dive into the Word of God, please bow with me...

(Pray)

ME:

Today, we are discussing the age old debate regarding the Relationship between Faith and Works... The Relationship between Faith and Works...

As we begin this morning, to wet our appetite...Chew on this quote, "The genuineness of a profession of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is evidenced more by what a person does than by what he claims... A person who professes Christ but who does not live a Christ-honoring, Christ-obeying life is a fraud..." (James, MacArthur, 119)

Transition: Perhaps, the time that the relationship between faith and works is most evident is when a Christian personally shares the Gospel with a non-believer...

Over the years, I've had the privilege to share the Gospel with hundreds and perhaps even thousands of people of various ages and in a variety of settings...But as I reflect upon the many times I shared the Gospel...**Two of the most prominent Gospel sharing memories are actually two contrasting events...**

The first memory is when I shared the Gospel with a young man named Chris... Chris visited my small group for several weeks in a row so I decided to pull him aside and share the Gospel with him...

I remember asking him the question, “How are you saved?” He said, “Well, I was baptized as a baby...” URKKK... So, right then and there in Room 9, I shared the Gospel with this young man and he prayed a prayer to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior...

We opened our eyes and I exclaimed to him, “You are a Christian...Congratulations...”

Yet, Chris did not demonstrate with his life any change whatsoever...Chris could be a Christian but I expected to see at least a little life...

Transition: Chris’ conversion experience and lack of change puzzled me... so I began to set aside my biases and really look at the scripture for the relationship between faith and works... I specifically began to look in the Gospels and at Jesus’ life for every example of when Jesus Himself shared the Gospel... And I found something very interesting...

I found something VERY interesting...Yet, before I tell you what I found...I want you to Think about something for just a second... Think about all the stories of when Jesus shared the Gospel with a person...

Think about Zaccheus, Nicodemus, Samaritan woman at the well, criminal on the cross... How do we know they become Christians? What is the only way we know they came to become a Christian? **By the change in their lives...Seriously, think about it...**

Zaccheus paid back those he stole from, Nicodemus defended Jesus in John 6, Samaritan woman brought a whole town to hear the Gospel, and the criminal on the cross professed his faith in front of a crowd of soldiers and mockers... So, I did this study... and I realized that every time someone came to faith in Jesus Christ **that there was an outside sign of an inward change...**

What is the only way in the Gospels that we KNOW someone became saved? _____

The second and the other contrasting to Chris’ story began with a similar setting... The Lord gave me another opportunity to share the Gospel again through my small group here at Calvary and it was another young man...

I again asked this other young man, “How are you saved?” and he gave me the right answer... “By believing in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior” and then I asked him, “Have you

ever believed before?” He said, “No”...

I basically said to him...You know the drill...Believe in him...We bowed our heads...

And as we opened my eyes I saw tears streaming down his face... But this time I resisted the urge to tell him he was a Christian... I resisted stating this because I learned a lesson from Chris and from the Life of Christ...I wanted to watch this young man and see if there was change...

And guess what friends? After a week or so, I was convinced of this young man’s faith because I SAW HIS LIFE...I saw an outward sign of an inward change...

And guess what the result of these two conversions is today?

Some years later, Chris admitted to me that he is an agnostic atheist running from God...

And yet the second young man is actually serving here at Calvary today... He is ministering to the next generation of Christians...Pouring his life into others to lead them to the Gospel to spiritual growth...

Which of these is a Christian? Chris could possibly be but yet I have no doubt of the conversion of the second Why? The proof of his faith was in his works...

WE:

Friends, what is the relationship between faith and works? What is the relationship between faith and works? Friends, the answer to this question is perhaps one of the most important questions a Christian can answer...

Well Today, James answers this very question in James 2: 14-26 and he gives us 5 truths for the relationship between faith and works...

Transition: So please come with me to James 2... James 2...As you turn there...First, I’d like to share with you that today’s message is going to be a bit heavy...A bit information overload and so if you need or want any of my notes they should be uploaded to website...

As you turn there, perhaps many of you already know this but today’s passage is a controversial...

