

Scripture: James 2 vs 1 to 4 & 17 to 19

1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.

2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Subject: Wisdom for Godly Living Part 2.

We saw from chapter 1 the things that test our faith to see if it is genuine, and the trust we have in God that enables us to exercise a faith that strengthens us.

We need now to consider some aspects of faith there are because if we are to grow in maturity and wisdom these have to become a reality in our lives, and not something we only know about by listening to someone or reading about it from a book.

The concept we have regarding faith needs to be made clear, otherwise our understanding of what faith is, and how it works can be wrong.

The second chapter of James' Epistle is all about faith and the various aspects connected to it, this second chapter is instructive and constructive. We are informed that faith does not make any distinction between people, James is also helpful for he shows to us that faith obeys, it obeys the law of God, which according to James is the Royal law verse 8, it is a law framed by the Lord, a law which if broken in one point, the law breaker is as guilty as if all the laws had been broken.

James 2 v 10 says *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*

Being in the faith means, we know.

What is Forbidden.

What is Expected.

What is Condemned.

In this chapter we will be considering.

1. Faith and Respect

James writes about faith in respect of persons, it is pointed out to us quite clearly that we are not to deal with the two classes of people referred to differently.

During His earthly ministry Jesus treated everyone equally; He showed no favoritism to any group, this is illustrated during His conversation with the woman of Samaria at Jacobs well. **(John 4)** The woman was shocked when Jesus spoke to her, her response to Jesus revealed the great divide that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews. The history of the two nations was not good.

John 4 vs 21 to 24

20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

2. Faith and Equality

Jesus is seen showing no favoritism in the stories of Zacchaeus Luke 19 and the man of the Gadarenes Mark 5. You couldn't have two men more pole's part than these, for Zacchaeus was a tax collector, the man of the Gadarenes homeless, and yet Jesus treated the men equally, and by His power He changes both men for the better, each man experiences a supernatural change in their behavior, which is noticed by others. Jesus sets down a marker for all His followers. It is something noticed by James who emphasizes the respect we are to have for all people no matter who they are or where they are from and treat them equally.

Faith does not differentiate between rich and poor, faith is the same for all, for faith saves people of all nations; it is also the same faith that saves people of all cultures.

3. Faith and Sin

According to James if we treat some in a different way than we do others, we are guilty of sin. There is always a danger in dealing with some in an alternative way because it is possible to

compromise your position, and so be incapable of disciplining those shown favoritism should it be necessary for some reason. Being over familiar can cloud ones judgment.

When we are well versed in the articles' of the Christian faith there is a consciousness of what is right and what is wrong, then in obedience to faith our lifestyle falls in line with the word of God. The Christian life therefore is a life of faith.

Live by Faith Heb 10 v 38 *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man drawback, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

Walk by Faith 2Cor 5 v 7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

Stand by Faith 1Cor 2 v 5 *That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

In the Epistle of James, he makes reference to.

4. Faith and Works

We come now to another very important part of the chapter as we are going to consider something that is very fundamental in the Christian's life, faith and works. James is very forthright in what he has to say and uses his words well to instruct us about these twins, for faith and works are N.T. twins, they are two pillars, they are like the two poles threaded though the ark of the covenant that enabled the priest to carry the presence of God. Let's observe what can be termed as.

5. Inactive Faith

When he says that faith without works is dead verse 17 *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone "*. He is referring to inactive faith. Faith that does not express itself in external practices is faith in isolation.

Faith was never intended to be something in isolation, it is to be like a seed and likened to a mustard seed that grows and grows. Jesus says this about faith in Luke 17 v: 6 *"If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.*

Inactive faith accomplishes nothing whatsoever, the Christian who has an inactive faith does not grow and also fails to share their faith with others.

Wiersbe in 'Be Mature' says *"Faith is confidence that God's Word is true, and conviction that acting upon that Word will bring His blessing."*

Jesus speaking to a man in John 9 v 7 He said *"Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing"*.

The Man had faith in the words of Jesus and obeyed, he then put into practice Jesus' word, and his sight was restored.

