

# Epistle of James - Part 2

by John Hunter

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of treating all people equally, regardless of their social status, and living out the royal law of loving one's neighbor as oneself.*

**Duration:** 57:03

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 7:1-2, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 25:31-46, James 2

**Topics:** "James"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on James chapter 2, specifically verses 1-7. He begins by breaking down the structure of the chapter, highlighting the appeal, illustration, conclusion, and explanation within these verses. The main themes discussed are the wrongness of showing favoritism and the doctrine of justification by works. The preacher emphasizes the importance of not holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ while still respecting persons. He also delves into the dangers of snobbery and the significance of recognizing the value of both riches and poverty.

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## Transcript

James chapter 2. Because we have to do a chapter a night with just the five meetings, we are reading the chapter and as we read we break it up, and then we come back again and we expound the salient teaching of the chapter. Now this chapter broadly divides into two. Verses 1 to 13, the subject is respect of persons, respect of persons.

Verses 1 to 7, the wrongness of it, how wrong it is to respect persons. The wrongness of it, verses 1 to 7. Verses 8 to 13, its relation to the royal law, its relation to the royal law. Verses 14 to 26, the subject is the doctrine of justification by works, justification by works.

So that tonight again we have both doctrine and practice before us. Now please, beginning at verse 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons? For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor.

Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called? The wrongness of it. Now its relation to the royal law. If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill.

Now if thou commitest no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

The respect of persons. Now verse fourteen onward, the doctrine of justification by works. What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone.

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God? Thou doest well.

The demons also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works? And by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Now back to the beginning. Although James is not so well known as other epistles, he certainly deals with very big subjects.

Last night we dealt with the three big subjects of chapter one, the tested life, the new birth, the word of God. Tonight we'll deal with the question of respect of persons and the doctrine of justification by works. Tomorrow evening we shall deal with the need to control the tongue and delineate to you the wisdom that cometh from above.

When we reach chapter four on Friday night, we shall be dealing with subjects like separation from the world and the acknowledgement of the will of God in daily life. Lords, the afternoon should find us in chapter five when we shall deal with righteousness, righteous relations between employer and employee. We shall deal with the coming of the Lord.

We shall deal with the taking of an oath, and I shall expound to you the much misunderstood passage that if anyone is sick, let him call for the elders to pray over him and anoint him, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick. I shall expound that carefully to you. Tonight we are dealing with chapter two.

Let me come again. Verses one to seven, the wrongness of it. Now please, just bear with me, will you, while I break up the seven verses for you.

This one is the appeal. Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and still respect persons. That's the appeal.

Verses two and three, he gives the illustration of two men entering the assembly and how they were treated. That's the illustration. Verse four is the conclusion.

You are partial in yourselves. Verses five to seven is the explanation. Harken, my beloved brethren, so that you've got the appeal, the illustration, the conclusion, and the explanation.

Let me come again. Well, you know, these scriptures are so rich that you can break them up in many ways. Verse one, the Lord of glory.

Verses two to four, the peril of snobbery. You'd understand that word, wouldn't you, here? The peril of snobbery. Verses five to seven, riches and poverty.

Verse five, the riches of poverty. Verses six and seven, the poverty of riches. Now that will do for breaking it up for you.

Let's come now, please, to verse one. Now he says, Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and respect persons. Last night, those of you who are present may recall that I drew your attention here that the writer is James, the Lord's brother.

He was reared with Christ yonder in the home at Nazareth. If anyone had the right to call him Jesus, it was this man. Yet when he comes to address him and speak of him, he calls him the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's no mark of respect to call him Jesus, as if he was just an ordinary person like your next door neighbor or a member of your family. He's the Lord, and he's the Lord of glory. So don't talk, please, about the Lord of glory as if he was a member of your own family.

You must ever respect the Son of God. Now he's telling us here that you can't hold faith in Christ and respect persons. There are two things in life that are incompatible, the glory of God and the glory of man.

You can't give glory to men and hold that the great thing in life is glory to God. You will notice, please, in your authorized version, that the words the Lord are in italics. That's interesting.

