

WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: How Great Thou Art, Victory in Jesus, Trust and Obey, Mighty to Save, Firm Foundation, Since Jesus Came into My Heart

WELCOME

Have you been blessed with an act of kindness from someone (e.g., from someone you know or even a stranger) the past week?

WORD

James 2:14-26

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 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 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.

We all want to make sure that things we buy are genuine and of good value. Our faith too must be tested to see if it's real (**2 Corinthians 13:5**). Many people go to church thinking they are saved – but we must not be deceived --- we must examine if our faith is true or not! Jesus said that our "fruits" will prove that our faith is real (**Matthew 7:20-21**). A true Christian does not only call Him "Lord" but will also obey and follow God's will. Real faith works, and a Christian is a follower of Jesus who...

ACTS NOT JUST TALKS (2:14-17)

A fruit tree bears fruit because it is alive – it is not alive because it bears fruit. A Christian bears good works because his faith is alive. This is very important theology: we know that we are saved by faith, but the emphasis here is that faith must have works (**James 2:14**). If someone needs help, as a Christian what must we do? If we just wish the person well, without real action, we are a hypocrite and our faith is not real (**vv. 15-16**). Someone who lives by faith and loves like Christ will not only talk but show love in action. Faith without works (the evidence in our action and how we live out our faith), is dead (**James 2:17**).

If we love others as we have been commanded to, and we see them in need, we must do something to help them. James' point is "love in action". Forgiving others is an example of this – when we are tempted not to forgive, we must remember Christ and His example. The Christian life is allowing the Holy Spirit to transform you. It is not forced upon you, but transformation comes and is revealed from the inside out. Many times, we say "I will pray for you", but faith that works means that we must go out of our way to help too.

How then does this go with Paul's perspective that salvation is through faith alone apart from works?

PAUL	JAMES
How a person is saved	How saved people live
Focuses on the root of salvation: salvation by grace through faith	Focuses on the fruit of salvation: faith is shown to be real through works
Against legalism	Against empty profession
Faith in Christ transforms	Dead faith bears no fruit

We are saved by grace and can be certain of it, if our FAITH is real (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). God's grace saves us not because we deserve it. Saving faith always has evidence. Paul taught that those who are saved must have good works. Good works does not save us, but we are saved to do good works (**v.10**). The fruit of the Holy Spirit comes from the inside out (**Galatians 5:22-23**). This is best practiced and felt in the context of small groups where God provides through His people. But to protect the church Paul gave instructions to set up guardrails in helping those in need (widows) (**1 Timothy**

5:9-10). Paul set standards for those who can receive help from the church. Paul warned another church and reminded believers to live disciplined lives instead of being idle (**2 Thessalonians 3:10-11**).

True Christianity is not a simply a passport to heaven or a one-way ticket, but a relationship with God through Jesus. It means becoming Christlike in our character – so that we obey, serve, and do good works (live out our faith). The presence of good works reveal that our faith is real. Good works do not save us, yet the absence of good works or lack of transformation in our lives reveal that our faith is dead.

SURRENDERS NOT JUST KNOWS (2:18-20)

Real faith surrenders, it is not just head knowledge. Faith must be seen in action (**James 2:18**). James used the demons' belief as an example (**vv.19-20**): people can boast about their Bible knowledge, but their lives don't reflect Jesus. Just because you know does not mean you are saved. Demons know about God, recognize who Jesus is, but they will never surrender to Jesus. Some of us are like that – we know, but we live lives rebelling against God. Even if we say repeatedly that we know Jesus, yet we do not keep His commandments, we are then, LIARS and even described as detestable, disobedient, and worthless (**Titus 1:16**). Your fruit will determine who you really are! Are we totally surrendered to God, committed to follow Him every step of the way?

OBEYS NOT JUST BELIEVES (2:21-26)

James gave Abraham as an example of obedience when he offered up Isaac and was considered righteous by God (**vv. 21-23**). But when was he considered righteous by God? It was when Abraham chose to believe in God back in (**Genesis 15**). Paul wrote in the book of Romans that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law (**Romans 3:28**). Paul later writes that Abraham was not justified by works, for it makes salvation like "salary" for works done; but it was because he "believed in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (**Romans 4:2-3**). Grace is not wage, but favor (**Romans 4:4-5**). But for the one who does not work but believes, faith is credited as righteousness. Abraham wanted to "help" God accomplish His promise of many descendants to him (**Genesis 15:1-6**). But God told Abraham that His plan is that he will have a son, and descendants as numerous as the stars. Abraham BELIEVED at this point, and God declared him righteous (**Genesis 15**). Abraham offered up his son whom he loved, Isaac, in (**Genesis 22**) – with over 40 years in between these events! Real faith grows. It is not perfect, but evidence will follow through obedience (**James 2:24**). Abraham's faith has matured through the years (**Hebrews 11:17-19**). It grew so much that even at the point of sacrificing Isaac, Abraham had faith that God can resurrect him from the dead! Rahab, a foreigner and a harlot, was declared righteous when she demonstrated her faith by saving the spies; she showed that her loyalty was to God (**James 2:25, Joshua 2:9-19**). May we all be able to show our faith is real through the works we do, and give God the glory He deserves!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Why is faith considered “dead” if it has no works?
2. In what ways apart from “knowing” or “talking” do we prove our faith is real?
3. What areas of your life is God using to build your faith right now?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those who may think they are saved but do not have genuine faith in Christ. Reach out to them and demonstrate real faith that works. Share the gospel to them, depend on the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts to bring them to real faith in Christ.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria) --- many have been beheaded and murdered; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- For the civil war in Syria to end peacefully, protection for Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression for Syrians. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout the country.
- PRAISE God that all Israeli hostages have been restored to their families safely! Continue to pray for Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism. May this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For nations in turmoil (e.g., Ukraine, Iran, Syria, etc.) to experience true freedom in Christ and become centers for massive spiritual revivals in their regions. Killings of thousands of civilians by Islamist

regime forces in Iran and Syria to be put to an end by God's mighty hand.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, leaders, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

James 2:26

26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.