

CHURCH MUSKOKA STLYE LIVING ROOMS PRESENTS
JAMES SERIES WEEK 4: FAITH AND WORKS
JAMES 2:14-26

Memory verse: James 2:26

“As the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead”

**VOLUNTEER TO OPEN IN PRAYER
BREAKING THE ICE (15 MINUTES)**

MANSION OR COTTAGE:

A rich woman who lived in a huge, beautiful home dreamt that she went to heaven and saw there a mansion being built. "Who is that being built for?" She asked of the Carpenter. "I am building this mansion for your gardener", he replied. Dumbfounded, she stated, "but he lives in the tiniest cottage on earth with barely room enough for his family. Huh! He might live better if he did not give so much to all the miserable, poor folk. Furthermore, instead of hanging around the homestead after work and putting a bit of work into his own shack and living in comfort, he spends his evenings fixing the leaky roofs and broken down fences of all his neighbours!" As she gazed a little further down the road she saw a tiny little cottage being constructed. "And who is that for?" she asked. "Oh, this one is for you", the builder replied. "But I have lived all my days in a mansion on earth" guffawed the old widow. "I would not know how to live in a cottage. I am accustomed to so much better!" The words she heard in reply were full of meaning: "I am doing my best with the materials that each person has stored up in heaven for me to use".

When you hear the terms 'good deeds' or 'good works' what sort of things come to mind?

LOOK TO THE BOOK: (55 MINUTES)

1) In James 2:14 James speaks of a person having faith without deeds and asks “can such a faith save him”? According to James 2:17, can it? If not, why not?

2) This teaching on the relationship between faith and works is not unique to the book of James and is not a contradiction to the writings of Paul when considered in their context. Read the following passages:

Eph 4:11-12 It was he who gave gifts to people; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for Christian works of service.

Eph 2:10 For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which he has prepared in advance for us to do.

Tim 3:16-17 All scripture is inspired by good and is profitable for.....preparing us for every good work.

Titus 2:14 He gave himself for us to set us free from every sin and to cleanse us so that we can be his special people, enthusiastic about doing good deeds

1 Tim 6:18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others

3) Let's read and then discuss the illustrations used in James 2:15-17 and also by John in 1 John 3:17. Have someone read these passages through a couple times to really bring them home. What is the point that is being made here?

James 2:15-17 Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in you saying to them, "God bless you, keep warm and eat well" if you don't help them with the necessities of life? So it is with faith. If it is alone and includes no action, it is dead.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and see's his brother in need and has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

4a) Let's open our bibles read these two examples of love in action: Matthew 25:35-36, Isa 58:7

4b) Now, lets read these two examples of a lack of love proven through inaction Matt 25:42-45, Job 22:7

5) From the perspective of the world, why is it so important that we have good deeds combined with faith? Let's read these few passages and then discuss that.

1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God in the day He visits us.

1 Tim 5:25 In the same way good deeds are plainly seen, and even those that are not so plain cannot be hidden.

Matt 5:16 In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see your good works and praise your Father in heaven.

1 Tim 4:12 'set an example for believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

The reality is, those who are not Christians are examining the lives of those of us who claim to be followers of Christ and we need to be showing consistent lives. There are also many new Christians who need Godly examples to follow. We “set the pace” so to speak. It isn't always our occasional wrong behaviour that takes unbelievers back and leads them to question the reality of our faith, but rather our inactivity.

6) Again, here is where the rubber meets the road. If we are the sort of people who can stand idly by while another has a need that we can meet, and we don't act, then we don't have a loving heart. If this is the case, what do the scriptures tell us about our “faith” and spiritual heart condition? 1 John 2:10, 3:10-23, 4:8, 21

7) There are many scriptures that make it clear that we are saved by grace through faith, apart from works. Let's also read these scriptures and have some discussion.

****NOTE.** There are many other scriptures that show this same idea. Before coming to group for this session, take the time to locate one for yourself and bring it to group this week and we'll discuss it, as well. Bring your ideas!

Luke 7:50 Your faith has saved you, go in peace.

Mk 5:3 My daughter, your faith has made you well.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God....

Eph 2:8-10 It is by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is a gift from God and not as a result of works so that no one can boast.(10) For we are Gods workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which He prepared in advance for us to do.

8) So what is the deal here? (Read the question thoughtfully) Are we saved by faith alone, apart from our good deeds? Do our good works, on there own merit, play a part in us being declared righteous? Is there a chronology to all this, a specific order of things?

Titus 3:3 Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us....

Romans 5:8 God demonstrated His great love toward us I that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

PRAYER (20 minutes): Have an extended time of prayer go around circle and ask for any special needs and then pray for them.