You see, when you read an ordinary book and the writer wants to impress upon you what he's writing, in that section he'll put it in italics. But when you come to your New Testament, it's different. When the writer puts words in italics, it means that they're not in the original, and he's introducing words in English to give the sense.

It could read, Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ thee glory. That would take you back, you men and women that know your Bible, to the Shekinah glory, that here was the person who was in himself the very glory of God. And whoever, wherever he went, the presence of the eternal was just right there.

So he indicates that you cannot respect persons and hold faith in Christ. The reason being that God is no respecter of persons, so you shouldn't respect persons. The illustration is interesting.

He depicts a scene in which the brother at the door, I noticed on Saturday at the weekend they called them ushers, and the brother at the door looks out and he sees two men approaching. The first man is obviously a very wealthy man. His very expensive suit and gold rings proclaim that he is a man of social

status.

Quite a bit behind him he notices a tramp, dressed in shabby clothes, and he's making for the door too. However, our friend at the door is very happy that the wealthy man came first. And so we are told that he received him cordially and very warmly.

And rightly so, that's the way everyone should be received. By the way, it is always very important who stands at the door, because you are receiving people in the name of the Lord and on behalf of the assembly of God. And of course you want at the door someone who is warm in their welcome, because most people are deeply impressed by the first impressions.

And after all, if people deign to come into the presence of God, why shouldn't they be warmly welcomed and shown to a seat if they're strangers? You don't want someone there that doesn't know how to smile, far less warmly received. And so he took the very wealthy man, it doesn't matter for the moment whether they're converted or not, and he showed him to a seat, a good seat. He may even have got someone to get up to make way for him.

And all that was perfectly all right. Now let me put a matter straight here, please, because there must be honesty in interpretation. The passage before you does not condemn the wearing of gold rings.

The gold ring and the expensive suit identify the man as wealthy. If you're going to condemn the gold ring, you'll need to condemn an expensive suit. Now you'll need to be honest.

It's not a question here of wearing a gold ring or an expensive suit. Both these things identify him as wealthy, just as the shabby suit identifies him as being very poor. Now I'm not justifying rings or anything like that at all.

You can see that as you look at me. But I must tell you exactly what the passage means. Now, when he has seen the wealthy man to his feet, he turns and goes back up, hoping in his heart of hearts that by some miracle the tramp will have gone.

But he's there, waiting to be received. So back up goes our good brother, and he looks at the poor man and he says, stand over there. If you don't like standing, you can sit at my feet.

Quite brusquely he deals with him. And you will notice, please, won't you, that he not only considers the poor man inferior to the rich man, but he considers the poor man inferior to himself. You can sit down here at my feet if you want.

By his action, the man condemned himself. This good brother at the door was caught on one foot. You see, suddenly a situation developed, and he had to act quickly.

But then he lived oftentimes and worked in the world outside, where respect of persons is the norm of the day. Isn't that right? And of course, placed in this situation, he reacted to what was usual, forgetting that he represented a God who does not respect persons. Now, of course, we've got to be careful, because we're becoming very much a middle class community.

And of course, very often these poor people, well, it can be quite a trial for them to come and sit beside you. No doubt about that. However, they're as welcome with God as the other man.

And you can think of it here in South Main Street if it happened. And someone that was really very prominent, like the chief of the police, or some notable man locally, came, you would welcome him as you ought. But the poorest man that walks the street should be made just as welcome, for he's entering the presence of God.

Are you not then partial in yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Because you've misrepresented God to the poor man. You've given him the very definite impression that God respects persons. You've given them the idea that we look on the outward appearance only, and we don't value the soul of the man within the shabby suit, as we do the man within the expensive suit.

Now, you can get the message, can't you? Now, it's not easy. Remember this, that even on the door by your reaction to someone coming, you can either represent God accurately or misrepresent him badly. Says the writer to them, that's fine.

Harken, my beloved brethren. Don't you realize that the way that you treated this man was contrary to the character of God? For God hath chosen the poor, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. And by giving such partiality to the rich man, you have honored the enemies of God's people, for in that day, the rich were oppressing the poor Christians and taking them to court.

