

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Autopsy of a Dead Faith

**SERMON REFERENCE:** James 2:17-26

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #0516

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 2:17
- b) We are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by nothing else.
  - i) It is grace plus nothing.
  - ii) We are not saved by doing good works.
- c) We can have confidence and assurance in our salvation, not because we're confident in ourselves, but because we have a wonderful confidence in our Savior and are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.
  - i) Acts 16:31
- d) If works had anything to do with salvation, then we could never be certain or have assurance of our salvation.
  - i) Did I read my Bible today? Did I pray today? Did I lose my temper today? Did I witness today?
    - (1) We could only hope that we are saved.
- e) Romans 1:17
  - i) We are not saved by laws, rules, rituals, ceremonies or sacraments.
  - ii) We are saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - (1) Acts 16:31
- f) On the surface, it seems as though James and the Apostle Paul contradict each other regarding salvation and works.
  - i) Romans 4:2, 5
    - (1) Paul says clearly that we are not saved by works.
    - (2) If Abraham were saved (justified) by works, then he would have something to boast of, but not before God.
      - (a) Paul makes it very clear that Abraham was not saved by works.
  - ii) James 2:21, 24
    - (1) Paul states that we are saved by grace through faith; we are justified by faith and not by works.
    - (2) James says that we are justified by works as well as by faith and that faith without works is dead.
  - iii) In reality, there is no contradiction when we understand what both Paul and James are saying.
    - (1) They are actually saying the same thing in a different way.
      - (a) They are giving the heads and tails of the same truth.
    - (2) Paul is speaking about justification before God, and James is speaking about justification before men.
    - (3) God can see our hearts and our faith, but we cannot see what is inside another person's heart.
      - (a) The only way we know anything about another's faith is by what we see them do and hear them say.
    - (4) We are justified before God by faith; we are justified before others by works.
  - iv) James is referring to a "show-me" faith.

- (1) James wants to get faith out of the academics and into daily living.
  - (2) James 2:14
    - (a) The word “says” implies that he simply claims to have faith.
      - (i) He doesn’t necessarily have it but claims he has faith, but he has no works.
      - (b) In the manuscripts, the text literally asks, “Can that kind of faith save him?”
  - (3) James 2:18
    - (a) James is saying, “Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”
    - (b) James is not talking about being justified before God but about being justified before men.
      - (i) Men cannot see our faith apart from our works.
  - v) Paul is talking about the root of our justification; James is talking about the fruit of our justification.
    - (1) The root is beneath the ground, and we cannot see it.
    - (2) The fruit is above ground; and if the root is there, the fruit will show.
  - vi) Paul is talking about the provision of our justification; James is talking about the proof of our justification.
  - vii) Paul is talking about the means of our justification; James is talking about the marks of our justification.
  - viii) Paul is talking about a know-so salvation; James is talking about a show-so salvation.
    - (1) There is no contradiction at all between the two.
  - g) James and Paul both show us that we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves us is never alone.
    - i) James makes it clear that people who simply have a say-so salvation without a show-so salvation are not going to Heaven.
      - (1) It is not that works save or that works even help to save.
      - (2) We are justified before God by faith alone, but that faith is proven before men.
  - h) Not all faith is valid faith.
    - i) Some faith is not real faith at all, just like some preaching does not truly preach the Gospel.
      - (1) Galatians 1:9
    - ii) What some men call faith is not really faith.
      - (1) James 2:14
        - (a) James is not saying that faith cannot save but that faith that does not produce a changed life is dead.
  - i) In the Scripture we’re studying today, James gives three marks of a dead faith.
- 2) IT HAS NO COMPASSION (JAMES 2:15-18)
- a) Pious platitudes cannot get us to Heaven.

