

A Test of Faith

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I'm excited tonight because I figured something out that I haven't understood for 33 years and actually I didn't figure it out, it was in the text all along. It was right there. James 2. How do you reconcile Paul's exhaustive teaching that salvation, if you want to say justification, is by faith alone and James, the local church, practical, brass-tacks, let's get down to where the rubber meets the road, teacher who says a man is saved by works? How do you reconcile those two? I was confident the Spirit of God had given me an understanding how they harmonize together and there is no contradiction but just going over this lately, I found the missing key. I found the slam dunk, it's over, forget it. 33 years. Do you know how many thousands of hours I've studied in 33 years and I'm a slow learner, I understand that but I'm still learning stuff and it still humbles me and I'm so grateful that God doesn't just leave us alone. He keeps teaching us.

James 2:14,

“14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.' 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected,” or completed, “23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

I call this “A Test of Faith” or “Faith on Trial.” First of all, obviously, faith is a key doctrine. Ephesians 2 says we are saved by faith. 2 Corinthians 5 says we walk by faith. Hebrews 11 says we please God by faith. And Romans 14 says whatever we do that's not of faith is sin. Someone said that faith is not believing in spite of the evidence but obeying in spite of the consequences.

We find that even in the early church, there were those in the church professing to be Christians, claiming they had saving faith, yet did not possess salvation and they showed they did not possess it by a lack of works. You know, it's true, wherever you find the true you'll find the counterfeit. Now, that being true, there is a false notion that is so very prominent in professing churches today that since you'll always have lost church members and we want to get as many saved as we can, don't worry about it, just let the church fill up with false believers. That is totally unbiblical. While there's always going to be some tares among the wheat, there will always be some false professors, the most diligent and able and biblical and spiritual elders in churches will not be able to keep all the counterfeits out, however, we should be striving to do that because it's the Lord's church and he builds his church and as Acts 2 says, he adds to his church. It's our job to use biblical criterion to lovingly and humbly discern who he's adding and who he's not. That's why the Bible says on the basis of two or three witnesses you'll know things and that's why when people come into the church we lovingly work with them and counsel with them to see that there's biblical evidence of saving faith and a genuineness to be a part of a genuine church.

Now, we can do better than have the majority of our church members false professors and that's true in a lot of churches today. I mean, what's going to happen if you just take the notion, “Well, you're going to have lost people and we've got to reach people.” You'll have what you've got today in modern evangelicalism. You have people at churches with 300 in attendance and 1,500 on their rolls. But James, the local church pastor who is very practical, he's about living this stuff out says this is an issue and we need to get down to where the rubber meets the road and deal with this.

First of all in my outline, 1. notice there is a primary clarifier. A primary, you could say foundational clarifier. This clarifies the issue – now here's the key, here's the missing link to understanding how James's teaching perfectly compliments Paul and it's not a contradiction. Here's the perfect clarifier: notice verse 14, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can,” here's the key, “can that faith save him?” In other words, there is a kind of faith that's not true faith, it's that faith. As Calvin said years ago and it's been quoted over and over and I've quoted it, “Faith alone saves but the faith that saves is never alone.” That faith that has no accompanying, listen to this now, grab a hold of this statement, no accompanying gospel works. Very, very different than the works Paul talks about which are the ceremonial rites and rituals of old Judaistic religion. Two very different things. These are not apples to apples, these are grapes to bananas here. Two different things when they're talking about works.

So, true saving faith has accompanying gospel works. True saving faith is not a mere acknowledgment of Christ; it's not near an intellectual ascent. Now, listen to me, it is a heart possession. Something has happened beyond the intellect. The intellect is involved for sure. The intellect perceives and receives the essential facts of the gospel but there is a heart possession. There is a heart transformation involved. So, James in essence is comparing true saving faith to the fruitless, workless, intellectual acknowledgment some in the church had and thought themselves to be true Christians.

