

FAITH THAT WORKS

(James 2:14-26)

How a person is saved is one of the most important questions of the Christian faith

Three misunderstandings of the Bible's teaching on salvation:

- **WORKS → SALVATION**
 - This view, held by many *world religions*, teaches that good works result in acceptance by God
 - We are 'justified' by our good deeds

- **FAITH + WORKS → SALVATION**
 - This view, held by the *Roman Catholic church*, prompted the protest by Martin Luther and the entire Protestant Reformation in the 17th century
 - We are 'justified' by our faith *and* good deeds

James tackles:

- **FAITH → SALVATION – WORKS**
 - This view, called *antinomianism*, teaches that faith alone results in acceptance by God and good deeds are never necessary to demonstrate faith
 - We are 'justified' by our faith, but good deeds don't need to follow

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no works? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

¹⁹*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. ²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without works is useless? ²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.*

²⁵*In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.*

James teaches:

- **FAITH → SALVATION + WORKS**
 - This is the biblical view—held by Protestants and taught by James—teaching faith results in acceptance by God and good works result from faith
 - We are 'justified' by faith, but our faith is validated by good deeds
 - Salvation has faith as its pre-requisite and good works as its post-requisite
 - We are justified by faith alone, but good deeds result

We are saved by faith—and faith alone—but not by a faith that is alone.

We are saved by faith—not faith and works—but by a faith that works.