

## 8. FOUR KINDS OF FAITH

This is the portion of James which made Martin Luther to consider that it should not be considered as a book of the Bible. Because Martin Luther believed that a man is justified by faith alone, and declared righteous before God. Martin Luther has his thought based on Romans 3:23-26. Apostle Paul used the word "Justified" for 22 times, mostly in Romans 2:13-5:1 and Galatians 2-3.

*Rom. 3:23-26 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Yes, I don't doubt it for one second that we can make our way to heaven by our good deeds or righteous attitudes. For we have mixed deeds of good and bad. God would not take us with some good and some bad. He is pure and holy and righteous God. He will not lower His standard.

There is no way to heaven other than faith in Christ Jesus. John 14:6,  
*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

So what does it mean? Is James saying that he is against what Jesus and Apostle Paul are talking about faith alone? Certainly not!!! The faith that James is talking about and the faith Jesus and Apostle Paul are talking about are not fighting each others. As a matter of fact, they are fighting together against their common enemy, satan, shoulder to shoulder and back to back. When you fight against more than one opponent, you would love to have someone cover your back. This is like that.

### A. GENUINE FAITH & SALVATION FAITH

Here we can find four different kinds of faith in this portion of the book.

First, demonic faith in v. 19; second, useless faith in v. 20; dead faith in v. 26; and true faith backed by deeds in v. 21-25. Faith in v. 14-20; 24; 26 is not used in the sense of genuine, saving faith. It is mere intellectual acceptance of certain truths without trust in Christ as Savior. James is also not saying that a person saved by works and not by genuine faith. Genuine faith will produce good deeds, but only faith in Christ saves.

*James 2:14-17 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

We can find the same kind of example in 1 John 3:17.

*1 John 3:17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

We see many people in America declare that they are Christians. From Jehovah's witness, Mormon, Hare Krishna, New Age believers and to just plain Americans who think they are Christians, because they were born in America or went to churches a couple times in their lives, or baptized when they were infants, or went to Sunday school classes when they were kids. Or just because we are here and have our own Bible on our laps. All of these don't mean one thing to God.

Let's say, I have a great faith that I can fly. So I went up to the top of the CitiBank Tower in downtown Tucson. With absolute faith in myself that I can fly, I jump off the edge of the building. You wouldn't think and sympathize, "Oh, he had such a wonderful faith." But rather you would say, "What an idiot!" Wrong faith leads to wrong direction. Thinking that we are Christians, because we are in America, and went to churches in our lives does not make us as true born-again Christians. In the same way, I would not be an auto mechanic, just because I went to an auto repair shop for a few times.

## **B. LIVING FAITH**

True living faith in Christ will bring good fruit in deeds. But false dead faith in their own concepts will not produce good fruits. I can fool you by lifting my hands during worship and praise time. I can pretend that I am holy and righteous person by telling you that how many hours I pray and read the Bible. But you can tell by the way I live whether I am the true follower of Jesus or not. If I am the true follower of Christ, I would obey His commands

*John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

The people in my office know that I am a Christian, not a pretender. Not because I have some Christina picture or Bible in my bookshelf. Because the Lord made me to live in His way, in front of those people, though I fail for many times every day. I don't cuss, I don't participate in their dirty jokes, I try to show my integrity and honesty. I try to be polite and courteous. Especially some of close people saw me how I reacted when I was in midst of valley of shadow. Yes, I am boasting for what He did in me. Because Joonho Kim, himself would lash out, spew out venom, punch somebody. But God who is a gracious God, God who loves all people, wants to show His mercy and love and grace through me.

So let's examine ourselves. Do we glorify our Father in heaven in our lives? Do we watch our mouth so that we may not disgrace our God? Do we keep our integrity and honesty in our daily lives?

*Col 1:10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

*Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

*James 2:18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

James denies the possibility of this. Walk the walk, talk the talk!!!

## **C. DEMONIC FAITH**

*James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!*

Do demons know that Jesus is Lord and He is the Judge? Do they believe that they will be destroyed by Jesus eventually? Yes, this means that demons know about Jesus better most of Americans. Does this mean they are going to heaven? Their intellect knowledge didn't touch their free will to serve Jesus as their Master. That is same with people with intellect knowledge about God yet do not put it into action.

*Luke 4:34 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"*

#### **D. USELESS FAITH**

*James 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man ("kenos" in Greek - It means empty headed), that faith without works is dead?*

James is not contradicting Paul in Romans 4:1-5 and Gal 3. He is simply telling us how the saved person proves that his salvation with his life before others.

Being a Christian is not a matter of what we say with lips. It involves what we do with what we know.

#### **E. TRUE FAITH**

*James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? (Heb 11:8-12)*

This verse and v. 25 show that James is not against faith of justification through Jesus. Because the exact same concept shows up in the hall of faith chapter, chapter 11 of Hebrews which we think Apostle Paul was the author.

*James 2:22-24 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6)." And he was called the friend of God (2 Chro 20:7). You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.*

Apart from its context, this verse might seem to contradict the Biblical teaching that people are saved by faith and not by good deeds. But James means only that righteous action is evidence of genuine faith.

*James 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?*

Here, James does not approve Rahab's occupation. He merely commends her for her faith. (Heb 11:31)

*Heb 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.*

#### **F. DEAD FAITH**

*James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

We can tell our own faith by what we do. We are not here to examine other people's faith, but to examine our own.

*1 John 2:4-6 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*

## **G. APPLICATIONS**

**1) Christian life is not mere talk, but in actions with faith in Jesus.**

As we had to make a choice to come to God through Jesus, we have to make choices of good deeds in our lives as the evidence of our faith.

**2) Let's remember that our actions speak louder than the words of our testimonies.**