GOD:

In fact, it was so controversial that Martin Luther wished to exclude The Book of James from the Biblical canon based on this very passage... Yet if I might add...James Chapter 2:14-26 is a bit unnecessarily controversial...

Yet friends before I begin...I have a favor to ask...Many of us have in our mind a huge logjam of information and fear regarding the relationship between faith and works...I am going to ask of all of us a favor...

I will ask for each of us to Take down your defenses...Take down our biases and let us look at the actual text...Let us actually look at the text today....Not looking for what we want...But for what it actually says and means for us today...

Theological Guardrails

As we walk into today's passage, I find it helpful to establish some theological boundaries...IN the world of hermeneutics which is fancy word for Biblical interpretation...Anytime you come to a difficult exegetical passage it is helpful if one first is mindful of theological boundaries or guardrails to bump up against to avoid heresy...

Theological Guardrail #1: We are Saved By Grace Through Faith Alone in Christ

Alone...Let me be very, very, very clear...Listen to me...Friends we are saved by grace through faith alone in Christ Alone...**Period...**

Anything outside of this boundary is wrong and is heresy....Period...

Theological Guardrail #2: We are Not Save By Works...We ARE NOT SAVED BY WORKS...PERIOD...

There isn't enough good deeds we can to push down the door to heaven...There isn't enough plates we can serve, money we can give nor prayers we can send for us to storm the gates of heaven...

So, as we begin our discussion with James 2 with verse 14 let us remember that we must work within these two theological boundaries...Let us not ever slip outside these guardrails...

Transition: Let us begin our discussion with verse 14...

Read verse 14, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

What is the function of verse 14? It is the introduction of the problem, right? James is using verse 14 as a way to introduce the subject he is about to discuss...He does the same thing in Chapter 2:1...

But also notice also the grammatical form of verse 14... “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?” What is its grammatical form? It is a question right?

Why is James using a question?" It's a rhetorical question assuming his audience already knows the answer...What is the answer to the question, Can that Faith Save Him?... And the answer is.... _____

Transition: So, right after James gives the overall premise, James gives us Truth #1 of the relationship between Faith and Works...Look at verse 15-17

Read verses 15-17, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, ¹⁶be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is ¹⁷dead, *being* by itself."

What is the Truth regarding the Relationship Between Faith and Work? Truth #1: True Faith Leads to True Compassion, True Faith Leads to True Compassion...

James in verses 15-17 gives us an example of a "faith" that isn't exhibited in works...

What is the example? A brother or sister comes to a believer and is in need of food and clothes...

The Greek construction here yields the idea that the brother or sister are not naked but rather poorly clothed suggesting they were cold and miserable due to lacking proper clothes (Ibid, 126). The food here carries a similar idea...The person is not starving to death but rather lacking the food for normal, healthy living...

Yet, notice what a person who has "faith" does... "Go in peace, ¹⁶be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is ¹⁷dead, *being* by itself."

Interesting also the phrase "be warmed and be filled..." are actual two Greek middle imperatives revealing the cruel indifference of the person of "faith"...Essentially the person of "faith" is saying, "Leave me alone..." "warm and feed YOURSELF..." Go in Peace...Be warmed and be filled because It is your problem...Not mine...Quit bothering me and figure it out yourself... I am busy...

Talk about a Lack of Compassion...Friends, True Faith Leads to True Compassion...

Practical:

Friends, I am not going to camp on this issue to much because this is so personally convicting...But how many times have we lacked true compassion for the needy? We have all seen a needy person, a homeless person, a estranged person and kicked them back into the cold

treating them as James condemns...saying to ourselves... “they aren’t my problem...They need to go figure it out themselves...”

Transition: Truth #1: True Faith Leads to True Compassion...BUT then James continues with Truth #2 in verses 18-20...

Read verses, 18-20 “¹⁸ But someone ^[a] may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” ¹⁹ You believe that ^[i] God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?”

What is the truth revealed here? Truth #2: True Faith is More Than Knowledge...

What is the essential proof in these verses that True faith is more than knowledge?...The demons, right? Look at verse 19... “You believe that ^[i] God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder...”