Why, that's strong, isn't it? You won't forget this. Now, God's been good to you, far better to you than ever you deserved. Lots of you are well off.

There's no harm in that at all, not the slightest. But don't you forget that God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. Listen, when your Lord and mine came into this world, he came into the world as poor.

Isn't that right? Do you remember on Sunday night in the gospel meeting, I showed you that when the Lord came down, that he didn't come to Caesar's palace, nor Herod's palace, nor the big hotel along the road, nor the inn, he came right to the stable. He was poor. When his mother brought the offering to the temple, she brought the working man's offering, two turtle doves, two young pigeons.

When Christ ministered and preached in this world, it was the mass of the people that heard him gladly. As the terms went out of the way into the kingdom, the rich people found it a barrier and the poor were swept into the kingdom. And when the Lord of glory returned to heaven and he wanted people to represent him in this world down here, he chose the poor and the weak and the foolish and the basest of men to represent him in this world.

My brethren, hearken to me. God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith. Their only wealth is their faith.

Yet you would despise the poor. Heirs of the kingdom, you favor the rich man that oppresses the Christians, that hails them away to the law court, that blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called, the name of Christ. Thus he shows them the wrongness of the whole business.

Now let's come now please to verses 8 to 13. He's going to show us now disrespect of persons as it stands in relation to what he calls the royal law. Now let me break it up for you.

Verse 8, fulfilling the law. Verses 9 to 11, breaking the law. Verses 12 and 13, judged by the law.

Got that? Verse 8, fulfilling the law. 9 to 11, breaking the law. 12 and 13, judging the law.

Verse 8, commendation. You do well if you fulfill the royal law. Commendation.

Verse 9, violation of this law is sin. He transgressed the law. Verse 10, the principle stated.

If you keep the whole law and offend in one point, you're guilty of all. That's the principle stated. Verse 11, the principle illustrated.

If you keep one part and not the other, you're still guilty. Verse 12, the appeal. So speak and so do.

Verse 13, the vindication of the appeal. Back again now to verse 8. The royal law, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It's the royal law because it comes from God, because it was taught by the Lord Jesus.

It's the royal law because it is the law supreme. What is this royal law? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Would that be right? Who is my neighbor? Said the lawyer to Christ.

Who is my neighbor? Just anyone that needs you. Many parts of James Epistles that we shall see, the background is the background not only of the sermon on the mount, but of the Good Samaritan. Any person as we shall see in a moment in need, that person is your neighbor.

You love them as yourself. Would that be right? Come on now. Is our selfishness exposed that number one is prominent? We don't care much for anybody else.

You see, Christianity is intended to be lived out among the people. It says of the Lord Jesus, the word became flesh and pitched his tent among us. Christ lived among the people and he loved his neighbor as himself.

Fulfill it, you'll do well, brethren. I hope you're listening. For as in the last three visits, we are looking for results from the word of God.

Now verses 9 to 11, breaking the law. He says, but if you respect persons, you commit sin and are convicted as transgressors. Now you wouldn't think that, but you know, there are lots of things stated in the Bible that are quite startling.

And if you have come under the royal law, then violation of this law means you're a transgressor. And you can't respect persons if you love everybody like yourself. Come again.

Verse 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole law and offend in one point is guilty of all. Now that's righteous.

It's not unjust. It's not unrighteous. What he's teaching is this, that the law is a unity.

If you break one part of it, you break the law. It's not that you're as guilty in breaking one as you are in breaking the law. Obviously guilt increases the more you break.

But he's showing this, that you are branded as a transgressor if you break one part of it. That's true in Britain. It's true in this country.

The law is there. You violate one law and you're a lawbreaker. It's not like you don't need to break them all to be branded a criminal, a lawbreaker.

So he says, it's like a sheet of glass. You hit it one place and you shatter the law. Now he illustrates that.

Now he says, for instance, the law says thou shalt not commit adultery. Did you listen to me? Now that needs to be proclaimed on a day like this, doesn't it? But it also says thou shalt not kill. It says now if you don't commit adultery, but you kill.

You're a transgressor. Now what these people were doing was this. What he's trying to say is this.

