

# Faith Without Works Is Dead

by Shane Idleman

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*Shane Idleman emphasizes that true faith is demonstrated through works, urging believers to love without partiality and recognize the spiritual dangers of wealth.*

**Duration:** 41:11

**Scripture:** James 2:14

**Topics:** "Faith and Works", "Genuine Christianity"

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## Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical relationship between faith and works in his sermon 'Faith Without Works Is Dead,' drawing from James chapter 2. He explains that genuine faith naturally produces good works, and without such works, faith is essentially dead. Idleman reflects on the historical context of Martin Luther's challenges to the Catholic Church's works-based salvation, asserting that true faith is evidenced by actions that reflect a relationship with God. He encourages believers to examine their lives for genuine fruit and to engage in acts of love and service, particularly towards those in need, as a demonstration of their faith. Ultimately, he calls for a balance between faith and works, reminding the congregation that both are essential for a vibrant Christian life.

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## Transcript

James chapter 2. The title of the message is Faith Without Works Is Dead. And I'm pretty sure most of you have heard that phrase before, right? Faith without works is dead. This is actually why Martin Luther, he was part of the Reformation.

I'll just, brief history lesson, some of you already know. But around 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther nailed the 95 thesis on the church doors in Germany challenging the Roman Catholic Church to all these different points that weren't biblical. And Catholicism, as you know, many of you know, really promotes works and works and you gotta works.

And it's works to get to heaven, it's works to stay in God's good graces, it's really a works based religion. So the Catholic Church would often use this scripture against Martin Luther and the Protestants. And that's where the word Protestant comes from, the word protest.

That they would protest what the Roman Catholic Church was teaching. So he did not like this phrase, faith without works is dead, because the Roman Catholic Church would use it showing, see you've gotta have works, you've gotta have works, Martin Luther. And I don't think he realized that all the scriptures,

which I'm sure he did eventually, but this scripture is really just saying that if you have genuine faith, you will have genuine works.

A person who's truly a believer, you can't hide it, it's like telling an apple tree to stop growing apples. It's gonna happen. So a genuine believer has works.

But if you don't have works at all, and your lifestyle doesn't resemble anything that looks like a Christian, then that faith is dead faith, it's a faith based on religion alone. So that's what James is talking about here. And I'm gonna get to that in a minute, but while I was, during worship, I was thinking that most people, especially on Wednesday nights, this won't be applicable in the sense of challenging your faith.

I don't think there's false Christians on a Wednesday night, most of you here, I mean I don't know everybody, but this message will be wonderful for those who have religion, but not a relationship. That they don't have any works, there's no fruit. But I want to encourage some of us to really look at our lives because we can start to measure our Christianity based on what I do for God.

The more works I do, the more He likes me, the better I am, and the more holier I am than you, and I start to have this attitude of works, works, works, and I'm in this wonderful relationship with God because all of my works, and really, God doesn't see our works and then we go on a better pedestal or we become better in His eyes. He simply looks at Christ, the finished work of the cross, that's why we can stand before God. He knows that our works are but filthy rags.

But because of my love for the Lord, because He commands it in His scripture, because there are rewards based on obedience, there are rewards, our works will be rewarded to see if they're made of straw or stubble or gold and these wonderful things. So the works are important. But, and maybe it's just me thinking about this this week, growing up, I've explained before with a dad that was hard from the farms of Oklahoma and wanting to please and wanting to please and wanting to please and not show emotions, and it was works, and the harder you work, the better you were.

And it's really hard for me now to rest sometimes on vacation because I think I should be working or taking a day off because you measure who you are by what you do, and the more work you do, the more successful you become. The more work you do, the happier. My dad was a harder worker.

We were known in the valley, many would know, as a hardworking family. My dad, people would still, even to this day, your dad was a very hard worker because of that poverty in Oklahoma and working 12-hour days and in construction. And you know it's a hard job.

I mean, he would drop me off with a jackhammer and an air compressor and say, I'll be back in four hours for lunch. And lunch came and I was exhausted and we worked again and hard work paid off. So sometimes now we take this concept into God and, see God, I'm a hard worker, I'm doing all this work, but if we become the old Mary Martha syndrome, and which is about works and we don't take time to sit at the foot of Christ and sit in God's presence and just let Him minister to your soul and not rate yourself by your works, you will be very blessed.

