

Series – Part 10: How to Live as a Christian:

Be Truthful with God's Word!

Faith without Works Is Dead!

James 2:14-17 NAS

Sunday, June 30 at 8:00 & 10:45; Monday, July 1 at 7 PM

6th Sunday After Pentecost / 5th After Trinity – 2013

Our Summer Schedule for July & August:

Sundays: DS 9; Refreshments 10:10; BC&SS 10:30; Mondays: DS 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ, are you physically alive? How do you know? You might answer by saying: I'm talking / I'm breathing / my heart is beating! If you thought of similar answers, *you were giving tangible evidence!*

Today, in *James chapter 2*, we are being called to see the *necessary* connection between faith and works. Martin Luther wrote: **"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."**¹ In other words: As physical life involves breathing, *so faith in Jesus involves works*. Breathing doesn't make us alive, *but it is vital for all who are alive*; so our works do not make us Christians, *but they are vital for all who are Christians!*

As we continue in James, the LSB includes this note: **"To this point, faith has been viewed positively (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5). [Now,] In 2:14–26, James uses "someone" else's definition of faith, which separates faith or belief in God from faithful living (v 18). [We will discover next week that] Even demons have**

¹ <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/26222>

that kind of "faith" (v 19).... **Faith [is] usually used to mean trust, but here James means mere knowledge of a subject."**²

1. **God's Questions and Answers:** ¹⁴ **What use** [*benefit, profit, advantage*] **is it, my brethren, if a man** [*τις – someone, anyone*]³ **says he has faith, but does not** [*μη*] **have works? Is** [*not, μη*] **that faith able to save him? //**
 - a. The situation: Someone says he has faith – *thus faith in Christ*, but he has no works – *thus no evidence of his faith*; can that faith save him? We could just guess *as to whether or not such faith can save*, but James has actually given us the answer in the Greek text.
 - b. The answer: Twice in James 2:14 we have the Greek word "μη" – an interrogative particle which is used when a *negative answer* is expected. So, again, the situation: Someone says he has faith, *but he has no works*:
 - i. Is such faith useful? *No!*
 - ii. Can such faith save? *No!* The LSB notes: **"Mere intellectual assent is not saving faith, nor does it produce fruit in response to God's gifts."**⁴

² Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible* (2137). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

³ Greek: **τις** – someone, a certain one, anyone; **James uses that Greek word 12 times** (1:5, 23, 26; 2:14, 16, 18; 3:2, 13; 4:12; 5:13, 14, 19) **to identify a person in need of repentance. In this section it's the one who says he has faith, but has no works!**

⁴ Engelbrecht, 2137.

2. **A Real-Life Example:**¹⁵ **If a brother or sister is without clothing** [*lit. bare, naked, uncovered*] **and in need** [*lit. lacking*] **of daily food,**¹⁶ **and one** [*τις – someone, anyone*] **of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” but you do not** [*μὴ*] **give them the necessities of the body, what use is that?** // Sometimes we are unsure if a person is really needy or not, *but here it is obvious*: The person is *naked* or *without the minimal amount of food needed for a single day*.
- The answer: Try to imagine yourself with no clothes and no food; then someone, *after seeing your needs*, says to you: “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled!” Would you feel better? Would such kind words be helpful in any manner? *Not at all!*
 - The reality: “**Mere lip service or empty, pious blessings accomplish nothing for those in need, nor do they reflect faith.**”⁵ For all such people, *who speak of faith but have no works*, God is calling them to see His truth and repent!

3. **The Shocking Reality:**¹⁷ **Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.** // As a body without breath is dead, *so faith without works is dead!* John wrote: “...if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? (1Jo 3:17 ESV) The answer is: *It doesn’t!*”

⁵ Engelbrecht, 2137.

Conclusion: Works do not save! Faith + works do not save! Instead, **faith alone in Jesus saves!** Then, from such faith will flow good works. The works never save, *but they reveal the saving faith!*

Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

- What is more important?
 - What *we believe* to be true.
 - What *God says in His Word* is true.
- As breathing is vital for all who are alive; so _____ are vital for all who are Christians!
- How are people saved?
 - Thru their good works.
 - Thru their faith in Jesus + their good works.
 - Thru their faith in Jesus.
- As a healthy fruit tree has fruit, so healthy Christians have _____!

Let us pray together: Dear LORD, *You have saved us through Jesus!* Now, *in response*, may our daily lives show forth the fact that we are Your forgiven children! Amen!

Read, Understand, and Apply God’s Holy Word!		
Verse and Key Word – James 2	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but does not have works? Is [not] that faith able to save him?	μή me (Give the “e” a long “a” sound!)	not – an interrogative particle when a <i>negative</i> answer is expected.