

Last time, in James 2, we began our study by learning about "faith" that is counterfeit, and that is characterized by nothing but empty words!

There are many who will SAY they have faith in Christ, but they do nothing in their lives as evidence and proof of that faith! They may gather with the saints on the Lord's Day, but they don't pray AT ALL to God the Father, they don't feed AT ALL on God's Word.....and they don't help their needy brethren or their neighbors. They are non-participating Christians!

James 2:14: "Can (THIS) faith save him"? "Is this what true and genuine saving faith looks like?"

The short answer is NO! This is counterfeit, pretend faith, it is not the faith of God's elect people. If you recall, (3) times in this text, James calls "THIS kind of FAITH" that hath not works, "DEAD FAITH". James 2:18-20

This is a wake-up call to us all as professing Christians... Do we only talk about our faith in Christ and SAY that we have faith in Christ... Or do we PRACTICE and DO what we SAY about ourselves?

Paul wrote that Abraham and Rahab were justified by faith, here, James wrote that they were justified by works. James 2:21-26

Therein lies the supposed contradiction and spiritual conundrum between the doctrine of James and Paul. Were they justified by faith? Or were they justified by works? To both, I answer YES! Hebrews 11:17-19, 30-31.

There is no contradiction between the doctrine of Paul and the doctrine of James, there is only confirmation, compliment, and harmony. Those who would dismiss one for the other, as T. Manton wrote, "seek to cut out the knot rather than to simply untie it and preserve the whole, as one."

Again T. Manton wrote: "They show more reverence for the scriptures who seek to reconcile both places than to deny the authority of one."

Don't we know this all too well in the doctrines of God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility? Many cast off one for the other. But now, let us LOOK INTO the perfect law of liberty and see what saith the scriptures.

Romans 3:19-20, 4:1-2, 5:1, Galatians 2:16, 3:11

In these passages, Paul speaks of our justification before God, "in His sight", which speaks of our salvation, that it is by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5.

James, in his letter, teaches us that our faith is justified (confirmed to be true and genuine faith in Christ) by the evidence, fruit, and works that come forth from our lives.

But there's more: James proves that Abraham was justified by works when he offered Isaac, his son upon the altar.

But James doesn't cut away the truth of Abraham's faith, instead, he shows us that his works were the evidence and proof of his faith, that his works were accomplished by the obedience of his faith, and that his works strengthened and perfected his faith in His God!

When Abraham offered Isaac upon the altar, there is no doubt in my mind that, THAT was the most difficult trial of Abraham's faith in his life! It is in Abraham's trial that we are able to understand James' words that Abraham was indeed justified by works! James 2:21-24

His faith in God in this trial was justified & proved by his works...it is in this sense that Abraham is said to be justified by works! Genesis 22:1-12

In conclusion:

Paul teaches us that in our salvation we are justified in the sight of God, by grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. That is how we are saved from our sins by Christ!

James teaches us that our faith in Christ is proved and justified in the sight of God, and in the sight of men, by our works, which are the evidence and proof of true and genuine saving faith.

LISTEN: Every one of us BEGINS our Christian life by grace alone, and by faith in Christ alone. But once that faith in Christ has begun in the new birth, it cannot do anything but bring forth good works and deeds from our "NEW HEART and our NEW LIVES" in Christ!

Rudolf Stier: "It is impossible to separate works from faith, it would be like separating burning and shining from fire."

Giovanni Diodati, a Genevan-born Italian Calvinist from the 15th Century wrote: "The justification of Paul is opposite to the condemnation of a sinner in general, and the justification of James is opposite to the condemnation of a hypocrite, in particular. In Paul's sense, a sinner is absolved, in James' sense, a believer is approved."

The doctrine of James does not contradict the doctrine of Paul, the doctrine of James gives proof and evidence, and strengthens the doctrine of Paul.

Abraham's and Rahab's actions were proof of their faith, that they were believers in God! AFTER they believed in God, they did the works of God, their Father.

None who are saved from their sins are saved by their works, the scriptures are clear on this. Ephesians 2:8-9.

We are saved by grace alone, and by faith in Christ alone.

But take heed to what the Word teaches us about the judgment of the great day, go and do a study, and see how many times the scriptures teach us that EVERY ONE of us will be judged according to our works! I remind you again of what is written in Revelation 14:13:

Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea,
saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their
works do follow them."