True faith is inseparably accompanied by good works. Faith and works are one yet they are separate just as light and heat are one yet they are separate. Let me illustrate that: to illuminate this room you only need light. I'm under television lights right now and they also put out heat. Wherever there is some light, there is some heat. They may have some modern mechanisms whereby they have light fixtures that put off almost no heat but some heat is there. That is the picture we get that James wants you to grasp. If there's saving faith, there's immediately the germ of gospel works in there that's going to start coming out.

So, to be saved, you only need faith but saving faith always had accompanying gospel work. Now, look at verses 15 and 16. Here is the missing key. Here is the key interpretive clarifier for this whole passage. Verse 15, "If a brother or sister," that's it. That's it. He's talking about the fruit. He's talking about the works of a loving devotion and service to your brothers and sisters in your local church. He said that's the great clarifier. That's the great revealer of what's genuine and what's not genuine. That's the great clarifier and revealer of who is really God's and who is really not God's. Are they connected to, do they have a love for, do they care for other true believers in Jesus Christ? Are they drawn to a true church? Or do they go around looking for just a fun church or an exciting church? That's the great clarifier. That's the great revealer. That's the great manifestor to see if something's really in your heart that's been wrought by God true faith is in there.

He doesn't say, "Are you just doing works?" No, he's very specific. Brothers and sisters, when I preached in the conference this last week or two weeks ago and when I talked about interpreting a passage of Scripture, I said one of the primary issues you must interpret a text of Scripture in the flow of its context. What's the context? The context is what you're doing for your brothers and sisters in Christ. It's not ceremonial works of Jewish religion. It's not good works for all mankind but there will be some of those too. The real clarifier, the thing that defines is: how are you loving, caring for, is there something in your heart for the body, the true body of believers that wasn't there before? That's the great prover of genuine saving faith.

He gives this illustration in verse 15, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" Again, the context is persecution and a number of brothers and sisters were finding themselves without necessary shelter or food or clothing. This is not about a brother who wants three flat screen tvs and he only can afford two so let's buy him a third one. That's not what this is. This is truly basic needs are not there in their lives and he's saying a true brother and

sister in a true church where the majority are true, genuine, Spirit-wrought believers, they just care and love for each other. They don't just put words to it. He doesn't give us an amount of caring, he just said Christians care for each other. That's the kind of gospel works you should look for and will be evident in one another's life if it's a true faith.

Well, let me go a little further in this. Verse 17, "Even so faith, if it has no works," what works are you talking about, James? Oh, loving and caring for brothers and sisters in your local church. That works. If you don't have that, then your faith is dead being by itself. A dead faith is no faith. Now, dead faith could be characterized as one who has a general belief in God and in Christianity. Francis Schaeffer, a philosopher and historian, used to talk about America which wasn't full of all Christians in the early days but it had a Christian consensus, people generally embraced the beliefs in God and in Christian truth. Some people have an historical faith. That means that they know more of the facts of history, about the truth of Christ, but they really don't have saving faith. Some have dogmatic faith but it's not saving faith. That is, they're pretty deep studiers and they can dot the i's and cross the t's on the theology and argue with you points and debate things about Scripture but they don't have the heart-change or true saving faith. How do we know? Long-term, watching their lives, do they connect to, have love for and devotion to a genuine local church?

Listen to me: God's local churches are the centerpiece of God's work and the centerpiece of God's glory for time and eternity. Ephesians 3:21, "To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations," that's time, "forever and ever," that's eternity. Amen. Now listen: if he died for the church and the local church is the centerpiece of his work and the local church is the centerpiece of his glory not only for time but for eternity, heaven sakes, when he changes your heart and he lives in here, he gives you something of love for that church because that's what he's all about. That's the great clarifier. I know that makes some of you uncomfortable because some of you have loved ones who don't love true churches and that breaks my heart. It breaks my heart. I have the same thing but that's the truth and quit kidding yourself that a person that can long-term attach themselves to what John MacArthur and he's very reputable and very trustworthy, John MacArthur calls non-churches. They claim to be churches but they're so biblically anemic they're non-churches. But if they're not drawn to true churches that are striving to honor God and live for God, then that's a great clarifier of whether or not they have true saving faith. It's right there in the text. It's so clear.

