



There is but ONE WAY and it requires belief AND action!

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:14-26)

Our devotion opens with James asking a very relevant question. Do not err in understanding the substance of the question. James is not asking if faith is valid for salvation, but he is asking about the false 'profession' of faith that is not evidenced in good works. Many today hold themselves up to be Christians – they proudly proclaim it with their mouths, but they live exactly like the unsaved. There would not be evidence to convict them in a court of law of being a Christian. 14 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Remember that educator's definition of meaningful learning? It reads, "Meaningful learning results in a change of behavior." That is simply, yet profound. What good is knowledge, or even faith, if it is not acted upon? Observe what James says in verse 19 – even "the devils also believe, and tremble." So, if we have great faith that God exists, and that His Son Jesus Christ died for our sins – what good is that faith if we go on living in the way of the lost?

James gives us a barometer by which we can measure our true faith: 15 "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" True faith in Jesus Christ changes lives. In

fact, the person of faith becomes a new creature in Christ. There is a famous book entitled, "What would Jesus Do?" That is a pertinent question always. If we see a fellow brother or sister without food or clothing, will we respond in the way that Jesus would have responded. Would Jesus have passed by on the other side as the two religious leaders did on the Road to Jericho? Faith relies upon the compassion of God in saving us. If that compassion has been a benefit to us, we must make it a benefit to others. We must feel the pain and suffering of those around us. If we put our finger to a hot stove, we draw back immediately. Why? Because we felt the pain of the fire. Feeling pain always results in a response and, if we have the compassion (like feeling) of Jesus, we will feel the pain of hurting children and others – so much so that our feelings of that pain result in a response.

17 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Let us look at the reverse image of this coin: "Good works, without faith, is also DEAD!" If our hearts were a fountain pen, and our faith was ink, what good would our pen or ink be if we did not dip the pen in the ink and write? Have we believed in vain? Yes, we have if that belief and faith has not resulted in a fundamental change of heart and behavior. 18 "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." There are no good works sufficient to save us. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor 13:1-3) The kind of good works that come as a result of true faith is that of love. All of our good works without that love of God is nothing.

19 "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." You may not believe me, but I assure you that most, if not all, atheists believe in God. Their only hope, as they see it, is to deny Him and obliterate the mention of His Name from every corner. They believe in their minds, but refuse to believe in their hearts lest they must accept His authority over their lives which they do not desire to accept. If devils believe and tremble, how much better is an atheist than a devil? 20 "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" If a friend promises to repay a debt to you, and does not do so, will you simply let it slide? The proper follow up must follow the promise, and so with faith.

21 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" What do you suppose motivated Abraham to undergo the sacrifice of his only beloved son? Do you not recognize that it was great faith that moved him to raise the knife over Isaac? Faith precedes all good works that are acceptable to God. Without faith, such good works are actually only sin. Even cultivating a field with a wicked heart is sin: "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." (Prov 21:4) Note the account of Abraham's obedience of the awful counsel given him in Genesis: "And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me (Gen 22:11-12) What was the result of Abraham's faith-driven actions? "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the

stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen 22:15-18) I hope the reader will see in this that the only good works are those that are motivated by faith to the obedience of the Lord. 22 "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

23 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." Are you called the friend of God because you have believed without qualification in His promises? Does your love for God extend to all of His Creation? You will observe that even Abraham had no righteousness of his own, but rather that same 'imputed' righteousness that we have in our faith in Jesus Christ. 24 "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Please do not tell me that simple faith is sufficient in and of itself. That faith must be manifested in at least a WILLINGNESS to do good to others and to God. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt 5:16) "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt 16:27) Paul summarizes the issue in a nutshell: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:8-10) Our justification is not of our own works, but the work of Jesus Christ at Calvary. But the evidence in our lives of that justification is good works.

25 "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" Rahab certainly had no good works before faith was imparted to her heart. She had been a prostitute, but believed God and helped Israel in the taking of Jericho. She later was found in the genealogical line of Jesus Christ. Her courageous works in saving the two Israelite spies proved her faith.

The human body is designed to do work – to labor, to move, to feel pain and joy. The spirit gives meaning and direction to that body. Without the spirit, the body can do nothing. 26 "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." May I point out that though the body without the spirit is indeed dead, the spirit without the body is NOT dead. But while we have bodies with which to labor and do good, we must be about our Father's business. Even our Lord said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4) We, too, must work the works of Him that sent us.