

BOOK OF JAMES PART 5 – KALEB KRUEGER

JAMES 2: 14-26

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 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. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. James 2:14-26

I. FAITH CONFIRMS YOUR SOUL, ACTIONS CONFIRM YOUR FAITH.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. James 2:14-17

- A. Hebrew word for faith in OT: **Aman** – reliability, firmness or trustworthiness
 - 1. Verb is: “to believe” or “to have faith”
 - 2. Adjective is: an object that is “lasting/firm” such as a kingdom that is firmly established (2 Samuel 7) or a covenant that endures forever (Psalm 89) and people like Abraham, Priests, even God Himself.
 - 3. Noun form is: **Emeth** (different word) – **truth**. As in “...all your words are reliable (truth).” (2 Samuel 7:28) and “...your law is true (reliable).” (Psalm 119:142).
- B. Old testament faith placed emphasis on the object of one’s faith – the “faithful” person considered God to be reliable, trustworthy and firm and resulted in a strong and active commitment that enabled the person to be considered “faithful” themselves (Abraham).

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13

- C. Old Testament faith (aman) was a decision to base one’s life on the bedrock reality of who God says He is in His word and by so doing, that person became a faithful (aman) person whose life was firmly built on truth (emeth).
-

- D. Greek word for faith in the New Testament:
- **Pistis (noun) – faith**
 - **Pisteuo (verb) – to have faith**
1. In classical/pagan Greek (BC) these words expressed an “intellectual conviction that the gods existed,” the opposite of atheism, but with no practical impact outside of rituals to avoid the wrath of the gods. There was no concept of relationship, merely a detached, intellectual belief.
 2. New Testament uses the language of ancient Greece but the meaning is derived from the Old Testament use of faith and couples it with the reality of personal relationship with Jesus (two testaments, one faith). The New Testament uses these two words about 240 times each! It even invents a new phrase “to believe into” or “to believe by entering into relationship with.”
 3. Faith has always been represented through personal trust in God but when Jesus came it took things up a notch!

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

- E. Faith is expressed by our whole being: body, soul and spirit.

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. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! James 2:18-19

- F. James is correcting the secular Greek interpretation of faith, not merely the intellectual one. This is AMAN and EMETH, the foundational bedrock truth you can build your life upon. (James may as well have been writing a discourse on the life of Abraham).
- G. James is saying: look back at the life of Abraham! Sarah his wife was able to conceive and give birth as an old woman because “she judged Him faithful who had promised” (Heb. 11).
- H. I don’t know how pre-cross faith works out, but God in His infinite wisdom and grace knew those who had faith to believe even before the cross.
- I. Hebrews 11 the “Hall of Faith” chapter is one of the bridges between new and old testament.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6

- J. Faith is exercised in the tension of the “already not yet” principle...

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. James 2:20-23

K. When we exercise faith we are tapping into something that is rooted in eternity.

God is love. 1 John 4:8

L. Abraham understood this. His faith—stepping out and leaving his comfort—showed that he believed it.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! Psalm 118:1

II. FAITH IS OBEDIENCE IS LOVE.

“As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” John 15:9-11

Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. James 2:20-26

A. The two are inseparable—like sunlight and heat. One is a direct result of the other.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12

B. Faith expressed through action is the will of God for our lives!

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

III. WHEN WE SEE JESUS FACE TO FACE, FAITH WILL NO LONGER BE NEEDED, HOPE WILL NO LONGER BE NECESSARY, THERE WILL BE ONLY LOVE.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

A. Faith–Hope–Love: the greatest of these is love because love is eternal.

...but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Romans 8:24-25

- B. Jeep Analogy: you can relate this to so many areas of life (retirement, etc.). In fact, it should apply to why we do what we do on earth, because our goal is set on seeing Jesus face-to-face and hearing “well done good and faithful servant.”

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Proverbs 13:12

- C. This is the tension we live in...

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5

- D. So faith, that is worked out in hope, results in love.

IV. LOVERS WILL ALWAYS OUTDO DOERS.

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

For it is by grace you have been saved... Ephesians 2:8-9

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. Philippians 2:12

V. STRIVE TO ABIDE!

So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:9-16

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

VI. PRAY THROUGH COLOSSIANS 1:9-12