March, 2017

Cousins, making memories when we are all together.

Do Our Actions Prove Our Faith Is Alive?

James speaks of the relationship between faith and works in verses 14-26 of Chapter 2. "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" At first glance this verse seems to be in contradiction to the teachings of the Apostle Paul, who states in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast."

So who is correct in teaching, James or Paul? In our study, if we feel we have found contradictions or inconsistencies in God's inerrant Word, we need to seek clarity from the ultimate author, the Holy Spirit, Himself. James is speaking to a Jewish audience who would have grown up under the strict tutelage of the Law of Moses. James is making it clear to his readers that if they truly have a believing faith in Jesus it should show in their actions, not just in adherence to the law.

Paul, speaking to a Gentile audience, who knew nothing of the Law of Moses, tells his readers that they can do nothing to work for salvation. It is the free gift from God that can't be purchased or earned. So both men, inspired by the Holy Spirit met their readers at the point of individual understanding and are encouraging all to accept the gift of salvation given by God through Jesus. Then all must allow their actions toward God and others to prove their salvation is real. James says when one sees a brother in need of food or clothing, he must prove his faith is authentic by meeting that need in tangible ways (James 2:15-16).

Thus faith without works is dead (useless, worthless, idle). Active faith involves more than saying one believes in God for even the demons believe and shudder (Verse 19). To prove his point, James uses two very different examples of the faithful from the history of the Jewish nation. First is Abraham, the revered father of their nation. He proved his faith in God when he obediently obeyed the command to offer his son Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice (See Genesis 22). As a result of his belief in God, it was "counted to him as righteousness and he was called a friend of God." (James 2:21-23)

The second example is that of Rahab, a prostitute who saved the lives of the spies who came to the city of Jericho. This Gentile woman recognized that no one could stand against the God of the Israelites and because she protected the messengers, her family was spared and accepted into the Israelite nation (See Joshua 2, 6). Thus, living faith must prove itself to be authentic in our lives, not just by the words we say, but by our actions as well. God can use anyone who will believe Him and act upon that belief to do His work. Are we living out our faith today?

Thank you for your continued support of us at Complete in Christ through your prayers and generous giving.

Date	Time	Place	Event
Mar. 2-5		Christian Camp of North MS, Grenada, MS	Emmaus Walk, Doug King, Leader
Mar. 5	9:45 a.m.	Williamsville Baptist Church, Kosciusko, MS	Weekly Sunday School Class
Mar. 6	9:00 a.m.	Williamsville Baptist Church, Kosciusko, MS	Small Group Bible Study
Mar. 6	6:00 p.m.	Mrs. Dorothy Sides' Home, Kosciusko, MS	Weekly Bible Study
Mar. 8	6:30 p.m.	Williamsville Baptist Church, Kosciusko, MS	The Gathering
Mar. 9		Memphis Beau Hattox's First birthday! Happy Birthday, Memphis!!	
Mar. 9-10		Redemption Church, Saraland, AL	Discipleship Shift
Mar. 11		Forest Hill Church of God, Mobile, AL	Marriage Enrichment
Mar. 12		Forest Hill Church of God, Mobile AL	Morning Worship
Mar. 17-18		Ethel Baptist Church, Ethel, MS	D-Now
Mar. 19-22		Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Weir, MS	Revival
Mar. 26-29		Fredonia Baptist Church, New Albany, MS	Revival