

## WORK WHAT YOU GOT

- **\*\*Introduction:\*\***

Hallelujah, saints! Today, we're diving deep into the book of James, where the rubber meets the road in our Christian journey. Really, even before the rubber meets the road a vehicle must have an engine, and that engine must have fuel. For James that fuel was faith. That's where the book of James and the gospel of John have so much in common. They both teach that knowledge, truth, belief, faith; these words are not just the conceptualization of ideas and understanding of deep philosophies, but rather they are actions words. To have the truth and to believe the gospel meant that you had the power of faith to walk out your Christian journey. So, say this with me, "if I'm going to go anywhere on my Christian journey my vehicle has to have an engine, and that engine needs the right kind fuel." Let me put it another way for those of you who are not hearing me in the Spirit, say "neighbor, if I'm going to do anything substantial with my Christian journey I have got to take action, and to take that action I have to have the right kind of faith." Church, it's time to rise up with a faith that is alive, a faith that moves mountains, and a faith that transforms, a faith that delivers, a faith that brings salvation to the lost, healing to the hurting, peace to the downtrodden and a faith that will call us to stop playing church and finally become the church. Are you ready? Amen!

- **\*\*Opening Prayer:\*\***

- There are 5 types of faith that I want to cover very quickly tonight.

- **\*\*Dead Faith (James 2:14-17):\*\***

- James hits us with something really hard - faith without works is DEAD! When he asks, "can faith save you?" he is not talking about true faith, but yet psychological faith. The ability to hear the gospel and decide on what is better, heaven or hell. Even lost people can tell you that they would rather go to heaven than to go to hell.

- Listen, folks, dead faith is like a lamp with no oil, a shiny new light bulb with no electricity, an engine with no fuel, and even worse a promise with no fulfillment!
  - We have all made promises to ourselves that have fallen through. A new year's resolution to lose more weight. A dream to take that vacation that you've always wanted to take. Aspirations for a higher degree. To learn a new skill. People make these promises in their hearts every day, but the one thing standing between their promise and their fulfillment is a little word called - action.
  - The same goes for our Christian journey. We make church look good, sound good, and feel good with all of these promises of what God can do for you. It feels good for most church people to think about how much of a "difference" we are making by coming to church on Sunday morning and midweek service. But the truth is that most of what we call having "faith" is powerless and useless! The promise of Faith is not just occupying a seat in the sanctuary. The promise of Faith is not just volunteering in a department somewhere. If that is all that faith is then we might as well just call this the "good ole boys" country club. But the real promise of faith is impartation. The real promise of faith is believing for the impossible. The real promise of Faith is stretching out your hands during an altar call and praying harder for the people down at the front than they are for themselves. Faith is praising God with all of your might, even when you don't feel like it. Faith is having a heart that breaks for those that are lost and acting abhorrently instead of lifting our religious chins to them. We can't just talk the talk; we must walk the walk!

- It's not enough to just talk anymore, church. That's why in the previous chapter James dealt with inconsistency between words and actions.
  - He starts in chapter 1 verse 21 by saying, "therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted Word that has the power to save your souls." The word there for implanted actually has connotations of pregnancy. We are supposed to be pregnant with the Word of God. Immediately after this he says to "be doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves." I don't know about you, but that's a scary thought that we might be hearing the Word of God, but yet unknowingly deceiving ourselves.
  - Its like that engine I told you about earlier. Here we are revving up our engine. Devil has us thinking that we are sitting in the old school Mopar muscle car, with 8-cylinder, big block Hemi, supercharged. Revving it up to show everybody all the big things we are doing, but the reality is we are just a little toddler sitting in the front yard in our red little tonka car. Our little cozy coupe.
  - Let's go back over to chapter 2 starting at verse 15, "if a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, 'go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"

- Yes of course, if someone is hungry or cold we need to help them physically, but, even more so, if the world is crying out with their questions and looking to every other spiritual advice in the world for their answers we ought to be able to supply them with what they need. If they need deliverance our sanctuaries ought to be so endowed with the presence of God that they receive deliverance. Like Pastor Rod Parsley says, “the atmosphere of expectancy is the breeding ground of miracles.” Without the engagement of your faith the atmosphere of the church becomes infertile.

- **\*\*Demonic Faith (James 2:18-19):\*\***

- Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.
  - He was telling the religious that they may do all of the right things by going through the motions and procedures, but they lack the right kind of faith. They may believe in Jesus, but they have only been convinced by an argument, not conceived by the implanted word.
- James warns us of demonic faith—the kind that acknowledges God but doesn’t change anything. The demons believe and tremble, but they remain in darkness. Our faith must be more than head knowledge. It must penetrate our hearts and overflow into our lives. Church, we are called to a faith that transforms! We need a faith that moves us to action, a faith that makes the devil himself tremble because he sees the power of God at work in us!
  - Knowledge without action makes us nothing more than a thermometer. We can read the temperature, but we cannot

do anything about it. We can tell you all of the daily tragedies that are going on around us, we can tell you about the pandemics that are sweeping the earth, we can tell you about the latest climate catastrophe, we can tell you the last bombing of a war going taking place on the other side of the world, we can tell you about the trends and fashion statements that get less and less modest and more and more revealing and sexualized, we can tell you how school teachers are able to setup LGBTQ+ clubs for after school without your child having to tell you what it really is for, we can even tell you about how we believe in God, but NOTHING WILL CHANGE.