The demons KNOW the truth, right? YOU Bet...They know is so well they shudder in fear...They know that Jesus is the King of King and Lord of Lords...They know that God the Father Sent his son to die on the cross for our sins...They know we are saved by grace through faith alone...

THE DEMONS KNOW THE TRUTH...yet their destination is Eternal damnation...

Friends the demons prove to us that True Faith is more than Knowing the TRUTH...Knowing the IS NOT THE SAME AS BELIEVING THE TRUTH...

True faith is more than knowing facts about God...It is more than KNOWING Jesus Christ died for my sins...knowing that He is the Son of God...knowing He died and was resurrected...

True faith is...FAITH...NOT KNOWLEDGE... True Faith is Not believing a list of rules or facts...AND TRUE FAITH LEADS TO COMPASSION AND ACTION....

Transition: What is the relationship between faith and works?...Truth #1: True Faith Leads to True Compassion Truth #2: True Faith IS MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE and Truth #3 is found in verses 21-22...

Read verses 21-22, “²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and ^[s] as a result of the works, faith was ^[t] perfected;”

What is Truth #3? Truth #3: True Faith is Perfected by works... This Word “Perfected” means to be literally “complete or finished”...

Friends, good works lead our faith toward perfection... In other words, Works shape our faith... They sanctify us... What are good works? Someone recently defined good works as “Anything you do to put your faith into action...” Spot on...

Transition: So, Truth #3 is that faith is perfected by works... But friends there is another Truth for the relationship between faith and works... But it is contained in perhaps one of the most troublesome interpretive passages in the entire Bible... Let us reread verse 21-25

Read verses 21-25, “²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and ^[s] as a result of the works, faith was ^[t] 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 friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”

These very verses are why we began the sermon discussing theological boundaries... This is where the theological boundaries are very important... Because on the surface... when you look at verse 24 for example, “You see that a man is **justified by works** and not by faith alone.” On the surface, James seems to be suggesting that man is saved by works and faith...

But Friends, let us Remember the boundaries... We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone... And works do not save... So if the interpretation of verse 24 is not salvation by works then **what is the relationship between faith and works revealed in verse 21-25?**

Truth #4: True Faith is Evidence by Works...

Friends... Let me be clear... We are not saved by works... But because I am saved I do good works... **True Faith is evidenced by works...**

Let us ALL remember Ephesians 2:8-9- “For by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is a gift of God not by works so that no one can boast...” God’s salvation is a gift that cannot be earned...

But friends, the next verse Ephesians 2:10 reveals the same truth that James reveals in verses 21-25... “For by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is a gift not by works... So that no one can boast... For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for GOOD WORKS... WHICH HE HAS prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them...”

We are not saved by Good Works but because I am saved by grace through faith I do good works...

Transition: But some of you are perhaps are observantly looking at James 2 and saying, “But Byron that isn’t what it is saying here in James 2...It says “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?...and in verse 24, “You see that man is justified by works and not by faith alone...”

Some of you maybe saying... “Byron...it seems that James is saying here that salvation requires faith and works...Because It says that Abraham was JUSTIFIED by works and not by faith alone...IT SAYS HE WAS justified or declared righteous which seems to contradict Ephesians 2:8-9...”

Honestly...for many YEARS I struggled with this very passage...Until I read a thought that changed my mind forever...The idea is not my own but comes from another prominent scholar...He introduces the thought that there are two meanings to the Greek term of “justify”...

Listen to the thought...

The scholar adds, “The seeming contradiction, which has frustrated and confused believers throughout the history of the church, is clarified by understanding that justification by FAITH pertains to a person’s standing before God, whereas Justification by WORKS that James speaks of here in this verse pertains to a person’s standing before men...”

Friends, in the original language, there are actually two different understandings of justification...

Justification Understanding #1: is our **Justification before God:** Justification before God means to be declared righteous before God...We are declared righteous through the blood of Christ...

Justification Understanding #2: is our **Justification before men...**What must we do to justify to man our righteousness before God? We must provide evidence of our salvation through good works...

