

Sunday Service Sermons

06 June 2021

When Faith is Alive

Is your faith alive?

I doubt if any one of us wants a dead faith.

What does it mean to have an alive faith?

Is that when you can visit a sick person, pray for them and they are healed?

How about faith that gives life?

I like that.

Our faith should be life unto us and unto others.

Should our faith make our joy complete?

Jesus came that our joy might be complete?

The word in the text for what our faith should be can be translated full or complete.

What kind of joy do you have?

If we actually believe the Gospels, our joy is complete and full.

Because in Jesus we base our faith and we have no reason to worry about our future.

Anything we ask in his name is ours.

If our faith was like the faith in Father God that Jesus had we could say to a mountain go and it would cast itself into the sea.

Do you understand and believe that?

I do.

I now really believe that if I said to a mountain go and did not doubt it would go.

But there is no way that I cannot doubt that it is going to move.

It is against all that I know of science.

Mountains do not move themselves from one place to another.

They can get taller or shorter depending on what is happening beneath them but they do not move across country.

Or toss themselves into the sea.

Jesus was saying that God our Father can do that for us if we would believe it and not doubt.

We have no idea what all could be accomplished if we believed and did not doubt.

Or as we like to say, know better.

Just like the creation story in the Bible.

We now know better than to believe that it happened in seven days as written.

Really, I don't know better than that.

What we have is theories, not facts.

God was there; he knows how it was created.

I would rather believe God and be laughed at than believe man and insult God.

If you can believe in God, why not believe things as he said they are?

How will we ever hear God say well done good and faithful servant if we are constantly trying to make the Biblical account fit our little knowledge about things.

God said it, I believe it, and believing gives me life.

It makes my life complete and my joy full.

The title for today is: When Faith is Alive.

When faith is alive good things happen.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Can his faith save

him? Faith by itself, if it has not works is dead.” *James 2:14*

At this point I began wondering how many sermons you have heard on this text?

The nice thing is, I doubt if you can recall the point of any of them except that your faith needs to be evident in how you live your life, right?

That is what this series of sermons has been about.

We are in *James 2: 4-26* a section that in my Bible is headed by “Faith and Deeds”

How they go together.

It begins with the passage just given.

As an example it states that one must do instead of just say.

Like, if someone needs clothing or food just telling them to be well and keep warm and but not providing what is needed for that to happen, what good are the words.

Like telling someone if you need anything just call.

When we say that we know that they will never call.

If we really want to be a help we will see a need and take care of it.

In the name of Jesus we will provide for their need.

James states that faith, when not accompanied by works, is a dead faith.

So, you say you care about the needy, good for you, but what have you done to provide for the needy.

Oh, now I have stopped preaching and started meddling

I sure have, show me your concern by what you do for those in need.

James states that he will show his faith in his deeds.

Then he says that even the demons believe in one God.

The fact of one God does not bother them but action done by that one God makes them shudder.

Now for the evidence of how faith in God really works.

Take Abraham for example.

It was not what he said that made him righteous before God.

It was his action of building the alter and raising the knife to sacrifice his only son.

His faith was made complete by what he did.

His action fulfilled the scripture which said, Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God’s friend.

Next verse says, You see that a person is justified by what he does and not be faith alone.

Now the extreme example,

Was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

As the body without the spirit is dead so faith without deeds is dead.

Our deeds validate or cancel out our beliefs.

It is said that faith is like calories, you can’t see them, but you can see their results.

Some say that Paul and James are in conflict about salvation.

But that is not true, they are approaching it from a different perspective.

Paul is speaking about those who denied the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith and insisted on ceremonial works.

James is saying that true faith expresses itself in our actions.

You can say I love you to a person as many times as you like but if you do nothing that shows that love your words fall on deaf ears.

Love demands sacrifice to be real.

Paul speaks about the way to salvation and James is speaking about the life of a person after they have been saved that demonstrates their salvation.

Paul uses works to represent Jewish law in the ceremonial rituals.

James uses works to mean actions of love, proof that faith was alive and real.

James is saying that true faith produces actions that show that faith.

Faith must produce fruits of faith in how we use our resources.

Fruitless faith will not save anyone.

James believe that true faith is alive and has action associated with it.

Faith is something that dwells in the deepest recesses of the heart, and only God can see it.

Others can only see the outward appearance.

But if there is faith deep in the heart, it cannot but manifest itself in outward expression.

Ralph Erskine used to say, Faith and works are the two feet with which a man walks in Christ. One without the other produces a spiritual cripple.

We should not obey God due to a slavish fear, the demons fear God but do not serve him.

If we try to obey and serve God out of this kind of fear, our obedience and service will never be accepted.

It is true faith that produces obedience.

We do not do works in exclusion of faith.

For one's justification before God is simply by faith, but it is the kind of faith that moves the heart and regulates the life, it is a faith that does not lie dormant but manifests itself in active obedience.

Though Rahab was at the opposite extreme as was Abraham her experience with God teaches the same lesson as that taught by Abraham's experience.

Just as the body without the life-giving spirit is dead, so faith, which is a mere shell of profession if it is void of fruit, is dead also.

This kind of fruitless faith brings no glory to God and yields no benefit to the person who has it.

What James was saying is that the union between faith and works is as close as the union between body and soul.

Be of one mind, ring true, live what you profess.

Glorify God and serve your neighbor.

This is the love that makes one's joy complete in Christ.