- But one of these days the church will have had enough. It might not be today. It might not be next week, but eventually the red-hot flames of persecution will lick at your feet until you decided to change from a thermometer into a thermostat and change the atmosphere around you.
- It's not enough to just say that you know Him. The demons do that. The only difference between them and you is that the thought of him actually sends a shiver down their spine. It says that they know Him, and they tremble. When's the last time you thought about the Lord in so much reverence, such wonder, and amazement that it sent a shiver down your spine. That's part of what is so wrong with "faith" today. We have made it such a familiar thing that it has lost its wonder. Yes Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, but above that He is king of kings. Yes he is a father to the fatherless, but above that he is the lord of lords. Yes He is the bridegroom coming back for his bride, but he is also coming with a sword in his mouth and the angel armies riding behind Him, bringing doom to the beast and the false prophet.

- **\*\*Exemplary Faith (James 2:20-26):\*\***
  - James gives us some examples of dynamic faith! This faith powerful. Look at Abraham, willing to sacrifice his promised son Isaac, and Rahab, risking her life to hide the spies of Israel.
  - Now I know some of you who read your Bibles are asking yourselves about what Paul wrote in Romans 3:28 that we are not justified by faith apart from our works. The works that Paul is talking about here is the same works that James is talking about in 2:18-19. The religious work. Going to church. Dressing the right way. Saying the right things. Shouting at the right time. Showing up for the community clean up. Cooking for the Cookeville rescue center. Doing all the right things because you have been convinced of the word that God is good and you want to be on His good side. However, you have not been convinced of the implanted word that causes you to have the faith to say, “God, if you want me to kill the very promise that you’ve given me I will, because you know what’s best.” It’s easy to come to a service where everyone else around you is sacrificing, but it’s something else to come and offer a service and to bring a sacrifice of yourselves. In fact, it was also Paul who said in Romans 12 to present yourselves daily as a living sacrifice. It sounds to me like Paul understood that faith spurs us on to take the right actions for the right reasons. The engines got to be moving, but it also has to have the right fuel.
  - What’s amazing about these people is that they had such great faith that many generations later their stories of faith and action were still remembered and used to inspire. How amazing would it be if we had that same effect on those around us? That our friends and family would know that God can do great things for them, because He has done it for us.

- **\*\*Faith Tested by Trials (James 1:2-5):\*\***
  - What better way than for them to see how we react under pressure? James tells us to count it all joy when we face trials. Why? Because trials test our faith and produce perseverance. Like gold refined in the fire, our faith becomes purer and stronger through trials. Church, we don't run from challenges; we embrace them, knowing they draw us closer to God and deepen our faith.
  - In Romans 8:35 Paul asks a question. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" The real answer to that is none of those things can separate you from His love unless you let it. As long as you hold on to Him no matter the cost He will keep holding on to you. Just having faith that in the end He will make all things work together for the good of those that love Him.
    - I once heard an interview of a man that went through the special selection process of the military unit called the Delta Force. He said that part of their testing was doing a 40-mile trek through the forests and mountains of West Virginia. After days of being alone in the middle of nowhere he was climbing up this mountain with all of his gear on, and he begins to think about quitting. The problem is he's in the middle of nowhere and they don't know where he is, so only way for him to really quit is to continue up this mountain until he gets to the next check point at the top. Well, when he got to the top he figured he might as well keep going, because the next check point is at the bottom of the other side of this mountain. It's so much easier than climbing. If push comes to shove he could just roll down the thing. Little did he know the next check point would be his last.
      - If he had quit on that mountain if would have forfeited his opportunity to work in one of the world's most

elite group of fighters, only to find out he gave up just a little too quick. Like an old poem says, "...and many a failure turns about, when he might have won if he'd stuck it out..."

- **\*\*Faith in Prayer (James 1:6-8; 5:13-18):\*\***

- James emphasizes the power of faith-filled prayer. But faith and doubt cannot come from the same mouth. Just as James 3:11 says that both bitter and sweet water cannot come out of the same fountain. If you mix the fresh water with the bitter water it immediately becomes bitter. It doesn't make the bitter water fresh. The same goes for faith and doubt. You cannot mix faith and doubt and expect to just drown out the doubt. No. Once doubt is mixed with your faith you become like a wave in the sea, tossed one way and the other. Should we stay here, or should we go there, or should we do this or should we do that.
- The word there for double minded comes from two Greek words: *dis*, which means "twice", and *psuchē*, meaning "soul." Its where we get the word psycho from. So, it's like you have two opinions divided up between your soul and your spirit man, and they are having to fight it out and play tug-a-war with your thoughts and emotions.
- Unbelief is the antithesis of faith. It is diametrically opposed to faith. Wherever faith goes it wants to go in the other direction. We cannot have this type of wavering in our hearts and minds, and then expect God to answer our prayers.
- Ask in faith, without doubting, and see the mountains move! The prayer of faith will bring signs, wonders, and miracles. Church, our prayer closets should be places of power, where heaven touches earth! We believe in a God who hears and answers prayer. Pray



bold prayers, expect great things, and watch God work! Jesus said if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains. Our prayers, when offered in faith, can do the impossible.

- **\*\*Conclusion:\*\***
  - I could go on into Romans 12 about how faith causes us to work in your giftings, but that's for another night. Before the church can even get into giftings we just need the church to tap into their faith.
  - Faith that is not dead. Faith that is better than that of the demons. Faith that can be tested. A faith that, like James says in chapter 5, causes us to have effective, fervent prayer that availeth much.
  
- **\*\*Closing Prayer:\*\***