So, the primary clarifier to test faith is – let me say it this way: I remember I was converted at age 19. You could not have been more ignorant than I was. I had no church background to speak of. I didn't know the Old Testament from the New Testament. I was totally in the dark about things. I just knew Christ had radically changed my life and I get into a Baptist church, some sweet, good people there, I thank God for them but they were so poorly taught. When they would talk to me about, "Are you really saved?" All they knew to say was, "Did you pray the prayer? Did you mean it?" I said, "What prayer? I can't find one in here. I can't find one. What prayer?" They'd say, "Well, you need to pray a prayer and that's what you say." So, I began and I prayed it thousands of times: I prayed

it in my car, I prayed it at breakfast, I prayed it at night, I prayed it during the day. I just kept praying it thinking, "I hope I hit it right one of these times."

Then they'd say things, all these little gimmicks like, "Well, you need to drive a tomato stake down behind the house and go back there and drive that tomato stake down in the ground and tell God I believe in Jesus today and I'm driving this tomato stake in the ground and that settles it. I've nailed it down." No, all I nailed down was a tomato stake. Look brothers and sisters, the Bible says this Holy Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. What do you want? The omnipotent power of God telling you you're God's child or a tomato stake? I'll take the Holy Spirit, you can have the tomato stake.

But good people. I don't mean to deride those dear people. That's all I heard. But do you know what I had? I had a deep love for the church. I had a deep love for Christians and had a deep disdain in my heart for a whole lot of people I was finding in churches that were hypocrites and did not like Christians. I thought something was wrong with me. No, not one person sat me down and said, "Jeff, I want you to understand something: this love you have for the church, this love you have for people who are serious about God and serious about the Scriptures and serious about missions, you know how you're drawn to them and you love them? That's evidence you have saving faith." Nobody said that.

It's right here in the book, folks. Isn't it amazing how, I believe, with sincere motives we try to help God and we end up ruining everything. Look: just believe the book and leave off the gimmicks. If you're raising your child, you should begin to look for that. Are they drawn to sound preaching? Do you find them wanting to be around people who are genuine in the faith? Do you find them kind of saying, "I don't want to be around that kid, Dad. I don't want to be around that girl, Mom. They do things and I don't think that honors Christ." You start to see some of that over time and then you can look them in the eye and said, "Honey, according to the word of God, that's a good evidence. That's a clarifier of saving faith."

Well, secondly, not only the primary clarifier but the piercing illustration. There is a piercing illustration here where he just wants to drive this dagger into those who are false professors and he says this beginning in verse 18, "But someone may well say," he gives a hypothetical, "you're going to say, Well, I have faith and you have works." So, they're one of these that say, "Well, I don't need to do anything. I don't need to show anything. I don't have to do any sacrificing to serve my brothers and sisters in my local church. I just have faith." Then this statement goes on and James answers back and he says, "Well, you show me your faith without the works," this is James talking back, he says, "and I'll show you my faith by my works." In other words he's saying it is absolutely totally impossible to have saving faith without something of at least a germ of love and devotion and care for your brothers and sisters in your local church.

Now, I cannot command you to go out here and love all Christians because there's too many of you, you don't know them all. That's why God has put us in local church congregations. You can be responsible for them. But I can't even command you to really

care for 1,000 people in this church but I can tell you, get in your small group and love those folks. And the folks that that stirs a little something in them, the folks that say, "Yeah, I want to be a part of that. I'm not good at it and I slip some but it's in there." That's a good sign you have genuine saving faith.

So, James says, "Man, you say, I've got faith. You might have works but I've got faith and that's all you need." James says, "No, no, no. You're missing it. Works is absolutely inseparable. I'll show you I've got that true saving faith by my works." Then here's the piercing part of this illustration, verse 19, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder." He said, "The demons have faith in God. You may have a demonic faith." Demons believe that Jesus was the Son of God, Mark 3. Demons believed that there was a place of punishment and people would be sent, Luke 8. Jesus believed and recognized that he was the Judge of everyone, Mark 5. They believed. They had faith in him but it's not a saving faith, it's an unsaving faith.

