When Christians Act Like Zombies July 9, 2023

*James 2:14-26 Series: Show Me It’s Real*

Faith sweats, sends emails, cooks meals, plants churches, builds hospitals, flies to the other side of the world, and spends itself in servant form. That’s what saving faith in the Lord Jesus means. – David Gibson

Intro: Have zombies invaded the church?

1. Church zombies are all talk and no action
2. Zombie faith is dead, not just inadequate

v. 14 *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?*

v. 14 *Can that faith save him?*

v. 17 *So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

1. An example of a church zombie

v. 15 *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food …*

v. 16 *… one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?*

* Is James teaching that a person is saved by faith alone or faith and good works? How do you know?
* What “works” do you think God would consider evidence of genuine saving faith? Why doesn’t the Bible contain an essential list of them?
* Could someone fake genuine faith by doing some good works for the sake of appearance? What would that look like?
1. Church zombies have good theology but a terrible lifestyle
2. Saving faith doesn’t exist without good works

v. 18 … *someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.”*

v. 18 *Show me your faith apart from your works …*

v. 18 *I will show you my faith by my works.*

1. An example of a demon’s faith

v. 19 *You believe that God is one; you do well.*

v. 19 *Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Galatians 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

* What are some of the things that demons probably believe about God and the Bible?
* Why do demons “shudder”?
* What would it look like for a person to be knowledgeable about the Bible but to have faith like a demon?
* Does God treat people who “believe in God” any differently than atheists?
1. With saving faith, actions speak louder than words
2. Abraham: an example of saving faith evidenced by obedience

v. 21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

Genesis 22:12 *He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”*

v. 22 *faith was active along with his works*

v. 22 *faith was completed by his works*

v. 23 *the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”*

1. Rahab: an example of saving faith evidenced by courageous love

v. 25 *was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works*

v. 25 *she received the messengers and sent them out by another way*

Joshua 2:9 *I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you.*

1. Do you need to exchange a dead faith for a living one?

v. 24 *a person is justified by works and not by faith alone*

v. 26 *as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead*

Matthew 7:16 *You will recognize them by their fruits.*

* What do you learn about the nature of saving faith from Abraham’s life? Was his life always consistent with his faith?
* What was it about Rahab that led to her being saved and the other residents of Jericho being judged?
* Does this passage give you more or less assurance that you have saving faith?

Look ahead: Next week, we’ll study James 3:1-12

Notes