

Saturday/Sunday: James 2:14-26 (Psalms 8)

Some have imagined a contradiction between Paul who says we are saved “by Faith” and James who says “by works.” There is no contradiction at all, let me show you:

We are saved by faith alone but saving faith is never alone. Faith in the Bible is always exhibited in action. In other words, it is impossible to believe God and not obey God. This is the focus of Hebrews 11. Every person in that chapt demonstrated faith by obedience. (I.e. Noah)

Understanding this we see that James is showing the effects of true saving faith, he is not contradicting Paul, in fact, he sounds a lot like His older half brother (Matthew 7:13-23)

(Vs 14-18) This is faith based on knowledge; it resides in the intellect only. It is dead faith.

(Vs 19-20) James is writing to Jews who would state the Jewish statement of faith “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord!” (Deut 6:4) James points out that the demons have this faith (Vs 19). The demons are not only touched in their intellect but in their emotions, they tremble (Vs 19).

(Vs 21-26) We must remember, who was reading this letter, Jews who understood Abraham’s walk of faith, and his obedience, Rahab’s faith in believing God would give Jericho to Israel and helping the spies. James was showing them that saving faith produces works or more specifically obedience.

We could say Faith is the root and Works are the fruit. So to speak to the oft-supposed contradiction Paul was saying that God declares one righteous apart from the works of the law. James, by contrast, was saying that a person’s faith produces works that vindicate his faith in Christ as genuine.

Daily Devotions

James Week 1

Monday: James 1:1-4 (Psalms 37)

The book of James was written by James the half brother of Jesus. Many people are surprised to hear this (Jude is also His brother). James is listed in Gal 1:19 and is the probable pastor in Jerusalem. He also presided over the council in Acts 15. (*James the brother of John was martyred earlier*)

James was probably converted after the resurrection because Jesus’ family did not believe on Him during His ministry (John 7:1-5). Jesus can relate to anybody whose family has “scorned” him or her for being a Christian.

(Vs 1) Knowing James’ position in the persecuted church at Jerusalem we can understand his “heart” for the Jewish Christians scattered abroad. It is a pastor’s heart, the heart of a shepherd.

(Vs 2) These Jews had entered a “temptation” or a trial. They were scattered, persecuted by Rome, beset upon by false teachers and left as the “offscouring of the world”

How should we approach any trial? (Vs 4) We should let the process of “patience” shape us and mold us into what God wants us to be.

Joy in the Christian life is not by looking back, but looking forward with patience.

Tuesday: James 1:5-12 (Psalms 107)

These verses deal with the matter of our faith in the trials.

(Vs 5-8) In the trials we need to pray. If we are “double-minded” about God or His purpose for us, we will be unstable in these times

(Vs 9-11) Trials remind the poor that they are rich in the Lord and therefore can lose nothing; trials remind the rich that they dare not

live for riches or trust in them. (Vs 12) is a wonderful promise to any believer enduring trials.

Trials are what God uses to reveal, try and purify people. They are good for us in their purpose and outcome. Are you in a trial? Pray, have faith; do not put your trust anywhere but in God!

Wednesday: James 1: 13-21 (Psalm 18)

James tells us that there is a difference between a “temptation” from the devil (bad) and a “temptation” (trial) from God. God tests to bring out the good, Satan does so to bring out the bad.

(Vs 14-16) This is a rabbit trail he is taking to emphasize the purpose of trials **good**, not evil. Sin will draw us to death however

(Vs 17-18) God will not put us through trials for bad or for sin. He gives “perfect gifts,” He is good and “of His own will begat us” (Vs 18) God will not lead us to destruction or to sin, we can rest in His character (Vs 17) even when we do not understand everything.

(Vs 19-21) We should rest in the Word of God. Getting angry will not bring about God’s purpose (Vs 20) So often we get angry at God or other people because of the trials. Rather we ought to live in the word in these times and be swift to hear and slow to speak.

When I allow the trial to make me bad, I am falling to a temptation of Satan in the midst of a temptation (trial) from God.

Thursday: James 1:22 -27 (Psalm 91)

Paul told us in 1 Cor 8:1 that knowledge (without love) “puffeth up” in other words it gives us a big head ☺. In the same vein of thought James tells us we are deceiving ourselves when we hear, but do not obey the Word.

(Vs 22-25) These verses deal with the personal life of a believer, it is to be characterized by obedience. Do you know a lot yet do not obey it? In order to be blessed we must obey.

(Vs 26-27) These verse describe the public life of a believer. It is interesting to read of the Christian life called “religion” nowhere is it implied that the new life is a “religion,” but in this case it is telling us how to recognize “true faith” Religion being what people see.

What are the signs of “pure religion?”

1. Self control 2. Love for others 3. Clean life

Why did James tell these Christians this? It was the goal and the purpose of God in the trials. As the children’s song goes:” He still working on me, making me into what I ought to be, it took Him just a week to make the moon and stars and He still working on me..... how loving and patient He must be!!!!”

Friday: James 2:1-13 (Psalms 133)

Chapt 1 was sort of a “table of contents” now we are moving into the specifics.

(Vs 1-13) The Christian faith does not differentiate between social standing, wealth or race. Every Christian is a child of God, loved by the Father and should be loved by us!

Notice how we can unknowingly become a judge when we differentiate between Christians (Vs 4-5) James points out that by treating the poor, improperly we are persecuting the “rich in faith” (Vs 5) and by respecting the rich we are commending the very people that most often blaspheme our God (Vs 6-7)

The point is: when we treat people differently we set ourselves up as a judge and we are “poor judges” at that! We end up commending the sinful and condemning the faithful!

We ought to live by the “royal law” Vs 8-9 and treat all mankind (rich, poor, nice, not nice) with Christian love.

Let us all live by the “Royal Law” (God’s Law) and love each other as ourselves.