He amplifies this as they believe and shudder. The idea of shuddering there means emotionally they're stirred and demons even are very emotional about this. It literally means to make your hair stand on end. It means to be in horror. The demons know deeply Christ is the truth and there's an emotional part to their belief but emotional stirring along with intellectual acknowledgment is not evidence of saving faith.

So, here we have a piercing illustration: you believe these facts about Christ, even emotionally stirred about it, well, you're about where the demons are. You have faith about like the demons do but they're not going to heaven. As a matter of fact, they're doomed and have no opportunity of conversion. Human beings do have that opportunity.

Thirdly, moving right along, let's go to the practical illustration. He's going to go to a very practical illustration that will really, really, really speak to a Jewish audience. He's going to father Abraham and throwing in Rahab the harlot too but mainly father Abraham and he's going to talk about how there is a corresponding harmony between salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but salvation is also of works. He says in verse 20 there, "But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?" Just a concluding summary statement of what he's been saying. Now verse 21, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?" Now, what James is pointing out, James is coming again from the practical perspective of a local church pastor and he's simply saying, "Just as Abraham showed the truth of salvation in his life, so you should show the truth of salvation by the works in your life."

We often use this illustration that true saving faith includes all three parts of the inner man: your intellect believes the basic facts of the gospel, your emotions feel the guilt and the weightiness of your sinfulness before God, and your emotions feel the joy and the release of Christ removing and taking the burden away. And in your will, you want to receive Christ. You want to put all of it on him. You want to begin to learn to follow him and honor him as Lord and Savior. And all of that is the result of the regenerating work of the Spirit in the heart and as the regenerating work of the Spirit works in the spiritual

part of the inner man, the intellect is involved, the emotions are involved and then the will is involved. Listen, don't sit there and get in this deep morbid introspection of organizing all of this to see if you're in the faith. No, you go back to what James says, "How are you doing when it comes to having a heart that has something of a devotion and a concern and a work ethic toward caring for your brothers and sisters in Christ?"

Doctor Al Mohler who preached for us in our conference, I told you, as a matter of fact, he's on tv all the time and I think he's probably the most respected evangelical intellectual in the world. By the way, he loves us. I don't know if that means anything. Jesus loves us, that's the important thing. Amen? But he does, he really loves and appreciates what we are and what we stand for and that's encouraging, a lot of people can criticize you through the years, to have a man of his esteem giving you a strong affirmation. But he was speaking at Brigham Young University. Brigham Young has a big, I don't know what they call it, but it's like God and government kind of emphasis. How are we as Christians going to function in this society, in this world, though Mormons aren't Christians. And he told them, he said, and he did a great job. You talk about laying it out there talking to those Mormons, he pulled no punches. He just brilliantly shared the gospel and he said this to them, he said, "We will not spend eternity together." He means I and you Mormons. "But we may go to jail together and we may go quicker than you think."

He's just saying we live in a climate where if you believe the historical doctrines of the Christian faith, you're liable to be branded, especially if you're a preacher, as promoting hate, committing a hate crime or whatever it could be. He said, "We will not spend eternity together." That's pretty bold, wasn't it? 10,000 Mormons sitting out there. But he said, "We may go to jail together." Here's the point: if I'm arrested and put in jail because I will not stop calling homosexuality a sin and a wickedness, is that going to burden you? Are you going to say, "I'm going to love my pastor. I'm going to see him. I'm going to care for him. We're going to pray for him. We're with him all the way." That's good evidence that you have saving faith. That's what James is saying. When Christians are suffering for the truth, other Christians just have something in their heart that says, "I'm with them. I'll go down with them."

Here he says Abraham was shown to be justified by works when he offered up his son on the altar. What James is pointing out here is that Abraham gained a right standing as an act of faith but the works always was there to prove that right standing. As a matter of fact, he goes on in verse 23 and says, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'" Wait a minute, James, you just said he was justified by works, now you're saying it's just his belief that caused him to be recognized as righteous. Here's what James is saying: he said they're just inseparable. Works is the proof of justification, faith in God's finished work through his Son is the basis of justification. And in the Christian realm of practicality, you just can't dice that up and separate it out.