Let me demonstrate the difference...How many of you have ever heard or used the phrase before, **“Justify Your position”...**What are you saying? Are you saying, describe to me your righteousness before God?... NO...What are you saying when you say “Justify your position”? Provide me evidence for your position...Right?

Transition: But friends, let us go even a bit deeper into the text...What is the evidence of two different types of justification...one before God by faith and one before men by works? What proof does James provide for this thought?" The evidence the two forms of justification comes from verses 21 and 23...

First Look at verse 23...What do you notice about that? It is in ALL CAPS, right...The all caps reveals something very very important...The All Caps tell us that James is quoting an Old Testament verse...

Friends, This verse comes from Genesis 15:6 (which is honestly one of the most important verses in the entire Old Testament for many reasons) which says exactly, "And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord and The Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness..."

Listen friends, Abraham is justified (declared righteous) before God based upon faith in Genesis 15:6...So, clearly in James 2:21, James must have a second understanding...Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 does not justify himself before God...That was done in Genesis 15...

Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 justifies or proves his salvific faith before men...It proves it to James' audience then and to us today..Abraham is justified before God in Genesis 15 and proves his justification before men in Genesis 22...

A scholar continues, "James is teaching then that Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac vindicates or justifies his faith before men...A teaching with which the apostle Paul was in wholehearted agreement in Ephesians 2:10...There is thus no conflict between the two inspired writers..." (MacArthur, page 137)

Transition: So what is the relationship between faith and works? Within the theological boundaries, Truth #1: True Faith Leads to True Compassion Truth #2: True Faith is More than Knowledge Truth #3: True Faith is Perfected by Works Truth #4: True Faith is evidenced (or is proven) by works...

But then we still have one more truth that James wishes to convey...And the final truth is really James' point for the entire passage...

What is James' single point in verses 14-26? Well...let us look at what he repeats over and over and over...

Notice in verse 17, "Even so faith, if it has no works, is ^[a]dead, *being* by itself."

Notice verse 20, "But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, **that faith without works is**

useless?”

Notice verse 26 again, “For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

What is his point in the entire passage? **FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS USELESS OR DEAD...Right?**

Truth #5: True Faith without Works is USELESS...

Illustration: Allow me to illustrate this principle... (As you walk over) “I imagine many of you have anxiously wondered what this was for...”

What is this? A Shovel right?

What is it’s purpose? To remove dirt, correct?

Now this shovel has sat idle in my garage for months...It is completely **useless** just sitting in my garage doing nothing...

Why? Because it isn’t fulfilling its purpose...

Yet when it sits there and does nothing...Is it still a Shovel? Yes...Is it still valuable? Yes...

Friends as Christians, what is our purpose? Our purpose is to perform good works, correct?

Ephesians 2:8-10...We are not design to be sat on the shelf and just breath air....God did not redeem us to just give us fire insurance did he? No...As Christians our purpose is not to be “useless” but to be useful to our God by perform good works...

Yet, if we decide to sit idle...Are we still Christians? Absolutely...

If we sit idle...Are we still valuable to God? Absolutely...

But without winning souls...without loving others, without making disciples without performing acts of service and proving our justification before men we are not fulfilling our purpose...

Friends, Truth #5: Faith Without Works is Useless...

Transition: As I head toward closing, I’d like to address each of these different groups of people... I am CONVINCED that there are three different groups of people here this morning...

YOU:

The first group are those that have never even been confronted with the Gospel of Jesus

Christ...

If any of you are without Jesus Christ in your life... If any of you sitting in here this morning have never believed in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior... Then look in the mirror and realize that Jesus Christ has given you a free gift... A free gift that was paid for by the death of Jesus Christ... And that you can be declared righteous by faith in Him...

If you have not believed in Jesus Christ, then I can't think of a better time to believe than right now...

Transition: Yet there is a second group people here this morning... And the second group of people here this morning are far more common... The second group of people here that I guarantee ARE in this room are those that share the **knowledge of the demons...**

I guarantee you that there are people in here that "know" God but don't believe him... That "know" God because they pray to Him... That "know" God because they have gone to church their whole lives... That "know" God and the truth of the Gospel...