And it's just been a challenge for me because I do rate sometimes my relationship with God on how much work I'm doing. And He always brings me back to that spot of remembering that it's not about what I do, it's about what He's already done for me and then resting in that. So does that make sense? That's the foundation of works and faith and different things.

The message then, we'll start in chapter 2. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. And we talked about that last week, so I'm not going to say much on this. I'm just trying to recap.

Basically, what he was talking about the first part of James 2 is we often rate a person by how they can benefit me. He was talking about if somebody rich comes into your service, don't treat them nice, and somebody poor, don't sit in the back seat. Because we have the tendency, even as believers, how can this person help me? What do they have that will help me? Can they help in this area, that area? But somebody who can't help me or is just poor and maybe takes more effort, and we just kind of cast aside.

But he says here that there is no partiality, and we can find that in skin color and gender, a particular struggle, our attire, age, different things we can categorize people. So a lot of what the writers of the Bible will do is they'll tell you, your flesh is doing this, the Spirit wants you to do this. So your flesh is going to have the tendency to elevate somebody else, but the Holy Spirit wants you to not have any partiality.

Actually, if you want to work on that area, go to those who cannot ever repay you. Sign up tonight for our hospital homes. It's a wonderful place to start.

These are people in beds who many of them are not coming out, and it is like Christmas to them when we go and visit. There's nothing they can give back. And believe it or not, when you leave, you are transformed.

Are you not? Those who go, you know when you leave, you are left there filling God's tremendous grace and love, and we've given to those who cannot give back. So that's what he's saying here. Go out of your way to help the unlovable.

Go out of your way to help those who are poor in this world and cannot offer you anything. Those are the ones we need to be reaching out to. And it's interesting, as we follow this course, we begin to be filled with the Spirit.

I've been talking about that on Sundays, being filled with the Holy Spirit. The best way to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God is to follow these principles, to start to love people, not based on color or race or age or status or financial status, but to just love them, and as you're doing that, you're filled with the Spirit. You have this joy and this passion for life because of that.

So that's what he was talking about. And then he goes into verse 5. Listen, my beloved brethren. Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man, going back to how He was treating him.

Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme the noble name by which you are called? The rich were persecuting Christians in many cases, but yet the Christians were still looking to the rich and treating them with this pomp and this arrogance that they thought they deserved. And they were not looking to the poor. Now it's interesting on this issue of poverty and wealth.

The Bible does not condemn wealth. David was wealthy. Abraham was wealthy.

There are wealthy Christians. The Bible per se does not condemn wealth, but it does say that it can severely hinder your walk with the Lord. It can severely hinder your walk with the Lord, and it can severely hinder salvation.

Well Shane, come on, how do you know that? Well, I think Jesus said it's hard for a poor man to what? Nothing? It's hard for a rich man. See if you guys are paying attention on Wednesday. It's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Why? Because the rich has become our God and become idolatry, and we're worshipping that, and when you have wealth, it's very hard to show that person their need for God. Try talking to Bill Gates about God. Try talking to, who was the one that owned Apple? Steve Jobs.

Try talking to him when he lived here about God. Now he knows who the true and living God is, but wealth does that. Wealth, it's a double-edged sword because we need it to exist.

It's a monetary, you have to have it. There's no way around it. But when it begins to control you, and that becomes your God, and before a person is a believer, I mean, just looking over my life, I have not seen that many wealthy people come to know the Lord.

I've seen a lot of people poverty stricken in spirit, the divorce, a life is difficult, things aren't working out, the loss of a child, the loss of this, financially ruined, this and that, and it's in that poverty that we begin to see our need for God. So that's what he's teaching here, that the poor in this world are rich in faith, but the rich person, it's going to be hard for that person to follow God, and it's going to be hard for an unbeliever to know God because they're trusting in their riches. Why else would it be hard for a rich man to enter heaven? Because he sees no need for God.

