

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

(James 2:20-26)

Life is a wonderful thing, a thing of beauty. It does not matter whether it is a tree, a dog, a flower, or a human being. If life is found within its being, it is something amazing to behold. When that life is gone, it is dead.

Pastor James in writing to his scattered congregation, expresses his concern for those who claimed to know Christ but evidenced no fruit, no life. He tells, "that kind of faith does not save."

Furthermore, he tells that a faith that works is the only true faith. It works because it is alive.

TWO EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING FOR US THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD.

"For a workless faith is a worthless faith."

I. Abraham's Faith Is Fully Revealed In A Most Difficult Test. (vv.20-24)

This reminds us that sometimes the Lord asks us to do hard things. (The revered patriarch)

A. James, speaking to an imaginary opponent, tells that faith without works is useless. (20) again this is the principle that he is driving home into the hearts of his people. (and us!)

B. Abraham is dearly loved and respected by these Jewish Christians...he is their father.

1. The Lord saved Abraham, declaring him righteous, based solely upon his faith. He believed God. He trusted Him. (Genesis 15:6)

God promised that He would give him a great number of offspring. "seed"

2. 30 years after his salvation, the Lord commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. He was the "son of promise." (Genesis 22:1-19) (especially vv.9-12)

His birth had been supernatural. Sarah was 90 years old when he was born.

The Lord opened a very old womb. (Genesis 17:18-19) She laughed at the idea!

a. This offering of Isaac was the "work" that James had in mind. (v.21)

b. He is showing us that Abraham's faith was not the sterile sort, a mere claim. Rather, it showed its life when confronted with this test. (Obeyed)

c. Hebrews 11:17-19 tells us even more, what Abraham was thinking. He reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

C. The offering of Isaac made Abraham's faith complete, for it developed his faith. (vv.22-23)
"Faith is not fully mature until it flowers into appropriate works." Like a fruit tree...

Hard times have a way of developing our trust in the Lord.

D. Abraham's faith was evidenced by his works. (v.24)

1. His faith was the kind that evidenced a continual trust so that later, when he was