- i) Mere words and just saying that we believe are not going to save our souls.
- b) Real faith gives us a love for other people and will change the way we act toward others.
  - i) The repeating of words cannot warm and fill a hungry person.
    - (1) Just telling someone who is cold and hungry to be warm and filled will not warm them or take away their hunger; I must give them warm clothes and food.
    - ii) Just as repeating words cannot warm and fill a hungry person, the repeating of words cannot save and transform a life.
  - c) Many people claim to be saved and talk a good religion, but there's never been a change in their lives; it's merely words.
- 3) IT HAS NO COMMUNION (JAMES 2:19-20)
  - a) Some people have no more faith than the devil.
    - i) In some ways, the devil is very orthodox and a believer.
      - (1) He believes so much that it causes him to tremble.
        - (a) James 2:19
        - (2) The devil believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
          - (a) Matthew 8:29
          - (3) The demons believe that Jesus is holy.
            - (a) Mark 1:24
            - (4) The demons believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of God, who was sent by God into the world to redeem the world.
              - (a) Luke 4:41
          - ii) Though the devil is very orthodox in many ways, there is a difference.
            - (1) James 2:19
              - (a) The literal meaning of the word "tremble" in this passage means "to stand up straight."
                - (i) It can also be translated as "shutter."
                - (ii) It has the meaning of a person being so frightened that their skin crawls and the hair stands up on the back of their neck.
              - (b) The demons in Hell cringe and quake in fear at the idea of God.
            - (2) The demons believe, but their belief has never brought them peace, only torment.
              - (a) They have no longing or love for Jesus.
        - b) There are a lot of people who, like the demons, have a fearful, cringing relationship to God.
          - i) But the Bible says that perfect love casts out fear.
            - (1) 1 John 4:18
            - ii) Romans 5:1
          - c) A dead faith has no communion with God.
            - i) It may believe facts about God.
            - ii) We may be very orthodox and still not have a relationship with Jesus.

- iii) The devil is not fighting churches today; he's joining them.
    - (1) He is working from the inside.
      - (a) 2 Corinthians 11:14
      - (b) If we were to give the devil a questionnaire for church membership, he could check off many of the same boxes as our members.
  - d) The devil believes that Jesus Christ is the virgin-born Son of God, but he is not willing to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord or bow the knee to Jesus.
    - i) He is not willing to submit to Jesus, to love, trust or serve Jesus.
  - e) Do you know Jesus Christ?
    - i) Do you love Jesus?
    - ii) Does God's Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?
      - iii) John 2:23-25
        - (1) The people mentioned in this passage were surface believers and miracle mongers; they didn't really believe with their hearts.
          - (a) Many people believe in their minds the facts about Jesus, but they don't believe with their hearts.
            - (i) They have no love for the Lord Jesus.
- 4) IT HAS NO REAL CONVERSION (JAMES 2:20-26)
  - a) There is no basic change.
  - b) Faith that does not change a life and does not root in action is dead.
    - i) If a person says that he believes in Jesus Christ and has been saved, but he won't make a confession of his faith, he refuses to follow Jesus in believer's baptism, he does not love the Bible, he doesn't pray, he doesn't witness, he doesn't love other Christians, and he has no changed life, then that person is deceiving himself.
      - (1) He likely has not been truly converted.
  - c) Again, James is not saying that we are saved by works; he is saying that faith that saves always produces works.
  - d) Ephesians 2:8-10
    - i) We see three important prepositions in this passage:
      - (1) By - "for by grace"
      - (2) Through - "through faith"
      - (3) Unto - "unto good works"
        - (a) We are saved by grace through faith unto good works.
        - (b) The works do not save; the grace saves.
          - (i) Faith lays hold upon that grace and works within us the good works.
  - e) James gives three examples or illustrations to show that dead faith has no real conversion:
    - i) Abraham
      - (1) James 2:21-23

- (2) In Genesis 15, the Bible says that Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.
  - (a) Genesis 15:6
    - (i) Abraham believed God.
- (3) Thirty years later, in Genesis 22, Abraham offered Isaac on the altar.
  - (a) Genesis 22:1-13
    - (i) Abraham showed that he believed God.
- (4) Some translations interpret James 2:24 to say that Abraham showed himself to be justified by his works.
  - (a) James is stating that what happened in Genesis 15 was made evident in Genesis 22.
    - (i) James is talking about showing the justification before men.
  - (b) If we don't have enough of what it takes to get us out of the church pew and down the aisle and into the baptistry and out serving the Lord, then whatever we have isn't real salvation; but the works do not save us, they simply justify us before men.
- ii) Rahab
  - (1) Rahab the harlot didn't just simply say that she believed, but she laid her life on the line and took a risk because she believed in the Lord Jesus.
  - (2) James 2:25
- iii) A dead body
  - (1) James 2:26
    - (a) The body represents faith; the works represent life in that body.
    - (b) The way we know a body is alive is because it has actions: it walks, talks, stands, etc.
    - (c) A body does not have life by acting; it acts because it has life.

## 5) CONCLUSION

- a) Life is a gift of God, and salvation is a gift of God.
- b) When we are saved, our lives are changed.
  - i) If your religion hasn't changed your life, you better change your religion.
  - ii) Faith without works is dead.
- c) Have you been saved?
- d) Do you love Jesus?
  - i) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16