And I truly believe that's why they see a lot more miracles on the mission field in third world countries than we do here in the United States because they are utterly dependent upon God. They're not going to go walk into Kaiser and get their medical need met. They're not going to put it on Visa and pay it off next month.

They're just not, they can't, unless God heals. I've read stories, unless these people are liars, which, I mean, they've been on the mission field, they've got a good track record, where they'll have food out, and God will keep supplying that food, and they'll feed hundreds of kids, and they don't know where that food, it just kept, how did that happen? Well, come on Shane, they're lying. Well, either that or God is providing.

God can do that. If you're poor and you're relying, poor of spirit, poverty of spirit, blessed are those who are poor in spirit. What does God desire but a broken and contrite heart? That He will not cast away.

So there's something about physical poverty and spiritual poverty that are near to the heart of God. Now, if you're convicted in this area of having wealth, I'm not convicted in this area. I switched careers from real estate to this, and that did me in as far as focusing on wealth, because you got large bonuses, and you can make a lot of money, and that was the focus.

Where ministry, thank God, is just you serve God, and then God provides for your needs. But if you have a struggle, and I'm not saying I don't, most people struggle with the monetary things. We want more.

We want to save more. We want 401ks. You know, God, I don't think you're going to help me when I'm 65, so I need to start planning ahead.

And some of that's wisdom. You've got to use wisdom as well. But if you have a problem in this area, the best thing to do is to give some away.

It's to just, you know, I've got abundance here. I want to give some away. That releases the stronghold that money can have on us.

And it's interesting. Any time over the years, West Side Christian Fellowship has done very well financially with bills. We've always saved.

We've saved a few thousand dollars every month since God planted the church. But there are times where it gets tight with different things happening, and usually, you know, that's when you want to drop giving to missions, but that's often when we've increased it. We've got next Wednesday, Sylvester, that we've helped before, put water wells in Africa.

He's actually going to be in the United States. I've asked him to speak here next Wednesday. You want to hear this next week.

And we'll write them a check for \$1,000 to help that mission. There's another mission field in Asia, in China, the Asia Harvest, where it goes directly to the pastors on the field in China. And we do that regardless often of where we don't really have it, but we're going to do it.

And then God will bring in like 10 times more. Some people drop by the office. Oh, I just sold my house.

Here's a check for \$10,000. Where'd that come from? God, when you put that fir, when you sow churches, even churches can have a struggle in this area. We want to just hold on to everything because, you know, we've been taught that.

And there is a balance there. There's wisdom in saving. Bible Proverbs.

Look at Proverbs. It talks about storing away and saving. So that was my only thought on that.

If you struggle in this area, give some of that away. Sell the jet ski or sell the boat or sell this and get rid of some of that that's holding you. And if you're not sure if it's holding you or not, try selling it.

And you'll see real quick if that has a hold on you or not. And isn't it hard to let some things go? Even when God puts it on our spirit. It's hard to let that go when it comes to money.

I think I've told you this before. I probably wouldn't share it again on Sunday. I'm kind of careful with this because, you know, you don't want to say too much.

But Randy will remember it because I talked to him and the elders back then. But I just paid off my truck two and a half years ago. I just, five years, finally, the month I paid it off, God put on my heart to sell it and give the money to, at that time we had a homeless couple in their 20s with a three-year-old living in their car.

So I said, oh, Lord, you've got to be kidding me. Isn't there something else we can do? And a month went by. And I was fighting it and fighting it.

And he threw out an axle on his car, I think, out on 90th Street. Like, okay, so I did it. I talked to the elders.

It was hard. You know, I sold it, gave half of it, used half for a down payment on a truck I was going to get and then used the other half, bought them a Chevy and got them an apartment. And it was wonderful, but it was hard.

Because I'm like, Lord, this isn't you, right? This is just me. Or is it the devil? Is the devil going to tell me to do that? But it was hard because I just paid it off. I've always wanted to do that.

And it was a struggle for a while. Sadly, though, shortly after, she overdosed in a hotel room on Sierra Highway. And I had to go there, and we kept her three-year-old daughter playing out on the grass while her husband waited for the coroner.

