



# Blackfoot Church of Christ

Published by Blackfoot Church of Christ  
Blackfoot, ID

Volume 6 Number 28

July 15, 2018

## Show me Your Faith

By William Stewart

In the latter portion of James 2, we find a great discussion of faith's dependence upon works. The writer merges a collection of examples with his constant affirmation – faith without works is dead (James 2:17, 20, 24, 26). The destitute brother or sister who receives our well wishes and nothing more is destitute still (James 2:14-16). The demons are certain of the existence of God, but their doom is equally certain, for they do not do the works of God (James 2:19). The patriarch Abraham and Rahab the harlot were both justified before God, not merely because they believed, but because they exercised faith in God (James 2:21-23, 25).

One modern day faith only advocate admits of James 2, *“The passage definitely seems to cause serious problems for the ‘salvation by faith alone’ concept.”*<sup>1</sup> After redefining some terms and quoting a couple wordier translations, he bolsters his false doctrine by claiming, *“Any verse that ascribes salvation to faith/belief, with no other requirement mentioned, is a declaration that salvation is by faith alone.”*<sup>2</sup> That's no more true than saying any verse that ascribes salvation to perseverance (Matthew 10:22), with no other requirement mentioned, is a declaration that salvation is by perseverance alone.

Many are familiar with Martin Luther's disparaging accusation of the epistle by James as *“...an epistle of straw, compared to the others, for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it.”*<sup>3</sup> He did not stop there in his assault. He portrayed James as one who *“...wanted to guard against those who relied on faith without works, but was unequal to the task... He mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture.”*<sup>4</sup> I suspect much of the disdain for James among Calvinistic folks today can be traced back to Luther's low opinion of the book.

However, the opposition to James' approach to faith and works goes far beyond the days of Martin Luther. The inspired writer knew his message would not be popular among some, even among his contemporaries. James provided the words of an imaginary dissenter right in the text. Notice, *“You have faith, and I have works”* (James 2:18), or as the NLT renders it, *“Some people have faith; others have good deeds.”* The dissident

basically says this, “James, you may excel in good works. Good for you. I excel in faith, and that is equally sufficient.”

The false notion of salvation by faith alone was just as enticing to some in the first century as it is today. To the one who stakes his claim to heaven on his faith alone, James boldly requests, “*Show me your faith without your works*” (James 2:18). Pause and think about that for a moment. How is faith shown apart from works? What is the “demonstration” of faith, if not works? How does one bear evidence of their faith without works?

The one who espouses the “some have faith” position is like little Johnny who tells his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classmates with intense fervor and wonderful detail about his new Learjet. It is one thing to make lofty claims, it is quite another to support the claim with proof. As Johnny cannot show evidence of his Learjet (since he doesn’t actually have one); neither can the faith only proponent demonstrate his faith (since faith without works is dead). “*Show me your faith without your works*” – it is impossible.

Having displayed the conundrum of the faith only proponent, James states the truth as simple as he can: “*...I will show you my faith by my works*” (James 2:18). Faith requires demonstration. James is not alone in emphasizing the need for works. Hear what the Lord said: “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven...*” Are these not ones who have faith but not works? He continues, “*...but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21). To have the hope of heaven, to have saving faith (James 2:14), we must DO the will of God. The apostle John concurs, “*Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him*” (1 John 2:3-4). There is a difference between saying we know Him and knowing we know Him. Those who know Him keep His commandments; they obey; they have works. Paul speaks about those who “*...profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work*” (Titus 1:16). In the same epistle, Paul identified Christians as being “*...zealous for good works*” (Titus 2:14), “*...ready for every good work...*” (Titus 3:1), “*...careful to maintain good works*” (Titus 3:8), “*...that they may not be unfruitful*” (Titus 3:14). The apostle Peter asked, “*...what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’ Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator*” (1 Peter 4:19). Tell me again how it is possible to “*show me your faith without your works*”?

James is not an aberration or nonconformist. His message is not at odds with Paul, John, Peter or the Lord. Despite the popularity of salvation by faith alone in today’s religious world, not a single Bible writer gave support to such a doctrine. The Bible consistently reveals the necessity of obedience and of works. “*...Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*” (James 2:17).

# When I Survey The Cross

Jim Mickells

Isaac Watts in 1707 wrote a song which is entitled “When I Survey The Wondrous Cross.” It is such a beautiful hymn which should make us all consider what God has done for us through the death of His Son when we sing it. When you allow your mind to deeply contemplate Jesus’ death on the cross, what do you see? Let me suggest a few things we should all consider.

**The extreme cruelty of men.** Did Jesus suffer such an ignominious death because of some great crime He had committed toward mankind? Absolutely not! Peter said, “...who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil...” (Acts 10:38). He committed no sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). He harmed no one. Yet even before being crucified, He was spit upon, struck in the face, scourged, had a crown of thorns placed on His head, was mocked and ridiculed. Eventually He was nailed to the cross to experience one of the most painful and cruel deaths known to man.

**Man’s rejection of God.** “He came to His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). What more could the Lord have done to convince the Jews that He was the Messiah who had come to save mankind? The miracles He performed, the words He spoke, His compassion, His humble and loving spirit and the deeds He did were clear manifestations of who He was, the Son of God (Matthew 14:33; 27:54). Yet the words of those who surrounded the cross are reminders of their rejection of Him. “He saved other – himself he cannot save”; “let Him come down from the cross and we will believe Him”; “He trusted God let Him deliver Him,” etc. (Matthew 27:41-44). They rejected Him despite all He had done to convince them He was the Christ. The cross was the ultimate rejection.

**How terrible my sins really are!** I am so afraid we can see how appalling the sins of others are, yet not realize it was because of our own sins the Lord was crucified. The writer of the book of Hebrews said that Jesus tasted or experienced death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9). I know I am a sinner because I have violated the laws of my Lord (Galatians 5:19-21) and I need forgiveness. Even while I was a sinner Jesus died on the cross, so my sins could be remitted (Romans 5:8). In the song “Rock Of Ages,” the second verse says, “Thou must save, and Thou alone: In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.” I have nothing with which to pay for my redemption, it took the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

I see the greatness of God’s love. If you have a son or daughter, think of allowing him or her to die so the vilest of sinners could be saved. This is exactly what the Father has done for us. In John 3:16, we find the word “so.” God so loved the world, an adverb denoting degree. The extent of Jehovah’s love is seen in the gift of His Son. Yet Jesus willingly suffered death on the cross so that all men could be saved (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16). He laid down His life for us. There is none worthy of such love. He died even to save those who put Him to death; “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). Truly amazing love.

When we survey the cross, seeing what was done for us, it should motivate each to live for Him, always putting Him first in our lives (Matthew 6:33). Let us give thanks to God, His Son, and Spirit for all the blessings which we can enjoy because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. What do you see when you survey the cross?

## Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Shirley Torres, Seattle WA (Torres' have visited our congregation) is fighting cancer. Chemo treatments have not been successful. They have decided to stop the Chemo and pursue other treatments to help enhance her quality of life.
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines.
- Bible class tomorrow night 7:00pm at Chad and Kass' on evangelism

**For prayer requests, call or text**

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

## Assignments

<b><u>Today</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Lord's Table</b> – David Porter <b>Sermon</b> – Ross Ward	<b><u>Wednesday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Kyle Callahan <b>Invitation</b> – Ross Ward
<b><u>Next Sunday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – David Porter <b>Lord's Table</b> – Tom Mitchell <b>Sermon</b> – Ross Ward	<b><u>Next Wednesday</u></b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Invitation</b> – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

### **Meeting Times:**

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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