

Speaker: Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam
Title: Real Faith – Faith That Works
Scripture: James 2:14-26

Introduction:

- We must live and practice a life of faith.
- James teaches us about “Real Faith”
 - Faith without works is dead faith
 - Works are essential expressions of faith
 - Works are not an addition to faith but are present as an expression of faith
 - Faith and works are mentioned 10 times in this passage

(James 2:14-26)

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 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. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- 3 key principles about Real Faith:
 - Real Faith is more than verbal affirmation
 - Real Faith is more than mental assent or understanding
 - Real Faith is more than positive attitude

Real Faith Is More Than Verbal Affirmation

(James 2:14)

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?”

- Verbal faith is “say so” faith; it is all talk
 - James asked, “Can faith (i.e. verbal faith) save him?”

- James concludes as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.

(James 2:20)

“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”

(James 2:26)

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”

- James is not saying, “believe and do good works to be saved” but “because you believe, you do good works”
- Paul explains the doctrine of salvation

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”

Our new nature gives birth to a changed lifestyle.

- Illustration: Someone in need of food

(James 2:15-18)

“15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works”

(1 John 3:17 & 18)

“17 But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth”

- Verbal faith does not serve

(James 2:15, 16)

“15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

- Verbal faith does not survive

- “Say so” faith and faith that “does not serve, does not survive.

(James 2:17)

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

(Matthew 25:25)

“And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

Real Faith Is More Than Mental Assent

(James 2:19-20)

“19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!
20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”

- Devils are not atheists

Real Faith Is More Than Positive Attitude

Faith is an action; an act of obedience

Israel had the word but not the faith (the obedience); they failed to enter the Promised Land.

(Hebrews 4:2 & 6)

“2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience”

- Abraham (“Father of Faith) was a Hebrew

(James 2:21-24)

“21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works [obedience] when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, [obedience] and by works [obedience] faith was made perfect? 23 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. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, [obedience] and not by faith only”

(Genesis 15:6)

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness”

- “Believed” – is mentioned here for the first time
- Faith is not alone – it is accompanied by works (obedience)
- Faith by works is made perfect or complete

Hebrews chapter 11 mentions “Heroes of Faith”. All of them had works

- Noah - the ark
- Moses – the red sea
- Joshua – the walls of Jericho

- Rahab was a gentle, young believer

(James 2:25-26)

“25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

She acted on her faith

(Joshua 2:9-11)

“9 and said to the men: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath”

(Hebrews 11:31)

“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace”

Conclusion

(James 2:26)

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”

- An inactive faith enshrined in an intellectually approved creed, is of no more value than a corpse
- Saving faith is obedience in faith
- The Christian life must be a life of integrity and passion.

Salvation is a gift - (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast”

We are saved to do good works - (Ephesians 2:10)

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”

- If you stress obedience apart from faith, you produce legalism (The Scribes and Pharisees)
- If you stress faith without obedience, you produce cheap grace
- If you stress faith with obedience, you produce abundant living – a fruitful life