And it was something I'll never forget. But when I was there, I was glad that I did that. I was glad that I was able to at least help what God put on my heart.

But the whole point of sharing that was to tell you that it's not easy. When God puts something like that on your heart, it's hard to let that go because it has a hold on us often. Verse 8, If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

So basically saying if you really fulfill the law, if you're really a Christian, be quiet, close your mouth, and love your neighbor as yourself. That's a true test, isn't it? I knew I didn't want to start James because God was going to just shoot me with everything in here. Trials, tribulations.

This one, my neighbor, I'm pretty sure I haven't asked him yet, but he's done some time. He's tatted up. He's got the white wife beater tank top on.

He walks his pit bull right by my house. Six feet past my house, guess what he has his dog do every morning? Leaves it right there. And so now I get a square point shovel and a trash can and clean it up.

And we have a good relationship. But exactly what this says. It's hard for me because I've - I hope they don't watch this now that I'm thinking of it.

I'm going to have to edit this part out. I don't think they do. But I've prayed probably a dozen times to bring me new neighbors in the last two years.

But I know how do you love the unlovable if it's not unlovable? How do you love your neighbor if they're easy? If the neighbor baked cookies and watched the kids and took the dog on a walk, it's easy to love that neighbor. And so he'll put challenging things in your path. And that's what he's saying here.

If you really want to show - so the flesh wants to tell that guy off. The spirit says no, love him. But as I'm - we've given him gift cards for gals.

We've done all these things. Now we have a good relationship with them. But the flesh hates it.

The flesh - that old man, that old nature comes out. So you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Oh, another thing too.

They've got a new car. And they park on the property line on the curb. So I can no longer park past our house because he's parked there and he backs up.

So now I have to park down the street a little bit. And I tell - and I let him know, hey, if you ever need me to move or different things, if I get too close. Oh, no, no problem.

But it's that, it's the dog, it's everything. It don't even want to walk out front. So this really jumped out this week because you have to love your neighbor as yourself.

That's true religion. God really has your heart when you do these things. But if you show partiality, you commit sin.

If I treat a big tither - and we don't know who they are because we don't see the records. Pastors don't. But if I were to treat a big tither versus somebody who doesn't give wrong, then I would be sinning because I'm treating them based on what they give to the church, not who they are as a person.

And we do that same thing in our own lives. Skin color. Racism still exists in the church.

I don't know if you're aware of that at all. I've never struggled with that sin. Some of my best friends were African-Americans, Hispanic.

I've never had to thank God by the grace of God, but it still exists in our churches. And I think it has a lot to do with my mom and how she raised us and different things. And my dad was not that involved in that area.

But partiality is a sin. Let's just get that out there right now. If we show partiality, we are committing sin.

And we're convicted by the law as a transgressor. Now people might say, well, that's no big deal. I follow all these other things.

What's wrong with showing a little partiality? Well, then he'll clarify. Verse 10, for whoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of it all. This is an amazing concept.

You can go, I keep these commandments. I keep this, I keep this, I keep this, I keep that. Yeah, but you show partiality to a person.

Or you are committing adultery in your mind, which Jesus said is the same thing as committing in your heart. And here's what we focus on. We do all these things, but we can't seem to get this area together.

So we shoot people who are messing up in all these other areas, not realizing that we have our own struggle. And those who come at the law of God saying, well, I keep this law, I've never done this, I've never done this, I've never done this, but you've done this. So in essence, you've broken the whole law because if you break one piece, it's like the cake.

Don't ever touch that cake. If I have one piece, I just ruined the whole cake. And I can never do that.

Chocolate, whatever it was, it's the same thing. You can't just follow a certain amount of God's laws and then blow it in other areas and expect God to wink and turn the other way. For whoever shall keep the whole law and stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

For he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder. So what was happening is the Jews were saying, I don't, okay, I might have put away my wife and I might be in adultery, but I don't murder, I don't do this, I don't do this. He's saying, you've already stumbled on all points because you've fallen in this area.

Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So obviously, people were picking, choosing what they were doing in the early church, thinking it's not that big of a deal, I'm keeping all these other laws. And I think we all know, right, that breaking, breaking any commandment of God and trying to keep all his laws is not, it's impossible.

