

How does faith work when you want are feeling lazy?

- Well howdy! So excited to be in James 2 with you. If you've got a Bible, go to James 2. As we continue our study in this great book of the Bible written by the New Testament blue collard scholar, Jesus' little brother dude named James. And his big idea is how do you take your faith and put it to work in the issues of your life. And today the big question is how does faith work when you are feeling lazy, as you're finding your place in your Bible. Just tell you this week is a little bit different. I'm prerecording to an empty room. So if I tell a joke and no one laughs it's not because I'm not funny, it's because there's no one here. What's going to happen however, is I'm going to be out this week. It's my 51st birthday, the kids have got fall break. So I'm going to get a little family time and we'll do video this week, but I'll be back next week. All three services live at Trinity Church and as always live online at Real Faith. Speaking of real faith, one thing that's kind of interesting is real faith actually is a name that we took out of James 2. It actually comes out of the exact section that we're studying in James 2. And it says this, in one translation, "Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith." So based upon this section that we'll be studying this week, we took that concept of real faith. My daughter, Ashley and I who's the executive director, and in addition to the Trinity Church, we've got Real Faith which sends out Bible teaching on radio airwaves and platforms. And there you can find the sermons and audio and video full transcripts and also the sermon notes. As well as the archives, you can sign up for daily devotions five days a week. I'll help you study whatever book of the Bible I'm teaching. And if you go there right now, realfaith.com, you can get a free study guide downloaded as an ebook and also the most recent full book, and that is 'Christian Theology versus Critical Theory.' All of that is free@realfaith.com. Nonetheless, what he's talking about this week is someone says that they're a believer and they're not a behavior. Meaning they say one thing, but they're living something different. How does that work when you're feeling lazy? How does your faith work? That's James' question when you're feeling lazy. Sometimes you don't feel like doing what the Bible says. He just us previously to do what the Word says, to be doers of the Word. Sometimes you don't feel like doing it just cause you're burned out, you're tired, you're frustrated you've been in a hard season, you're a little jaded. You are a believer, but you've gone lukewarm and it's time to turn the temperature up on your relationship with God. Maybe some of you are there. Sometimes the reason that we're lazy regarding our faith is because we actually don't have faith. We may be religious people, but we're not really in relationship with God to set up kind of the context and for you to determine if either of these categories apply to you. Let me share a little bit about my story. So I'm Irish Catholic by background. We were the O'Driscoll's from County Cork, Southern Ireland, generations of Irish Catholic. And so the way it worked is I was a religious kid. I didn't have a relationship with God and I wasn't a rebellious kid, I was a religious kid. So when I was born, I was actually born in a Catholic hospital. So I started right out of the right out of the womb. Catholic. When I was a baby, my parents decided to have me baptized in the Catholic Church. I attended Catholic Church, some growing up with my parents. I didn't know the Lord, but we did go to church. And for three years I was actually in the Catholic school and I assisted the priests with mass. So the mass was their version of church in the Catholic Church. And many Catholics loved Jesus, I didn't and it wasn't their fault. I just didn't care, I had nobody to blame. but the priest would lead mass and I would be the alter boy, I

