

New Hope Sunday School: Study of James

Lesson 9 – Faith and Works - James 2:14-26

Faith Without Works

- How are verses 14-26 related to the general theme of the book of James?
- What is the problem James is attempting to deal with in this passage?
- How is verse 14 related to verse 13 of James Chapter 2?
 - What two things are being contrasted in verse 13?
 - What two things are being contrasted in verse 14?
- James says “What good is it, my brothers, if someone **says** he has faith but does not have works?” (emphasis mine). Why does he ask the question this way?
 - Does the person in verse 14 actually have faith?
 - Is this relationship between faith and works a new concept? (Matthew 7:21-23)
 - Is this relationship between faith and works different than Paul understands? (Titus 1:16; Ephesians 2:8-10)
- Why can't the faith described in verse 14 “save” the rhetorical person?
- How does the example of verses 15-16 relate to what James has stated in verse 14?
- Compare verse 17 with verse 26; can there exist a faith which does not produce works (Ephesians 2:10)?
- In Verse 18 James seems to make a distinction between faith and works, why does he do this since in the rest of the passage he shows that they are linked?
- What is the contrast James is making in verse 19?

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- In what way was Abraham “justified” in verse 20?
 - At what time did Abraham receive the imputed righteousness (Genesis 15:6)?
 - When did Abraham receive righteousness in relation to the event James is discussing?
 - What does this tell us about the point James is making?
- Why would James pick two such different examples: Rahab a harlot and Abraham the patriarch?

Construction of the passage

- A-1 Verses 15-17
 - Faith without works is ineffectual with regard to relationships with man: the hungry are sent away unfed (15-16)
 - Summary (17): faith lacking evidential work is dead
- B -1 Verses 18-20
 - Faith without works is ineffectual regarding our relationship with God; the demons have knowledge but fear (18-19)
 - Summary (20): Faith without works is useless.
- B-2 Verses (21-24) Abraham
 - Faith revealed in works is effectual in our relationship with God: Abraham's faith showed itself in works of obedience to the will of God (21-23)
 - Summary: works of obedience provide evidence that faith is true, justifying faith (24)
- A-2 (25-26) Rahab
 - Genuine faith reaches out in costly compassion to people at risk (25)
 - Summary: it is the activity of works that reveals faith as a living entity.