



SERIES: FEB-MAR FAITH IN REAL LIFE

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Monday, 02/28/2022

Scripture: James 2:19

TITLE: Take the Next Step

Over Christmas break, our family was able to visit an indoor waterpark in Minnesota. They had this massive 5 person waterslide where you could get into an oversized raft and cruise down the shoot. My youngest son is 9 years old, but he's not as adventuresome as my other kids. We kept seeing family after family come down laughing and right side up.

I said, "Let's all go together." My son said, "I don't want to flip." I said, we won't. All these people keep coming down safe and sound. We will be fine. Do you believe me?"

He nodded and said, "I do. But I am not going to go."

I think my son really understood he would be fine but knowing that truth wasn't enough. He needed to get into the raft to demonstrate true belief. James makes a similar statement about saving faith. And be prepared; it's a bit troubling. This is what James said in James 2:19 (CSB).

You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder.

Now, you may have forgotten or missed last week's episodes. James has been talking about saving faith as the faith that works. Saving faith is not intellectual assent to who Jesus is. Saving faith is not simply raising your hand or saying a prayer. It is more than just verbal agreement. It's about agreement, repentance, and transformation.

So James continues his case for saving faith here by saying, "You believe God is one. Good. Even the demons believe." James is likely responding to some argument or rebuttal. Perhaps someone said, "Yeah, we know who God is." And perhaps they referenced the *Shema* from Deuteronomy 6:4.

This is similar to what we hear celebrities say, "I believe in God." But we should be asking, "And what about God? What about Jesus? What differences does that make?"

We all face these scenarios. We all know that smoking is bad for our health, yet we still smoke. People know that eating an excessive amount of fat, sugar, carbs, etc., results in poor health, but we still eat them anyways. We know that driving without a seatbelt is dangerous, but we say, "next time."

Knowledge of the truth doesn't change a thing. It's acting upon that truth that makes the difference.

James says that the demons know the truth of God. They know who He is. They know exactly who Jesus is. They probably know theology better than the most astute theologian or Bible Teacher, and they shudder in fear. However, knowledge doesn't save.

James' challenge is to take the next step and embrace the truth and allow it to transform your heart, soul, and life.

So here's my challenge for you today: take the next step. Today, you may truly believe. You've moved from knowledge to salvation, and your life is being transformed by Christ. But if you're like me, you have held back in some area of your life. Saving faith is working, but not in some areas you don't want to let go of. Today, take the next step and allow the transformation to continue.

Today, you may have been raised in the church or been identifying as a Christian but have never truly turned from your sin and allowed Jesus to save your soul. Today is the day. Take the step and allow Christ to reform your heart and life.

When we move from knowledge to take the next step in faith, we will win the day.