We are striving to do it, we're called to do it, but realizing that we cannot keep his laws perfectly. Now, if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. You see what he's saying here? Have mercy on somebody that triumphs over judgment.

But many times, we want to judge the person and not show them mercy, right? Go get them, send sniffers. Go get them, go get them, go get them. And he says, every time, mercy triumphs over judgment.

On this issue of judgment and being judgmental that I've struggled with before. I'm sure some of you have as well. Here's a question I often ask.

I've presented it to you before. I'm sure you've heard it, but it fits in here. Is my attitude, is my attitude where I'm at leading to love, joy, peace, contentment, gentleness, and kindness? Or is it leading to being rigid, arrogant, legalistic, divisive, critical, and angry over non-essential issues? So I look at my, if I'm being judgmental, I look at my heart.

Because I can judge somebody, say about sin or something that's wrong, somebody's lied to me, I can judge them according to scripture, discerning, but am I loving and joyful and compassionate, considerate as I'm trying to help them see the error in their way? Or am I overbearing, critical, divisive, have a judgmental spirit? There's a difference between using wisdom and discernment and judging a situation than there is being judgmental. Big difference, it's night and day. Jesus was this and not this.

Jesus discerned, he judged all things. He called things out as he saw them and what was wrong. But yet he was not judgmental.

A judgmental, critical spirit is what he's going after here. Now the famous portion, verse 14, what does it profit my brethren? So think about this, what does it profit you if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? Well people say yeah, you're saved by faith alone. That was Martin Luther.

That was what the sola scriptura, scripture alone. They had these five solas of the Reformation. One of those was I believe also of Fido, however they say faith in Latin or whatever that is.

It's saved by grace alone through faith alone. So it was faith alone. So can faith save him? Yes, but James is saying no, not here in this context.

If somebody says, that's the thing, they have faith but they don't have any works according to the scripture, that faith won't save them because it's not genuine faith. We see this all the time, it's professing Christians. And when I mention the church down the street, I don't do that to poke fun, but it's a serious illustration.

They have tons of work, but not the right faith. Other people say they have faith, but there's no works. So they go together.

There is fruit. There is a fruit, and I believe if you have the John MacArthur Study Bible towards the back, it will give you listings of genuine fruit. There is a love for God's word.

There is sincere humility. There is genuine love. There is a disconnect from the world.

There is sincere repentance. All these things are biblical fruit that shows a person has faith. So all James is saying here is, well a person who says they have faith, Bill Gates says he has faith, he gives him millions of dollars to charity.

He has, but will the faith alone save them? No, they have to have works according to scripture. Now here's where it gets tricky. The works don't save me.

The works simply reveal what type of faith I have. And somebody who has works, well they go to church, they're a good person, they give. That alone doesn't save them because that's superficial.

That can be false works for the wrong reasons. So the key to Christianity is faith in Christ, and because God has changed my heart, works flow out of me. So if a person says I have faith, well I can't, there's nothing in your life.

There's no fruit. There's not even an ounce. You're an apple tree, and I don't even see a budding anything.

There's nothing there. Then your faith will not save you because you have, misguided, misdirected, not saving faith. You don't have saving faith.

If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, depart in peace, be warmed and be filled, but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Now, there's two ways to look at this. Theologians will go back and forth.

Faith without works is dead. You can be talking about faith that is not genuine, that's a dead faith. You're not in right relationship with God.

Or you can talk about a person who does have relationship, but their walk with the Lord is dead. There's no fruit. They're not bearing any fruit.

They're at a stale point in their life. And this can happen to people. We can have faith.

We could have been on fire for God, but we haven't clothed the poor, or the naked. We haven't fed anybody. We haven't visited the hospital homes.

We haven't led a person to the Lord. We haven't done a lot of these things. We've been dying in our faith.

And it's dead. So whether you look at this, either way you look at this, it's important that genuine works based on genuine faith go together. They cannot be mutually exclusive.

The fruit reveals the tree, basically. Verse 18, but someone will say, you have faith and I have works. See, they're not separate.

