

Wednesday with the Word

Teacher: Rev. Ralph Basui Watkins, MFA, DMin, PhD

What Are You Believing God For & How Are You Working On It? Faith and Works Conversation Continued

There is a correlation between faith and works. This relationship is complex and not as simple as I would like it to be. Tonight we want to do a close reading of James 2 and talk about the relationship between faith, works and how we treat people. Let's start with a few questions:

What are you praying for and believing that God is going to do in your life?

What is it you need God for in your life that you are working not but you know to get it done you need supernatural divine intervention?

What is the connection of faith and works?

Are there times when we do no work and God just does what God does?

Are there times when we have no faith and God just blesses us and others because God is God?

James 2:1-7 - Do we do this?

1 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ?

We can't run by this. How does our favoritism reflect on or what does it say about our faith?

James 2:2-4

2 For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, **3** and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," **4** have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

How do we pass out seats of honor? Who do we give the seats of honor to?

James 2:5-7

5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? **7** Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

James 2:8

8 You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

What does this type love your neighbor as yourself look like?

How do we show people love who visit Wheat Street?

How do we show love and respect to each other?

James 2:9-13

9 But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. **11** For the one who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. **13** For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

How do we treat the poor on Sunday?

Do we want the people who we feed on Monday and Wednesday to become active members of Wheat Street? How do we communicate this to them (in word and deed)?

How do we treat brothers and sisters who choose to join the church who we know are going through a rough time in their life?

Do we act like we believe that we can restore people who are down to their full potential? What does this look like?

Do we serve the poor or do we try to integrate them into the life of the congregation?

What battles should we be in the city to ensure that people who are struggling get the services they need?

How connected are we to the residents of Wheat Street Towers - Thursday through Sunday?

Faith without Works Is Dead? Really????

James 2:14

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?

Can faith save you?

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— **9** not the result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Does this contradict James 2:14?

How do we reconcile these two passages?

James 2:15-17

15 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? **17** So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

What does this mean?
Is our faith negated if we don't work?

Is our work a testament to our faith?

What is the relationship / correlation between faith and works?

Should our faith testify to our work or should our works testify of our faith?

James 2:18

18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

What is the writer saying here? Is the writer saying that somehow what believe is manifested to in what we do?

Does what we do say more about our faith than what we say?

Do we believe what we say and if we believe how do our actions or what we do witness to what we say we believe?

James 2:19

19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. **20** Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren?

Faith apart from works is barren = too poor to produce much or any vegetation. Not productive. Desolate. Fruitless...Incapable of producing offspring. Lacking in stimulation of ideas; dull: a barren movie.

How do works give life to a fruitful faith?

James 2:21-26

21 Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that faith was active along with his works, and

faith was brought to completion by the works. **23** Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. **24** You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. **25** Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? **26** For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

Is the writer saying that when we have faith along with works it somehow completes or brings to life our faith?

Do our works make what we believe truthful?

What are you working on that you believe God has commissioned you to do?