



+ **YOU**

Sermon Series: James: Living Out Your Faith
To be used with Session 3: Faith on Display in Your Actions

Sermon Title Possibilities: The Conduct of Faithfulness

Scripture: James 2:14-26

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “James: Living Out Your Faith,” this sermon teaches us our belief drives our behavior and that what you really believe is seen in what you do. In other words, the only faith that really works, is a working faith. The text challenges us to let faith show up, let faith show out, and let faith be useful.

Introduction: As we discovered in the previous message, the second chapter of the book of James is a chapter of warnings. James gives some warnings against having a discriminating faith (vv. 1-13) and having a dead faith (vv. 14-26). A discriminating faith is characterized by showing favoritism towards people we think highly of and being mean to people we think less of. A dead faith is a faith that is not accompanied by works—particularly acts of compassion towards those in need. Our text teaches us how to have a living faith instead of a dead faith. James speaks to us concerning “The Dynamics of Faith,” “The Demand of Faith,” and “The Demonstration of Faith.”

1. The Dynamics of Faith (vv. 14-17)

In verse 14, James speaks of a saving faith. What we must understand is that, while salvation is by grace, through faith, and not by works (Eph. 2:8-9), a saving faith is a working faith (Eph. 2:10). You don’t have to work to be saved, but if you are truly saved, you will do some work—this is what James is teaching. In verses 15-16, James is speaking of a serving faith. A serving faith will meet the basic human needs of brothers and sisters who lack those things needed to survive. In verse 17, James speaks of a solid faith. A solid faith is a faith that is proven in practice. If you have a saving faith, you will have a serving faith. If you have a serving faith, then you have a solid faith.

2. The Demand of Faith (vv. 18-20)

These three verses show us that faith is visible, faith is spiritual, and faith is practical. James essentially says that a faith that cannot be seen is a faith that cannot be substantiated (v. 18). Faith must be put on display in your actions. He goes on to suggest that faith is a spiritual thing, because your faith must exceed head-knowledge and extend to how you respond to God. The demons believe there is a God, but they don’t follow Him (v. 19). Faith must not only be visible and spiritual, but also practical. You must live it out and make it useful (v. 20). James suggests that when we don’t allow our faith to be useful, we are foolish.

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3. The Demonstration of Faith (vv. 21-26)

In these verses, James gives us some visible illustrations from the Old Testament. He speaks of the actions and acceptance of Abraham, the response and regeneration of Rahab the prostitute, and the demise of dead bones. Just as Abraham was justified by faith after he responded to the invitation of God, so should we display our faith in our actions (vv. 20-24). Just as Rahab was saved from destruction because she feared the God of Israel and decided to help the spies, so should we put our faith on display in our actions (v. 25). And, just as the dry bones in Ezekiel 37 were lifeless without the breath being blow in them, so also our faith is dead if it is not accompanied by works.

Conclusion: Firefighters are honored for saving people lives—and they indeed should be. Most of the time, when you see a fireman on the news being celebrated for saving someone's life, they simply say, "I was just doing my job." That's how we ought to feel about living out our faith. Our belief must drive our behavior. We must do what we do because of our faith in Christ. May the Lord help us put our faith on display in our actions.

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