



SERIES: FEB-MAR FAITH IN REAL LIFE

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Saturday, 02/26/2022

Scripture: James 2:17-18

TITLE: Get in the Wheelbarrow

My former pastor, Mark, would tell of a man who would walk a tight rope across Niagra falls. The crowd was amazed and excited to see such a feat. He would ask the crowd, “Who thinks I can make it?” The crowd would erupt, “Yes, you can! You can do it.” It was at that point he would bring out a wheelbarrow and ask, “For those of you who believe me, who will come with me in the wheelbarrow?” It was at that point that the crowd went silent.

They declared they had faith but were unable to display it. James describes that kind of faith in some very troubling terms. What did James say about faith without works? Here’s what he said in James 2:17-18.

In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works.

Okay, before we unpack this, we need to remember that James has been describing what it means and looks like to be a follower of Christ. He has been pointing out some favorable and unfavorable behavior.

Then in verse 14, he ties it together by teaching on the connection between faith and works. So here in verse 17, he says, “faith, if it does not have works, is dead.” This has caused a lot of debate because Paul was so clear that adding works to salvation is legalism. That is not the Gospel. And some declare that James is contradicting Paul.

Well, let’s set the record straight. Paul was clear that salvation is a free gift of God, and it results in a life of sanctification. We pursue a life pleasing to God out of love. Well, James here is saying the same thing. Faith, if it’s void of transformation, it’s not faith at all. It’s dead. It’s useless. It’s not saving faith.

That’s why James declares in verse 18 that “I will show you faith by my works.”

Talk is cheap. Facebook profiles are meaningless. Faith produces good fruit. Ephesians 2:10 declares, “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.*”

God saves us on purpose and for a purpose. Does this mean we won’t sin? We will sin, but we will have a posture of repentance and dependence on God to help us each and every day.

Saving faith works. So here's my challenge for you today: get in the wheelbarrow. I've done life proclaiming allegiance to Christ while living for the devil. It doesn't work. It can't work. So I had to submit to Christ and get in the wheelbarrow. My life has never been the same since.

So today, get in the wheelbarrow of faith. Begin to and continue to follow Christ out of love.

When we begin to put faith in real life, we will win the day.