

The Danger and Dynamic of Dead Faith

October 23, 2016 — Epistle of James series — Msg 24— Pastor Andrew Coleman

James 2:14-26

English Standard Version

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? **17** So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! **20** Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; **23** and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. **24** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. **25** And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? **26** For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Verses 14-26 deal with the test of faith.

The problematic claim -- ‘*I have faith*’ but he has no works. vs 14

The problematic understanding of faith vs 14, 17, 20, 26

The problematic absence of works vs 17

FAITH without WORKS = DEAD FAITH

There is saving faith and non-saving faith.

Matthew 3:7; 5:16; 7:21; John 2:23; 3:23; 8:30-31

Matthew 13 (the 4 soils, wheat & tares) John 15 fruitless branches

Remember James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Galatians 2:16

16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

**No one is saved by works,
but no one is saved without producing works.**

Think about the Jewish-Christian's extremes:

all works, no grace ⇒ all grace, no works.

1) Dead Faith is identified by an empty confession:

14 if someone says he has faith but...

Pastor James and the Apostle Paul are not standing face-to-face arguing over the gospel but rather back-to-back defending the gospel.

2) Dead Faith is identified by false compassion:

15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

3) Dead Faith is identified by shallow conviction:

18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Acts 8 -- Phillip and Simon the Magician

Key Concept:

Faith alone saves,
but faith that saves is never alone.

Key Question:

Is my faith showable? vs 18 HOW?