

Sermon Notes
Faith and Works: Part 2

James 2:17-24 (NIV)

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Background:

2:17: The faith by which we trust Christ must be a living, working faith

1. The faith which trusts Christ is more than intellectual assent, it is submission

- a. The demons and their knowledge of God
- b. Abraham and his confidence in God as “played” out in Genesis 22

What is it that Abraham actually believed?

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

2. Conclusions

- a. Faith and works are intertwined (in practice, but not in theology); yet we must not confuse this with the idea of merit or performance.
- b. Acting in faith “completes” ones’ faith

3. But what about the contradiction?

James 2:24 (NIV) You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

Romans 4:5 (NIV) However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.