

# Faith and Works

Wednesday Gathering; Week of Sunday, August 9; Steve Thiel

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**Sermon Theme:** True faith in Christ works itself out in every area of life, even in midst of trials, persevering in actions, attitudes, speech and relationships, causing believers to not only hear the Word of God, but practice the Word of God, all for their good as a body of believers and God's eternal glory!

## **I. True Faith Explained – Read James 2:14-19**

- A. As you think about the Book of James, set James 2:14-26 in the context of what has preceded. Specifically, read James 1:22-27. How do these verses inform the present section?
- B. Read Romans 3:28 and James 2:24. Are the apostles Paul and James contradicting one another with regard to the relationship of faith and works? How do you reconcile these statements?
- C. Compare and contrast the Parable of the Good Samaritan with James 2:14-17. What do these two passages tell us about the natural outworking of faith? In light of James 2:17 and 1 John 4:19-21, what does a loveless faith reveal? Where would you like to grow in loving your brothers and sisters?
- D. Read Mark 1:24 and 5:7. What do the demons know about Jesus? In light of James 2:18-19, what is the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge? As you look at your own life, where are you prone to adhere to true theology in your head, while denying that theology in your heart and actions?

## **II. True Faith Illustrated – Read James 2:20-25**

- A. Compare and contrast the backgrounds of Abraham and Rahab. Why do you think James would use such polar opposites for his illustrations of true faith? What point is James driving at with these illustrations?
- B. Read Hebrews 11:1, 8-12, 17-19, 31. How might someone refer to Hebrews 11 as both the “Hall of Faith” and the “Hall of Works”? In other words, what is the relationship between faith and works?

## **III. True Faith Summarized – Read James 2:26**

- A. How can you grow in being amazed by grace – so that it results in a supreme love for the Lord and a fulfillment of the royal law (2:8; i.e. engaging in self-sacrificing good works for the benefit of others)?
- B. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How do these verses relate to James 2:26? As you think about your own life, what are some good works that you would like to grow in (i.e. family, church, employment, school)?
- C. One of the biggest criticisms of the church is that it's full of hypocrites, those who say one thing and do another. How would a church that demonstrates its faith by good works be countercultural to the world around us? How can we, as a congregation, validate our faith in Christ to a watching world?