

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **James 2:14-26**.
- B. This is a "famous" passage of scripture, and one which is misunderstood by many.
- C. The word "faith" has two basic meanings in the NT:
  - 1. It can refer to the body of doctrine or teachings (Ac. 6:7; 1Cor. 16:13; Jude v3). This is not under consideration in Jas. 2.
  - 2. It can refer to the subjective belief of a person (Rom. 10:17; 14:23; Eph. 4:5).
- D. James is making the point that a true faith (subjective belief) will express itself in good works or deeds.
- E. There are very few atheists in the world; but there are thousands who believe in God, yet do not act on that belief! Their faith is dead!

## I. FAITH IS EXPRESSED IN WORKS.

- A. Scripture text: James 2:14,22.
- B. James asks the question if faith without works can eternally save and then answers the question in v22 -- no! He says that a saving faith, is a perfected faith, which is faith working with works.
- C. The classic argument that says one is saved by faith only and not of any works comes from a misunderstanding of the application of Rom. 4 and Jas. 2. In Rom. 3:28-4:5, Paul is speaking of the works of the Law of Moses, not works of faith.
- D. We are saved by grace through faith. In our gratitude for salvation we express appreciation in our works. We show our faith by our works.
- E. Remember, we show our faith by our works, not our works by our works.

## II. TWO ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH EXPRESSED IN WORKS.

- A. Scripture text: James 2:21-23,25.
- B. Abraham.
  - 1. The "when" of Jas. 2:21 is important. In Gen. 15:6 it says that Abraham believed in God and it was reckoned to his as righteousness. Yet, Abraham was justified in his faith when he attempted to offer up Isaac in Gen. 22:12.
  - 2. It was his actions or works together with his faith that was pleasing to God. It is the same combination that is pleasing to God today.
- C. Rahab.
  - 1. The "when" of verse 25 is important. In Jo. 2:1-15 Rahab helped the two Israelite spies by receiving them and hiding them.
  - 2. The text tells of her faith in the past miracles of God but she stood justified only when she acted on that faith.

## III. ONE ILLUSTRATION OF FAITH AND NO WORKS.

- A. Scripture text: James 2:19.
- B. The devil and his demons believe in God (a subjective faith), yet they have no works to be justified. Their faith is useless.
- C. Likewise if we believe in God and have not works to express that belief we are on the level with the devil. There is no righteousness.

## IV. GOOD WORKS EXPRESS A TRUE, GODLY FAITH.

- A. Scripture text: James 2:15,16,19.
- B. The rhetorical questions has the obvious answer of no!

- C. Since James was Jesus' half-brother it is entirely possible that with divine inspiration James has in mind Jesus' teaching about the judgment and how people will be separated. It will be on the basis of faith and works (Mt. 25:31-46).
- D. As we show our works and thus confirm our faith we must be careful to give God the glory. As was said earlier we are to show our faith by our works, not to show our works by our works. In one case God gets the glory and in the other we do (Jas. 2:17-20; Mt. 5:16).
- E. Faith alone cannot save. It must be accompanied by works and love (1Cor. 13:2).

#### **CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. No one is saved by faith alone; neither are they saved by works alone.
- B. But man is saved by grace (Eph. 2:8,9), through faith. This saving faith is expressed in good works.
- C. To have the saving faith that results in righteousness one must hear the word of God and act upon it (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 3:36).
- D. Express your faith by being obedient today.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.