These people would sit back and they would be like an accountant with credit and debit. And they would think of all the laws that they kept and some of the laws that they didn't keep. And because they kept more than they broke, they thought, well now the balance is on my side.

I'm all right. However, he says you can't do that. God is not glorified by omissions.

The fact that you break one means you're guilty of all. Come now to verses 12 and 13. Now he says, so speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Do you remember in verse 25 last night, who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein. So you'll need to speak and act according to the Bible, according to the word of God, because by that shall you be judged in a day to come. So act toward others as you ought to act, and don't be found to be transgressors.

Verse 13, quite startling. Listen to this. He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy.

Did you get that? If you show no mercy to others, you can't expect to receive mercy from God. Listen again, for the Lord was quite clear about this. If he forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father shall forgive you.

But if he forgive not their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses. It's not that mercy or forgiveness have meritorious value. Oh no, what he's saying is this.

If you don't show mercy, you can't expect to receive it. If you don't forgive, you can't expect God to forgive you. Now just stop a moment and think, and go over life.

Have there been days when you've been hard and you fail to reflect the divine character, and you refuse the exercise of mercy, that in a certain situation you could have tempered judgment with mercy, but you didn't. Then remember this, a day coming, judgment without mercy. But he says, the principle that governs the present time is this, that mercy glories over judgment.

Mercy rejoices against judgment. Isn't that right? Isn't that Calvary? Didn't Calvary, didn't mercy rejoice over judgment? Say, the night you got converted, didn't mercy rejoice over judgment? That's the principle of the day. Brethren, get it home to your hearts tonight.

Mercy rejoices over judgment. Thank you. Come now to verses 14 to 26.

Now we come to the interesting subject of the doctrine of justification by works, so much misunderstood. Let me draw your attention please. Will you notice that from verses 14 to 20 that James is speaking about spurious faith, or if you like, he's talking about a faith that's not real.

But in verses 21 to 26 he's talking about faith that's genuine and real. Interesting, isn't it? Now I'm trying to show you how to approach the passage. Again, if in verses 14 to 20 he's speaking about a faith that's spurious, not real, then in verses 14 to 17 he has before him a faith that doesn't operate, a faith that is inoperative.

When the opportunity is there to express it, there's no expression. 14 to 17. But in verses 18 to 20 he's dealing with a faith that is orthodox, but it's not real.

Got that? And then when you come to verses 21 to 26, he's dealing with faith that is genuine and real, illustrated first in Abraham and secondly in Rahab. Got that? Now, having laid that out for you, listen very carefully now, because I want to make a number of general statements to show you the outlook of James. You see, Paul says this unequivocally, a man is justified by faith only and not by works.

Now that's Pauline doctrine. Isn't that right? A man is justified by faith and not by works. James now comes along and he says a man is justified by works and not by faith only.

Now of course, obviously, if both passages are inspired by the spirit of God, they can't be contradictory. People say they're contradictory because they just don't understand. That's all.

Again, along come the expositors, the commentators, the teachers, many of them amongst us, and they say, well this is easily resolved. When Paul teaches justification by faith, that's God word. When James teaches justification by works, that's man word.

Well they might say it, but it's not true. Never look for an easy way out of a difficult situation. It's not true.

Now we'll see that as we go on. Because after all, the word justified is the same in both connections. Again, when Paul deals with faith, and he says a man is justified by faith and not by works, Paul is speaking of a faith that is genuine and real.

And a man is justified by faith, that's right. But when James comes to speak about faith, as I showed you in verses 14 to 20, he's talking about a faith that's not real, as well as a faith that is real. Again, follow me carefully.

When Paul says a man is justified by faith and not by works, the works that Paul is talking about is a person claiming that what they can do can save their soul, give them a place in the presence of God, and ultimately a place in heaven. Ceremonial works, any kind of works. If a man claims I can save my own soul, get to heaven by what I do, without faith in Christ, then Paul says no.

A man is justified by faith and not by works. Works claiming to be vicarious. Now, but when James talks about works, he's not talking like that.

The works that James is talking about are works that are an integral part of faith. That if you've got real faith, you've got these works. And if you haven't got the works, you're not saved.

