

James 2:21-26
Lesson #12
Faith and Justification
05/16/2021

James **Kingdom Living
in a Broken World**

What is the major theme of James?



Faith & Works



The “rich” & the “poor”

1

James **Kingdom Living**
in a Broken World

What is the major theme of James?

Luke 17:11



“Now these (Bereans)...examined
the Scriptures...to see whether
these things were so.”

The “have nots” and the “have lots”

Faith & Works (12 vs.)

2

James Kingdom Living in a Broken World

2:21-26

Works & Justification

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>This is what we should know</p> <p>Life's trials contain hidden blessings.</p> <p>1:1-18</p> | <p>This is what we should do</p> | | |
| | <p>“quick to hear” “Listen up”</p> <p>1:19-2:13</p> | <p>“slow to speak” “Slow down”</p> <p>2:14-3:18</p> | <p>“slow to anger” “Calm down”</p> <p>4:1-5:20</p> |

James 1:19

“But everyone must be
**quick to hear, slow to
speak and slow to anger;**

3

The Gospel

What Christ has done FOR us



What Christ has done IN us

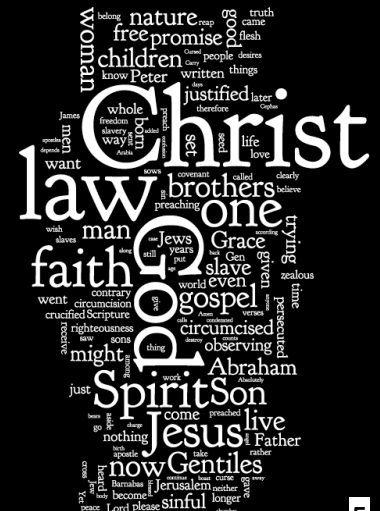


What Christ is doing THROUGH us

4

Great tensions in Christian tradition

How are faith and good works related?



5

Romans 3:28

“For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith** apart from works of the Law.”

Romans 4:5

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness**,”

Romans 11:20

“they were broken off by their unbelief, **but you stand by your faith**”

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James 2

“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; 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 And 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**.”

7

Possible interpretations

1. Paul and James reflect a theological **conflict** in the early church.
(Historical critics)
2. Good works are a **marker** of true faith.
(John Calvin)
3. Good works inspired by faith justify us **before God**.
(Roman Catholic)

4. **Good works justify us before man and save us in our usefulness and witness in this life.**



8

The Point

**Be slow to speak
of faith until you can
show your faith.**



9

Does “justification” include works for this life or the next and for God or man?

- Paul goes to great lengths to **separate** faith and works in our **reconciliation with God**.
- James’ **context** is not soteriology but temporal / material effectiveness.
- James makes it clear that he is seeking to challenge **true believers**, who may sin.
- **What kind of works and for how long** will assure a person of justification before God for eternal life?



10

“22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was **perfected**,”

Ephesians 2

“8 For by grace you have been **saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

11

Matthew 5:16

“Let your light shine **before men** in such a way that they may **see your good works**, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

It is possible to have real light but not to have it seen by men so as to glorify God.

Such light is useless.

12

“²⁴ **You see** that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.”

- Could it be that man is justified **BEFORE MAN** as his faith **is seen by man**?

Romans 4

“² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; **but not before God**. ³ For what does the Scripture say? ‘And Abraham **believed** God, and **it** was reckoned to him as righteousness.’”

- Paul teaches that “faith” **ITSELF** was counted as “righteousness” before God.

13

“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; 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.”

Abraham is declared
to be justified by faith in
Gen. 15

A private declaration

Paul's point

Abraham's faith is
perfected and expressed in
Gen. 22

A public display

James' point

14

- God promised Abram many nations through a son (vs.1-4)

Genesis 15

“⁵ And He took him (Abram) outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” ⁶ Then he **believed** in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

- Years after Abram's faith was acknowledged by God, it was **openly expressed**, in this world.

Genesis 22:8,14

“God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering,” . . . “In the mount of the Lord it will be provided (**seen**).”

15

How does authentic saving faith manifest itself?

- Confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom.10:9-10)
- Water Baptism in Jesus' name (1 Pet.3:21)
- Following Christ (Phil.2:12)

NOTE: These things authenticate faith before man as they animate it (make it visible).

Not unlike a marriage ceremony, which is a public sign of a personal commitment.



