



## COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS FAITH ALIVE - A STUDY OF JAMES

### NOT BY FAITH ALONE? - JAMES 2:14-26

#### **Focus**

James' repeated point throughout these verses is that if we have a true/living/saving faith in Jesus as our merciful Lord and Savior, it will manifest itself in a transformed life that obeys God and serves others.

#### **Opening Question**

There's a question that evangelists will sometimes ask of people, "When you die, if God asks you on what basis you should be allowed to enter heaven, what would you say?" How would you personally answer this question?

#### **Read**

For context, read James 2:1-26

#### **Some Questions for Reflection**

Sunday's sermon argued that this passage is not primarily about works but about faith. How do we see that this is the case?

Throughout this passage, James is contrasting a living faith with a dead faith. Carefully work through this passage and make a list of the things that characterize these two kinds of faith respectively – what are the characteristics of a living faith? What are the characteristics of a dead faith?

To be clear, can a dead faith save?



Read Romans 3:20-28.

- What is Paul saying here?
- Why does what he says not conflict with what James is saying? (Hint: consider their 'target' audiences, the different uses of terminology, as well as the different points they're trying to make.)

Where do we see Jesus and Paul agreeing with James that a faith that doesn't produce works is not a living/saving faith? (Hint: see Matt. 7:15-20; 25:31-46; Rom. 6:1-4; Eph. 2:8-10; Gal. 5:13-24)

If you'd like to think more fully about Abraham and Rahab and why James uses them as witnesses to make his case, you can read about Abraham particularly in Genesis 12, 15, and 22. You can read about Rahab in Joshua 2, as well as Joshua 6 and Matthew 1.

- How does Abraham's example teach us that a living faith shows itself in sacrificial obedience to God, no matter the cost?
- How does Rahab's example teach us that a living faith shows itself in sacrificial service to others, especially to brothers and sisters in Christ?

### ***Closing Reflection and Application***

Sunday's sermon highlighted two errors that are commonly made among Christians when it comes to faith and works.

- What are they?
- How do you see these two errors expressed in the Christian church today?
- What error is James most dealing with?
- Which of the two errors are you more prone to make?
- What can you do to gain a more robust and consistent understanding of these things?

If you shared the teaching of this chapter with someone and they retorted, "once saved, always saved" – how would you respond to them from the Bible?



What are some ways that God is calling you to sacrificially obey Him, no matter the cost?

What are some ways that we can sacrificially serve other Christians? Even just in our own church, what are some of the needs of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ that we can tangibly begin to help with?

If James' primary focus here isn't on works, but on the true nature of faith, then simply adding in more works to our lives isn't the ultimate solution. Rather, how can we go about growing in our faith in Jesus so that good works will naturally flow out from our faith?