So James is obviously answering questions that were coming up in the early church. Well, you have faith, Randy, and I have works. So we have the same thing.

Not necessarily, because that's what the church down the street will tell you. I have faith. You have works.

So we're on the same team, aren't we? Not necessarily. Show me your faith without your works. Show me your faith without your works, which the person was doing, and I will show you my faith by my works.

You believe that there is one God. So the person was saying, I believe there's a God. I have faith.

But James is saying, your faith produces no fruit. There's no works, so you don't have faith. It's dead.

He's challenging them. I believe in God. He says even the demons believe in God and they tremble in His presence.

Or when the word God is mentioned, even the demons believe. So the church over there, the church across the street, this cult, they can all say, I believe in God. Ask Anna Jolie-Jolie or whatever her name is.

Brad Pitt's ex-wife. She'll say she believes in God. Brad Pitt will say he believes in God.

Hillary Clinton says she believes in God. I'm a Christian woman, she says. And Donald Trump says he believes in God.

Just throw it out there for that side of the camp too. Do you have genuine faith? You can't say, I believe in God, and then everything that you do goes against His word. It's false faith.

So that's why he said, you believe in God, you do well. Even the demons believe and they tremble. But do you want to know, oh foolish man, that faith without works is dead.

So, again, this won't be too applicable to most people in this room because you have genuine faith and you understand that works don't save you, but that you know, right? I'm preaching to the choir. If you have faith, you have to do works. It's like I have to breathe.

The Holy Spirit is prompting us and wanting us to do good things for God. So I think James was challenging those people who would say, we have faith, but he would see them at church and they wouldn't do anything throughout the rest of the week. There was nothing going on in their life that would reflect the relationship with the Lord.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar, but that did not save him. Because the Bible says Abraham believed and God counted it to him as righteousness. So Abraham believed who God was, counted to him as righteousness, but then God said, give me your only son.

That work of putting his son on the altar showed God, showed everybody else that his faith was genuine. So that work didn't save him. It was a reflection of what was taking place in his heart.

So was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? And that word justified is interesting. In other words, it justified his faith. Had Abraham said, I have faith, but I'm not going to do what God tells me to do, then he didn't have saving faith.

He believed in God, so that work justified his faith. Do you see that faith was working together with his works? And by works, faith was made perfect. And the scripture was fulfilled, which says Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only. Boy, is he trying to get this point across.

He's again telling those people, you have faith, well your works will justify that profession of faith. The works will prove if you're really a believer or not. Verse 25, likewise was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? So here's Rahab the harlot who hears about God's people coming their direction.

This is not a person who's going to be looked upon in a good light as having faith in God. She's a harlot. She sees God's people coming to destroy the city and the spies come into the town.

She says, I know what your God is doing. You have the one true and living God. I want Him as well.

I want to be part of that. I'm going to lie and tell them that you're not here and when you come back, please do not destroy me. So what happened is, Rahab, many will believe, that she had saving faith.

She believed in the God of the Bible. She changed her life. She repented.

She looked rightly at these men as spies but sent by God so she hid them and that hiding of them was justifying her faith. It revealed her faith in God and that's why even Rahab the harlot was justified by her works of hiding the spies. Basically, she had a change of heart, repentance, that led to a change of actions now supporting the people of God.

So that's what James is trying to go through here, that faith without works is not really genuine saving faith if you do not have the works that God is asking for. She had a change of heart that led to a change of action. Now, interesting, on this point, no matter how far you have fallen, God will restore.

God will restore. You could be sitting here going, Shane, you don't know me. I just did this yesterday or I'm in this spot.

I can't believe I destroyed my life. No matter how far you have fallen, God restores. Yes, there are consequences.

Yes, we will have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Yes, we will have to take our consequences with us but you can never fall so far out of God's grace on this side of the planet where you can't reach out and grab His hand and allow Him to rebuild your life. It might be a short life.

You might go home soon to be with the Lord but you're never that far. That's what Rahab teaches us. This was a harlot.

She would have been stoned. She would have spent eternity in hell had she not embraced God's gracious gift of salvation. And you look even at the lineage of Christ and you'll see that through a prostitute, through Bathsheba, adultery with David after the one son died, the different son, that they had.

