



Lesson 11 August 15th, 2020

Faith without Works is Dead

JUNIOR

Study Scripture – James 2:14-26

Background Scripture – James 2:14-26

Key Verse:

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 2:26

INTRODUCTION

We are studying a passage in the book of James which answers the question, who is your favourite Christian?

There probably will be several different answers and several different reasons given as to why one person or another is one's favourite Christian. But the book of James boils it down to one reason or one test to determine this. This will have us to look at Performance by others and Mercy shown by others.

This letter will help us find the best reason behind our best New Year resolution. It helps us to look at what is inside a person and to take that seriously. It also reminds us that the Holy Spirit of God has given wonderful gifts to every person in the church and we should rejoice with them, help them and love them in every way we can.

James, the brother of Jesus, is telling us that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. That is what God told us to do in His Ten Commandments.

But he is quite concerned that people who say that they believe in Jesus Christ and have faith in Him and are therefore saved and will live with Jesus in the New Heaven and the New Earth, might only have what we can call lip-service faith, that is, a faith that will only use words to express that faith but will not do the deeds that show that there is real live faith.

Many people do not like what James is saying and they try to say that when the Apostle Paul said we are saved by faith rather than by the things we do, the Apostle is contradicting James. Some therefore don't seem to like the teaching that one Bible teacher points to in James' Book

“That genuine faith will result in works, and any faith that produces no good works is not true faith”.

But Paul is speaking about the “faith” that is given you by the Holy Spirit to enable you to come to Christ and accept Him as your Saviour. This is the only faith that is genuine and it will lead you to do good works directed by the Holy Spirit. Both Paul and James accepted that and so they did not contradict each other. So genuine faith in Jesus comes first and will lead to genuine works. They both go together and we cannot separate them.

It is certainly good to say a kind word to someone or to pat somebody on the back but that does not help a person that is cold and need some warm clothing, naked and need some additional clothes to make up what they have, and hungry for they do not have enough food. Words alone will not satisfy the needs of a person that lacks these things.

So James teaches us that having “faith” and having “the ability to work hard to help others” are not two different gifts given by the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of faith and the gift of works to everybody and so when you have true faith you would always do good works to make the world see that your faith in Jesus is true.

The world is looking at all those who say that they are believers in order to see whether they are serious about Jesus or not.

We have been told by history that in the time when Jesus lived and James lived there was a lot of prejudice and partiality and hatred among different groups because of their different class, nationality, religious background, levels of education, and family background among other things. But in the early church the people did not put people in those categories because they were Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, Greek or barbarian, or whatever. The world looked at the church in amazement for they were unified and open, inviting all that loved Christ to come and work together and support each other. This attracted many people to come into the church and it grew rapidly even though some others did not like that.

But God helped the church to spread the truth about salvation which only comes through belief and faith in Jesus Christ.

So that is your job. If you have faith in Jesus you must do the things that would help those in the church that need help and even those outside the church that need help.

So James warns us that just as how you can have a body that has no life, and is only a corpse, so you can have a faith with no life, and faith without works is a dead faith, unable to save yourself or anybody else.

So our Lesson today teaches us that we must avoid having a dead faith. God loves you when you have a living faith. He stands ready to help you to get that faith and to use that in a way that will please Him.

