

The Mystery of the Functioning Faith

September 16, 2018

Scripture:

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and 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? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.” (James 2:14–26, ESV)

From the Introduction:

“Functioning Faith” can only be made known through the works of the believer.

Outline:

- 1) What is _____? (What makes faith a mystery?)
 - a) The Greek word *pistis* (faith) basically means “belief, _____, confidence.”
 - b) True faith produces true _____.
 - c) 2 Corinthians 5:6–7, ESV
- 2) What is _____? (What makes works a mystery?)
 - a) The Greek word *ergon* (work) basically means “a work, a deed, achievement, _____.”
 - b) True obedience is the _____ of true faith.
 - c) Hebrews 9:13–14, ESV
- 3) Why _____?
 - a) James points to the fact that faith devoid of works is _____ religion.
 - b) Trying to live in faith apart from works is like trying to live in a body without a _____.
 - c) Ephesians 2:8–10, ESV

Remember:

“²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.” (James 2:26, ESV)

Reflect:

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Seek:

- 1) In the message, Pastor Mark poses the question, “What makes faith a mystery?” He then offers 2 Cor. 5:6-7 as evidence to the point in question. Take a moment to consider Paul’s words; then consider the three words presented as proper translations for faith, Gk. *pistis*. Which of these do you believe best applies to how James relates faith? Why? Please record your answers for sharing.

Share:

- 1) James notes that faith apart from work is like a body without a soul. Take a moment to reflect and share with the group a time when you found yourself attempting to do God's work but found yourself struggling due to a lack of true faith. Record and share your thoughts.

Serve:

- 1) Faith and works are intimately tied together in the life of the believer. Consider the importance of faith in fulfilling the work God has called you complete. What changes need to take place in your life in order for you to God's works to take place?

Pray:

This week, in your prayer time, as God to strengthen you with Christ-like faith in order that you might honor him through in your service.