And you'll see Christ came out of this lineage of broken sinners who have given their lives fully to the Lord, completely to the Lord. I was reading a book this week that reminded me of a quote that D.L. Moody heard that turned his heart toward God 100%. Somebody told him, I don't remember the guy's name, it said that the world has yet to see what God will do with a man who has been fully surrendered to the Lord.

The world has yet to see what God will do with a man or woman who has fully surrendered to the Lord. So it doesn't matter what you've been through. It doesn't matter how far you've fallen.

It matters if you get back up on track. And I don't want to minimize sin. I don't want to say, oh, it's no big deal.

Just mess up your life. God will take you back. Because I believe you want to live as close to Christ as you can.

You don't want to have a testimony. Young adults, you don't want to have a testimony. Your testimony wants to be, I've been walking with God all of my life.

He's held me. His grace. I don't know much about the prodigal.

I don't know much about a harlotry. I don't know much about this. I've been walking close with God and He's filled me with the Spirit.

That's what you want. Nowadays, young adults want a testimony. Let me use heroin for three years and then I'll give my life to the Lord and have a wonderful testimony.

That's not a good idea. I've already buried two or three young adults because of heroin overdoses in the last three years. It wrecks lives.

Verse 26, For as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Just a closing point. I hear people say all the time, I've got family members who say this and they're on their way to hell.

And they say, but I'm a good person. I'm a good person, Shane. And they are a good person if you compare it to ISIS, but compare it to God's Word.

How can a person say that? So being a good person is not enough. I have to actually correct people all the time. I try to do it lovingly and say, when you go before God, He's not going to ask you how good of a person you were.

He's not going to want to see your long list of good things. It won't even come up in the conversation. It's not even on the radar.

How can you say that? Good people, yes, but when you stand before Him, it's one thing and one thing only. What did you do with my son? That's all. That's all on the day of judgment that will happen.

Not our good works. Faith without works and works without faith will both lead to eternal separation. We need both.

We need genuine saving faith and from that, that should motivate us to work. And the only point of practical application is, obviously, if you don't know the Lord, if you don't know Him, and you just have religion and not relationship, then I would encourage you, you need to know Him tonight or when you hear this on the radio or when you hear this video or see this video. You need to get your life right with the Lord and repent and call upon His name and have genuine faith and your works will follow.

But also, I want to encourage a lot of us here tonight that we need to step out of the box and stop resting in knowing God but not going out and doing things for God. I mean, I read this and I think that could be some of us. Hey brother, it's great tonight, but we drove past a homeless person.

We know a family in need right now who needs something. We're too busy to go to Trader Joe's and buy some groceries. We know somebody who's... I can give you three people tonight you could call who are on the... just going through severe depression because of a marriage, because of a mistake, because of this.

Why don't we reach out to them? We've got people in hospital homes that we can go visit anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, Rancho Vista, 2 in East Palmdale, Lancaster, East Lancaster and over Lancaster and K4, that we can just go visit them and they'll... where is that works? I mean, if we have genuine faith, do you think Jesus would just show up on Wednesday and Sunday and do nothing the rest of the week? Who cares about the Dodgers and the Cubs? I mean, really? Chew me out later. But who... I mean, we... okay, watch a game, wonderful, but we are so consumed with entertainment, work, entertainment, work, go eat out, go to the movies, go to church, read my Bible, go to church, read my Bible, go to sleep, and there's nothing... we don't do anything to reach out. There's very little works, especially in the Christian church.

We've become comfortable, myself included. That's why I have to force my flesh into doing things. I want it now on Saturdays or even Sunday mornings before I come to church.

I looked into when the hospital homes open for visiting, and I just found out you can visit anytime you want to legally. So I want to do that, at least get one or two before I come here. And I'm going to have to plan it and do it because the flesh doesn't want to.

But the Spirit says, listen, your faith has to be backed by works. And that means you're going to have to get out of your comfort zone. And those of you who serve in the church, this can be a dangerous spot because we're serving in the church so we think we're doing work.

That's a good thing, but really serving is going outside administering those who need it the most.

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