So, James refers to the proof of Abraham's faith, the offering of Isaac, which gives this outward evidence of the inward saving faith. By faith, Abraham is justified before God but by works, listen here's the key, by works, Abraham was justified before men. Did you

hear that? Now, watch this context, he's saying, "We're looking at these people who claim to be our brothers and sisters in our local church and they don't have a love and a care for other brothers and sisters so before our eyes, they do not stand justified before God. Their works prove their justification to us, their faith is their justification before God." Because James is talking from the context of application in local church life. That's the key factor in all of this.

Now, what about the Apostle Paul? The Apostle Paul very clearly in Romans 4-5 and in other places, just lays out precept upon precept upon precept that salvation is by grace through faith and that alone. What's Paul talking about? The works Paul is referring to that do not save are the works of ceremonial Jewish religion. Paul is saying in Romans, those ceremonial works of Jewish religion and of law cannot save you. James says, "Gospel works are essential to prove one is saved." Paul points out that works prevent true faith. Paul says when you are clinging to old Jewish or modern Christian works, whatever you want to call it. There's a lot of Christianity today, at least professing Christianity, that will give you stuff to do and when you look to those rituals, those rites, those ceremonies, those motions: baptism, Lord's Supper, walk the aisle, pray the prayer. Whatever it is, come to the priest, when you look to that, you prevent yourself from the true saving faith. James points out that gospel works accompany true saving faith.

But they're talking about two different things: one is talking about ceremonial Jewish works of law, the other is talking about gospel works that accompany salvation and prove and point out you are justified. Paul deals with God's first verdict: justified, have a right standing before God. James deals with God's subsequent verdict: you show forth you're justified before men by these gospel works in your life. As a matter of fact, when we're saved, we more deplore the works of ceremony and religion than we did before. When we're saved, we reject those works even more and walk in more gospel works, loving my brothers and sisters according to the dictates of the word of God in my local church. Listen to me, listen to me, listen to me: if you're not a local church guy, I don't have much confidence in your salvation. Don't misunderstand me. We can go through seasons, we can get backslidden or we can get in a neutral place but if you belong to God, you keep being drawn back, drawn back, drawn back.

Just like Dr. Millikan told us in theology class, he said, "You know you can take a pen of sheep and there will be on goat in that pen of sheep and you can take that goat out of that pen of sheep and that goat will wander off and he'll never come back again." He said, "But if you take one of those sheep out of that pen of sheep, it'll wander around, maybe get something to drink, something to eat and in a little while it's right back at the edge of the pen looking at the other sheep going baaa." His point was: that sheep wants to come back and get with the sheep. James is saying that's the evidence we're looking for: local church love and devotion.

Now, again, I have to give that balance clarification. You may have been in a church that has a lot of weak doctrine, a lot of weak unbiblical practice and a whole lot of folks that are even faithful that don't belong to Christ and you didn't feel that love. That's normal but James, evidently, was saying there's a substantial core of true believers here and

you're not loving them and being devoted to them proves, clarifies, you're not of saving faith.

Well, he continues with this practical illustration using Abraham and let's go to verse 22. He said, "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected." That's a great clarifying statement. "Perfected" there means "brought to its end." God saves you so that he can change you. Again, the glory of God is the primary thing. God's primary purpose in all that he does is to bring glory to himself. He saves you to bring glory to himself so he saves you, so he puts something in your heart that you will love and be devoted to the place, to the entity whereby he's going to get the most glory. What is that? His local church.

So, James is saying it's inconceivable, it's unimaginable that you could possibly have true saving faith and not have the least bit of devotion and passion and commitment to your church. That's just your faith being completed, brought to its logical end. Not end in that it's finished or perfect but that's the outworking of why God saved you. He saved you so you could be active in a local church and that's evidence that you've got the true stuff. It's right there, verses 15 and 16. I've been there 33 years and never saw it. I kept looking at this thinking, "Oh, I've got to do this work and down at the Walmart, did I do the right kind of works there? Did I do the right kind of works when I talked to wife on Saturday? Am I doing the right kind of works? Am I showing I have saving faith?" I'm not saying there's no validity to that but that's not the primary clarifier. The primary clarifier is: has my heart changed for God's church?