So many people "know" That they know that Jesus Christ died for their sins... They know he was raised again and appeared to 500 witnesses to prove it and you that if you believe in Jesus Christ that you will be saved...

BUT FRIENDS "KNOWING" God "KNOWING" the Gospel does not Save you... FAITH DOES... FAITH IN THE TRUTH SAVES YOU...

FRIENDS, WE ARE NOT SAVED BY WHAT WE KNOW BUT BY FAITH IN HIS GRACE...

Friends, I'd like to address Group #2 with a story...

I used to be a youth pastor at another church in town... And probably 90% of the students in the youth group grew up in church and KNEW all the right answers and even KNEW how to be saved...

Yet one Wednesday night I got up in front of the students and I told them something... I told them that I thought only half of them were Christians... That half of those students were still eternally condemned for lacking faith in Jesus Christ...

But friends, they knew the TRUTH.... But Friends, knowing the truth of the Gospel does not save you... Faith in the Gospel does...

Friends, Churches, Youth groups, Family Life Centers, fellowship halls, Christian Schools... are full of people that are totally deceived... So many "Christians" think they are saved because someone convinced them or because they know the right answer to the question, "How are you saved?"

Friends, demons knew the truth... Friends, perhaps many of us are sitting here this morning knowing the truth but maybe have never believed the truth... Perhaps you "know the truth" but never have believed... **WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? BELIEVE...**

If you have never believed the truth then what are you waiting for? Jesus could come back tomorrow or you could pass tomorrow... For God so loved the World that He gave his one and only Son and that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but will have everlasting laife...

Group #3:

Are all of us in here that believe in Jesus Christ... That are sitting in this pew justified before God (declared righteous) but perhaps need some application to evidence or justify it before man...

To all of you... I am going to give you two points of application:

Action #1: Have Sincere Compassion...Evidence Your Faith Through Sincere Compassion:

Let us not be the people mentioned in verses 15-17... Let us be Sincerely in our compassion...

Let us not be Christians that see people in need... whether they need food or clothing, whether they need prayer or even a warm embrace... Let us be Christians that see the need, forgo personal excuses, and have sincere compassion to meet needs...

Friends... When we see a person in need remember that True Faith HAS TRUE COMPASSION...

Action #2: Do Good Works... Finally friends, let us not be shovel in the garage... Let us evidence our faith by our works...

But Some of you may be saying, "Ok Byron where do I begin? Where do I serve?" My response to you is "I don't know..." I can certainly help you find a place but perhaps seek the Lord and figure out where the Lord has you... Oftentimes, after we begin working and serving is when the Lord begins to direct our steps... Friends, remember it is difficult to direct a parked car...

WE:

Friends, I'd like to close with a statement again...I'd like to share a future and a hope as I close..

The hope and future I shared last week was the vision for our intoxicating and irresistible love for one another inside this building...that the unity we display in this building would drive guests through the doors and non-believers to their knees...

Yet the hope I see today through the lens has nothing to do with this building...But has everything to do with us outside this building...

The future I see is that we work out our faith...

The future that I see is not to magnify the name on the sign outside but rather to magnify the NAME of Jesus Christ radiantly shining His NAME AND HIS GOSPEL to all those in this dark world through OUR GOOD WORKS...

I hope that our LOVE FOR THE SCRIPTURE, THAT OUR Grip and GRASP upon the greatness of the GRACE of God...Causes us to proclaim God's love And HIS Gospel behind every wall, under every rock, inside every mall, to ever corner of the Globe THROUGH OUR GOOD WORKS...

I HOPE THAT OUR WORKS EVIDENCE THE CHANGE IN OUR LIVES...AND THAT WE STOP AT NO END TO SHOW HIS LOVE THROUGH OUR WORKS...

Let us remember what Matthew 5 says...YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD...A CITY SET ON A HILL...LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR **GOOD WORKS**

AND WHAT? GLORIFY YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...

Let them see your "Good works" and glorify God...Your Good Works matter...

Faith without works is useless...Let us pray...