Faith is not something that is to lie dormant, faith is a living word, that is why Paul wrote in Romans 10 v 17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Faith is alive and makes the Word of God something creative, therefore faith without works is dead because it is inactive.

Now we are not saved by works but by faith, however it does not mean we are to have an inactive faith, James is writing because he desires Christians to have.

6. Active Faith.

James says in verses **18 to 20** *But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

To show them what he means he uses three examples of faith and works operating together. He uses Abraham, Rahab, and the Body in verses 21 to 26.

He defines very clearly for us that Abraham was justified by what he did, he had faith to believe that the God who promised that his seed would be multiplied as the stars in the sky would not let him down, that is why he exercised faith and put his son on the altar, his works showed his faith in God's Word.

This is the key to faith and works; it is having the confident knowledge that what God has said is true, and that what God has declared cannot fail.

James also refers to Rahab who sheltered the spies from Acacia Grove protecting them and then providing a way of escape from Jericho.

Joshua 2vs 9 to 13 This is what she said to the men: *"I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.*

10 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

11 "And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

12 "Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token,

13 "and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

Her works demonstrated that she believed that the promise of God to Israel was true.

James also uses the human body to illustrate the same truth verse 26 "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Faith must be active to be effective. This is demonstrated time and time again in scripture, we see it in the Gospels when Jesus spoke to individuals. **John 9 v 7** *And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.*

Also, at the pool of Bethesda **John 5 v 8** *"Jesus said unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk".*

Then in Mark 2 the story of the man let down to the feet of Jesus through a roof it says in verses.

11 and 12 *"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."*

Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

We see then for faith to be effective it must be active.

How active is your faith?

How effective are you in your Christian life?

How do you demonstrate your Christian faith?

Paul refers in Galatians 5 to the 'Works of the Flesh', and the Fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh show themselves in those who do not have faith; the fruit of the Spirit shows itself in the lives of those who do have faith.

We are to have a faith that is active, and not inactive.

Matt 7 v 20 Jesus says, *"Therefore by their fruits you will know them"*.

To conclude we will observe some other aspects of faith that are vital to our Christian faith there is

7. Doctrinal Faith

By doctrinal faith I mean the whole of the Christian Doctrine, the sum total of doctrinal truth, the faith that Jesus referred to when he said, **Luke 18 vs 7 & 8** *"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"*

8 *"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*

This is the faith relates to God the Father; The Son, and The Holy Spirit, and all the associated doctrines linked to them, such as the doctrine of Man, of sin, of salvation and redemption. A full statement of the Faith can be studied in full by reading and studying one of the Systematic Theology books one by Louis Berkhof, published by Banner of Truth or one by Wayne Grudem published by I.V.P. Then there is.

8. Determined Faith

Matt 9 vs 20 to 22

20 *And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.*

21 *For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."*

22 *But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.*

Mark 10 vs 46 to 52

46 *Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.*

47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

48 *Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

49 *So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."*

50 *And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.*

51 *So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."*

52 *Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

Then there is.

9. Demonstrative Faith.

Acts 3 vs 1 to 8

1 *Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.*

2 *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;*

3 *who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.*

4 *And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."*

5 *So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.*

6 *Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

7 *And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

8 *So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.*

Acts 9 vs 10 to 19

10 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.*

11 *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

12 *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.*

13 *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

14 *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightiest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

And lastly.

10. Dependent Faith.

Heb 11 v 6 *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.*

Now there are different types of faith referred to and defined in scripture.

Matt 6 v 30 we have 'Little faith.'

Matt 8 v 10 'Great faith'

Luke 17 v 5 'Increase our faith.'

Acts 6 v 8 'Full of faith.'

Rom 10 v 8 'Word of faith.'

Rom 12 v 3 'Measure of faith.'

Rom 12 v 6 'proportion of faith.'

2Cor 4 v 13 'Spirit of faith.'

James 5 v 15 'Prayer of faith.'

How vital our faith is to our salvation, and our active participation in the things of God.