

NOTE: This sermon is inspired by a sermon preached by Charles G. Maples, Sr. at Elon church of Christ on March 1, 2015.

Can Your Faith Save You?

James 2:14-26

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James
2:14-26

¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ 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? ¹⁷ Thus 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 without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ 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. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. ²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Is It Produced By God's Word?

Faith Defined:

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen . . . And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him” (Heb. 11:1, 6).

Our Faith Must Be in the Proper Place:

“Your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5).

Is It Produced By God's Word?

We Receive Faith in God Through Study of His Word:

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

- This includes the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
- This includes the New Testament (John 20:30-31).

NOTE: We do not bind the Old Testament (Gal. 5:4), but it still bolsters our faith.

Is It Greater Than “Little Faith?”

The Apostles Were Rebuked for Their Little Faith:

“But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**’” (Matt. 14:30-31).

“Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “**Because of your little faith.** For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:19-20, ESV).

Is It Greater Than “Little Faith?”

To Guard Against “*Little Faith*,” We Must Fully Trust God:

“Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” (Matt. 6:30).

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:5-8).

Is It Greater Than “Little Faith?”

The apostles walked in the midst of Christ, but they could be guilty of having "little faith." How much more must we guard against such faith!

We must constantly examine ourselves to ensure we have strong faith:

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13).

Do You Have an Active Faith?

If Our Faith is Not Active, Our Faith is “*Dead*:”

“Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”
(James 2:17).

“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that
faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20).

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

Do You Have an Active Faith?

Christians Must Labor:

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard” (Matt. 20:1).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Do You Have an Active Faith?

Christians Must Labor:

“But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for **labouring night and day**. Because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (1 Thess. 2:7-9, KJV).

Do You Have an Active Faith?

Christians Must Labor:

“We give thanks to God always for you all . . . Remembering without ceasing your **work of faith, and labour of love**, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (1 Thess. 1:2-3, KJV).

Do You Have an Active Faith?

We are lying to ourselves if we believe God did not call us to serve Him by working in our faith.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before hand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Doing good works in Christ's service is as important as having faith in Him as the Savior.

Do You Have an Obedient Faith?

Though Christ's sacrifice is the "*free Gift of God*" (Rom. 6:23), we are now debtors (Rom. 8:11-12), and God expects something in return for the sacrifice of His Son - our obedience and our pursuit of holiness.

Do You Have an Obedient Faith?

Obedience is Required for Our Salvation:

“Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were **obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:7).

“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He **became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him**” (Heb. 5:8-9).

Do You Have an Obedient Faith?

It Is Not Enough to Know Christ, We Must Do What He Says:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father in heaven**” (Matt. 7:21).

“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Do You Have an Obedient Faith?

Grace and (an Obedient) Faith are Linked Together:

“By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

“Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:5-6).

Do You Have an Obedient Faith?

If We are Not Obedient . . .

“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance . . . **But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality**” (Col. 3:23-25).

““Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ **And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life**” (Matt. 25:44-46).

Do You Have a Steadfast Faith?

We Must Remain Steadfast in Light of Satan's Labors:

“And the Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘**From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it**’ . . . In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong” (Job 1:7, 22).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks **about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour**. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

Do You Have a Steadfast Faith?

We Must Be Ready for the Battle:

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Eph. 6:14-16).

Do You Have a Steadfast Faith?

Steadfastness Has its Reward:

**“The just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul”
(Heb. 10:38-39).**

Do You Have a Steadfast Faith?

Steadfastness Has its Reward:

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”** (1 Cor. 15:54-58).

Would You Feel Comfortable Dying in Your Faith?

Are We Still Of This World?

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13).

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Would You Feel Comfortable Dying in Your Faith?

Are We Still Of This World?

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4b).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil. 3:20-21a).

Would You Feel Comfortable Dying in Your Faith?

Would You Be Ready to Depart, Even Today?

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Would You Feel Comfortable Dying in Your Faith?

Would You Be Ready to Depart, Even Today?

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope . . . For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. **Therefore comfort one another with these words**” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Would You Feel Comfortable Dying in Your Faith?

If we do not find comfort in the fact that Christ will return, then I implore you to ask yourself why, because the only people who should not find comfort in these words are those who are not “in” Christ.

Let us all make sure we are prepared to meet our God!