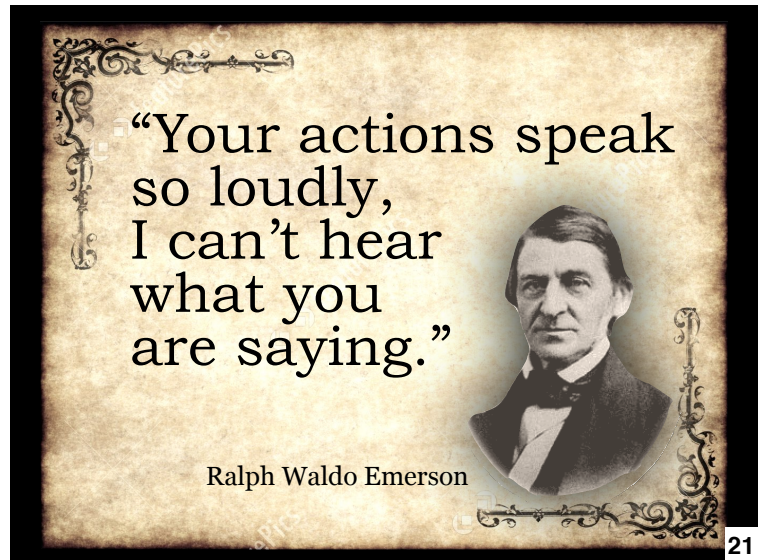
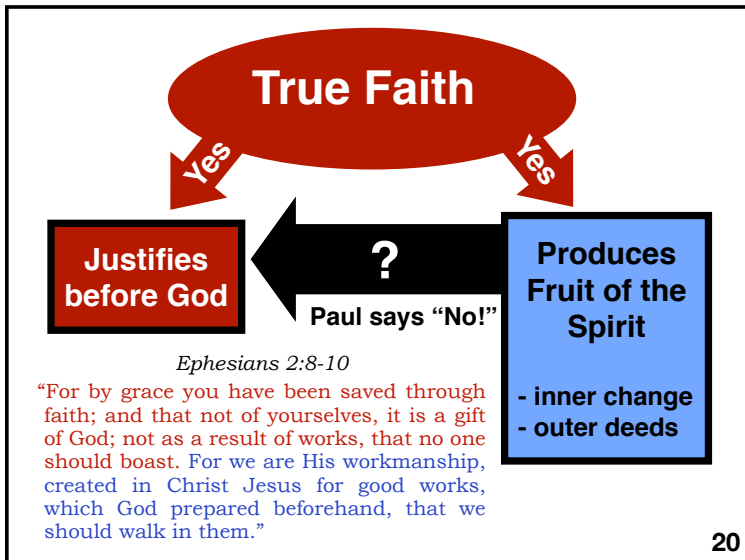
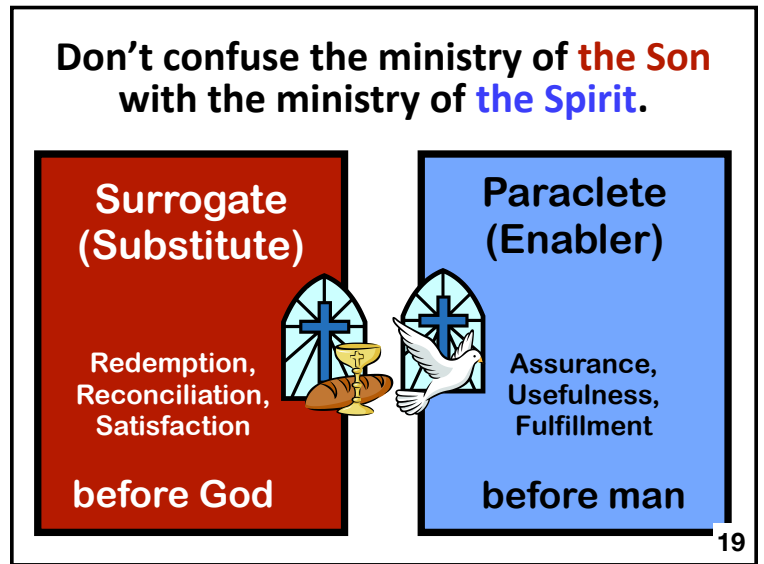
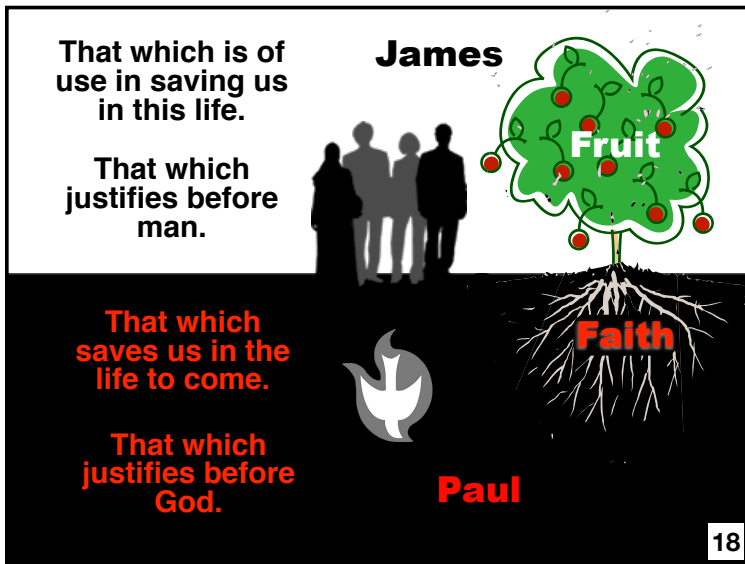
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Matthew 9

“⁶ But **in order that you may know** that the Son of Man **has authority** on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic – “Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” ⁷ And he rose, and went home. ⁸ But when the multitudes **saw** this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”

- The healing did not authorize Jesus' authority, it animated it **so it could be seen and affirmed by man**.

17



- How did Abraham show his faith?**
- He was willing to risk change **when it meant going to an unknown place** - (the promised land). (**Aliens to this world**)
 - He was willing see through God's eyes **when it seemed unreasonable** - (the promised seed). (**Hope in trials**)
 - He was willing to follow God's will **when it involved personal sacrifice** - (sacrificing Isaac). (**Way of the Cross**)
- 22

- What is the lesson for us?**
- Realize that our testimony is a story we tell to the world **with a visual aid - our life**.
 - Our faith is seen not in our testifying to our blessings so much as in **our being a blessing to someone else**.
 - Our **expectations and responses** in the face of the ups and downs of life tell the world a lot about our faith.
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