So James says a man is justified by works and not by faith only, because these works are an integral part of faith. Again, listen carefully. When Paul says a man is justified by faith, he's going back to the initial thing, the night you were converted.

Faith was real. Then you got a place in God's presence because your faith in Christ was real. But when James talks about works, he's not talking about the initial thing.

He's talking about the works of faith that come to light in a person's life. He's talking about people who claim to be Christians. That's why he tells you in the first half of this section, there are people who claim to have faith in works.

They're not saved. Now, let's come a little closer now. Now, drop your eye now to verses 14 to 17, the faith that doesn't operate.

Verse 14. What doth it profit my brethren though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can that kind of faith save him? The answer is no. Now, what do you mean, James? Well, it says, I'll illustrate it to you.

Verses 15 and 16. If a brother or sister be naked, destitute of daily food, one of you say unto him, depart, in peace be you warmed and filled. Notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Now he says, here's a brother or sister, and the clothing they have could hardly be called clothing.

They're so poor. And they've hardly got enough to eat. And you've met them.

Now, you can't deny the sight of your eyes. It's there. And you say to them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled.

Go on your way, brother or sister, the Lord will look after you and provide for you. And you give them not that which they need. Says James, what doth it profit? Even so, faith, if it hasn't works, is dead, being alone.

James says, if you're in that situation and you claim to have faith and it's not operating, you're not saved. Do you believe that? That people claim to have faith, but there's no evidence. For James is talking about the works that are the evidence of faith, an integral part of faith.

That's a minute now. Just in case you're not convinced, John, come up beside us, will you? Read us from your third chapter of your first epistle, John. Who so hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him.

John says, you're right, James, they're not saved. Now, that's a long way removed from our conception of things, isn't it? A faith that doesn't operate. Come now, please, verses 18 to 20.

For you'll notice, you see, going back to verse 14, you have two questions. Verses 15 and 16, you have the illustration. Verse 17, you've got the conclusion, not saved.

Faith, this faith is a dead faith. Verses 18 to 20, the illustration. Verse 19, the observation.

Verse 20, the conclusion. Now, the illustration, two men, they're speaking to each other. One says to the other, you've got faith and I've got works.

Will you show me your faith without your works? And I'll show thee my faith by my works. You see, they've always got the people that'll say, oh, well, you know, I've got the faith, but I'm not the doing kind of person. All right, show your faith without your works, you can't.

You say your faith in your heart, the only evidence is when you begin to live it out. Oh, but this person says, listen, I believe in God. Oh, thou believest there is one God? Do you believe that God is one? You're

orthodox.

That's right. Not the devils, there's only one devil. The demons believe and shudder, but go on their way.

It's not enough to say, I believe. Come on now. It's only enough when you're given evidence of the faith that you profess to have.

So he says in verse 20, won't thou know, vain man, that faith without works is dead. See that now? James is talking about the works of faith, the evidence. Then he does the most interesting thing, and it's the fact that he speaks of Abraham and Rahab that should have shown brethren that this is not evidence before men.

He now turns, and in relation to the doctrine of justification by works, he now takes up Abraham and Rahab, a man and a woman, a Jew and a Gentile, a patriarch and a prostitute. Takes them from different strata's of life, brings them forward. Now look at it now, will you please? Verse 21, in relation to Abraham, is the illustration of offering up Isaac.

Verse 22 is the explanation, seest thou how faith wrought with his works. Verse 23 is the observation, the scripture was fulfilled, Abraham believed God. Verse 24, the conclusion, you see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.

Got that? Now having said that, let me come now. Listen carefully. Those of you, those of the teachers that tell us that justification by faith is man-work, why we should need to be justified before men I wouldn't know.

But let's look at the two illustrations. If this is justification by works before men, whose eyes saw Abraham offering up Isaac? None, nobody, only God saw it. Who saw Rahab having received the spies sending them out another way? Nobody.

Again, if this is justification by works before men, could you tell me if you know any men who would accept the principle of human sacrifice as an evidence of faith? For worldly men don't believe in the principle of human sacrifice. That's Abraham. Take Rahab.