Now, here's what you do. If you're a false professor, you march out the door of the church and you point back and say, "There's a problem there." Sometimes there is. Some people should leave some churches, that's absolutely true. If you don't believe that, you're not a Baptist. Our Baptist forefathers left the established state churches of Europe because they were wrong, they were false, they had backslidden from the word of God. They left and formed other congregations. There is a time for that, however, to march out of a sound church without a love for it, I'm not saying it's an absolute every time, okay, but I'm saying it's a primary means of God clarifying those who have true saving faith. Does that upset you? Does that bother you? You're just going to have to get over it. That's what the word of God says.

Well, look at verse 23. He says again, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'And Abraham believed God,' not worked out his salvation, just faith, "and it was reckoned," it was established in God's heart and mind that he's righteous now before God, he's a friend of God. It looks like James is saying one thing and then saying another. No, he's not. He's just saying they always go together.

Verse 24, "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone." A. T. Robertson, the eminent Greek scholar, says when you read verse 24, you should read it this way in the Greek, "You see that a man is shown to be justified by works and not by faith alone." I didn't come up with that, the Greek scholars came up with that. Man is shown that he's justified by works not by faith only. Look, earlier he says in the context

of loving your brothers and sisters, verse 20, “Are you not willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?” Useless in what way, James? You're no good for the church and God saves you for the church so if you're claiming God did something to you and you've got saving faith and you're not doing anything for the church, then that's kind of like saying you buy a car to be a paperweight. You don't buy a car and park it on your desk as a paperweight, that's useless. You don't do that.

God didn't save people but for one primary purpose: to be active, faithfully serving, devoted to a church. If not, you're useless. He didn't save you to go change the world unless you're sent out by your local church to be an evangelist and a missionary to change the world. All of these people have this renegade independent spirit, “Man, I’m going to do this for God. God told me to do this.” God told you to be faithful, devoted and loyal to your local congregation. I've been doing that for 33 years. I have lived that before you and it's caused me to be right in the center of God's will and I’m telling you, there's times I wanted to do a lot of things and then my pastor said, “We're not doing that.” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And you know what? God kept me right where I needed to be. Do you have that attitude? I'm going to honor my church and my church elders. That's being useful, not being useless for the glory of God.

Verse 25, we're about done. “In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?” Again, unless James is just contradicting himself in verse 23 down to verse 25, what is he saying? He's saying that Rahab, a brand new believer who had very, very little knowledge but her heart was changed and she put the ribbon in the window to help save the Jewish spies and not be destroyed when the Jews attacked the city. Even a brand new believer showed a love. Who did she show a love for? Who did she show commitment to? Who did she show devotion for? The people of God. The Old Testament picture of the local church is Israel, the people of God. Isn't the word of God amazing? This is so clear. How did you let me miss this for 33 years? Why didn't you sit me down and say, “Pastor, it's all about the local church.” As if I don't say that all the time, I do but I never saw it in this context.

“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.” And I would amplify in the spirit of interpretive context, faith without works is shown that it is dead. You know, the absence of breath means the body is dead and the absence of works means that the faith is dead. You know, it's difficult sometimes to tell if a body is dead or alive. In the old days, they put a little mirror right over their nose and mouth to see if there's any little vapor, fog on that mirror, to see if there's life. Well, that's what works are: it's the little vapor on the mirror that shows there's something real in this person's faith.

God saved you first to bring him honor and glory in your life and it's inconceivable that he would have saved you and not given you a heart's desire to serve him in a local church. There you go. A test of faith. Is yours real? Do you see at least the germ? Are you drawn to genuine Christian people? Are you drawn to true churches? Is that kind of what

you come back to? Is that kind of what you're being led toward? That's evidence that you've got the real thing according to the authority of the word of God.

Let's stand together.