What man would accept evidence of faith in a woman who betrayed her country? Men despise people that betray their country. So do you. So you can see that the two illustrations, there are two illustrations that the man of the world wouldn't accept under any situation.

So it's not justification before men. What is seen is this, that when God said to Abraham, take now thy son and offer him up, there was now being exhibited in Abraham a demonstration of the works of faith, no matter the cost price. He will do that and thus evidence his complete and utter faith in God to accomplish his own end through it.

Again, verse 22, do you see how faith wrought with his works and by works was faith perfected, for faith was there before the works, but the works can't be absent, the works were present in order to show that faith was crowned by the works. Again, very interesting, verse 23, the scripture was fulfilled which said Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now that's interesting.

Now just a minute. When Paul in Romans 4 taught justification by faith, he based it on the same scripture, Genesis 15, verse 6, as James based the truth of justification by works. That should have taught you that

the thing is before God.

He used the same scripture. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, but just a minute. Genesis 15, verse 6, when it says Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness, that wasn't at the beginning of his journey.

The beginning of faith was a way back in Mesopotamia. Is that right? When you come to Genesis 15, what he's teaching is this, that in that incident, there is illustrated the principle of righteousness reckoned on the ground of faith. Abraham wasn't the first righteous man and he wasn't the first man of faith, but he's the first man in which the principle of being reckoned righteous in virtue of faith is demonstrated.

And it was demonstrated that day when God promised him a seat like a multitude and he was standing there without a child of any kind. Abraham believed God. And when God said to him, offer up Isaac on the altar, Abraham believed God, carried out the work of faith as God demanded.

Tremendous, isn't it? The scripture was fulfilled. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him righteousness. Now watch now.

Not for righteousness, instead of righteousness, for faith hasn't got that value. Faith is not equated with righteousness. It means that he was reckoned righteous in virtue of faith.

Now it's not the righteousness of God, it's the righteousness which is of God. You see, when you come to your, now I haven't time to develop this, but I'll just say this to you. When you come to your Bible, you'll need to distinguish not only things that differ, but you'll need to distinguish things that are similar.

This is one of them. You see, you would need to distinguish the different, need to distinguish between the age to come and the ages to come. You've got to distinguish between the fullness of time and the fullness of the times.

You've got to distinguish between the righteousness of God and the righteousness which is of God. You've got to distinguish between purchase and redemption, so on and so on. See, I haven't time to go into all that.

Clear? Now, verse 24. You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. Clear? Good.

Now let's come now to Rahab, the last two verses. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when having received the messengers, she sent them out another way. That is, here she was, she had faith in God, but here were two messengers of God who desperately needed help.

Well now, when the knock came to the door, how would her faith operate? Remarkable, James calls it the works of faith. That she rose to the situation despite the fact that she wasn't too honest. Nevertheless, she did what she believed to be right.

Her faith operated to protect the messengers of God. How would be known that this woman had faith in her heart, when she's faced with a difficult situation, it will be demonstrated in that she sent them out another way, the works of faith. Now please, look at the last verse, it's most interesting.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without works is dead also. That's strange. That's the very opposite to which I would have put it.

Look again. As the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith answering to the body without works answering to the spirit is dead also. Now if that had been me, I would have likened linked works with the body.

But no, he says there's a body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Because works demonstrate the living character of faith. We don't know you've got faith till you demonstrate it.

Wonderful, isn't it? Now I want to thank you for listening to me patiently. Because we're living in a day when doctrine's not too popular. And we're living in a day when we have got brethren and sisters who occupy quite big positions in the world and can handle things in the most acceptable way.

But when it comes to reading their Bible, they just don't give themselves to understand these things. And they're not too much interested in their explanation. But after all, this is what Christianity is all about.

It's all about these big things, as well as the practical thing of living out day by day. You will find in your Bible that constantly practice and doctrine are brought together. Just remember, James and Paul are together.

Paul says a man is justified by faith. James says, Amen, brother Paul. I believe that too.

But I believe in justification by works that a man will need to evidence that faith. And if he's got real faith, the evidence will be there. And if he hasn't got it, he's not saved.

Tremendous challenge these things, aren't they? So may the Lord bless his work.

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