would be the kid who would assist. And so I was very much involved in the church. Sometimes at Christmas or holy days, they would have me get up as the kid to read the Scripture, once in a while this happened, not very often. And then by the time I hit my teen years, got a driver's license, figured out how to hit a curve ball and figured out that girl smelled nice I just stopped going to church and paying attention, I really didn't care. I did have some conscience or concept of God, but I wasn't reading the Bible, I wasn't praying, I wasn't going to church, I didn't really care. So then I meet this gal at age 17, her dad's a pastor and she has faith internally, but she doesn't have works externally. She's now my wife Grace. Meaning she met the Lord when she was a young girl, she grew up in a Bible believing Christian home. Her dad was a pastor. Her mom's now part of our church family and love her very much. But Grace was in a season of being a prodigal. If we could use that story from the Bible, God was her father, but she wasn't being very obedient. She was living a lifestyle that was not Christian. She was doing things that teenage kids do when they're rebelling against God and authority. That's when I showed up. So strategically that was my entry point. So Grace and I become friends, we started dating and she's asking me, "Do you believe in God?" I was like, "Yeah, sure I believe in God and why does that matter?" She's like, "Well, I am a Christian." I was like, "I didn't know you were a Christian because you know, I mean, I know your dad's a pastor, but you're not doing all the Christian stuff." And she said, "Well, neither are you." And the difference was the truth is I had more works than she did, but she had a faith that I did not have. Neither of us had both faith and works. faith in here, a devotion to God and life out there devoted to God. So she was a Christian, she had faith, but she wasn't demonstrating it with her works. She wasn't living a faithful Christian lifestyle. For me, I had good works, I was a religious guy. She was rebellious, she had faith but not works. I was religious, I had works but not fath. So I live by my conscience and I didn't, I didn't get into much trouble. I was actually pretty good kid all things considered. In my neighborhood there was a lot of drugs and alcohol and gangs and prostitution, I skipped all of that. I was clean and sober, I worked hard, I made money. I did well in school, I got a college scholarship. First man in my family to ever go to college. I was 'Most Likely To Succeed,' Student Body President, four year Letterman, 'Man of the Year,' I was that guy. They called me a natural helper. They trained me to counsel other kids. I led a campaign to have the overturning of a historic designation on our school so that then we could have a bond initiative to raise money, to fix this broken public school. I was involved in political campaigns. I did some journalism, all of this by age 17, when I met Grace. So I'm a very active, good kid, good kid. I had a potty mouth and I ended up sleeping with a pastor's daughter. So I had very selective good works, but I did have some good works. So we're together and she comes to the conclusion that I probably don't have faith. She says, "I'm a good guy." Grace would have said that even as a non-Christian, I was better than the Christian guys that she knew. As far as my behavior and morality, but I didn't know the Lord. I was just a good pagan, we could use that language and she was a bad Christian. So I was a good pagan, she was a bad Christian. She had faith, but not works. I had some works, but no faith. And then one day it dawned on Grace that I probably didn't know Jesus. And so she bought me actually this Bible, this was my first really nice cow gave it's life, trees chopped down, first-class Bible. I didn't read it for months. I don't need to, I pretty much know what it says. There's good people, bad people, I'm a good person, so I'm fine. God's pretty lucky to have a guy like me on the earth, I'm here to help. And

so lots of kind of smug religious pride and self-righteousness, and i was a religious guy and she gave it to me. And then in college as a freshman, I started reading it out of curiosity 'cause all the different classes were trashing the Word of God. And God saved me in the same place that he saved a former Catholic monk who became a Protestant reformer named Martin Luther. God saved me in Romans 1. I don't know exactly when I got saved. It's one of those deals, you go from death to life and like what is the moment? It's a little unclear. But I do remember the moment that I knew that I was saved. And that was as a freshman in college reading Romans 1. Well that being said, now I have faith internally and now I start to live a new Christian life externally. Grace already had a faith internally, she transfers out to be with me in college and now she comes back into a vibrant relationship with the Lord. She's reading her Bible, praying, going to church. She's doing the things that God would have us to do. And we had to reset our relationship. We had to then learn how to practice purity and how to come under the authority of God's Word. She had faith, but not works at least for a season. And then I had works, but not faith. At least for a season. Faith is internal, works is external. Faith is what God sees, works are what others see. And the Bible talks a lot about faith and works. And that's our subject in James 2 today. Faith is who or what are you trusting in? Is it your beauty, your intellect, your money, your wealth, your presidential candidate, your parents, your inheritance? What is it? Who is it? That is sort of your anchor for security and safety. You trust in this, to deliver you from whatever might be against you. And then works is your lifestyle. It's your decision-making, it's your behavior. It's how you spend your money and how you invest your deeds in your days. And the issue is this: most people believe, and we just have this innate sense, something is broken and wrong in the world. Something's just gone wrong. It doesn't matter if you're a Christian or non. The planet's just very frustrating. And so the thought is that we need to have faith in someone or something and something needs to be done. And so faith and works are things that are not just Christian issues, they're human issues. And so what this leads to is for people who don't know the Lord, and they're not religious, their faith is in their cause, their movement, their political leader, their social justice agenda, their ism, their cause, their voting record. They have faith in someone or something is going to fix the pains, problems and perils of the earth. This is where we get all the causes. We get all the election hype, we get all the partisan bickering. This is where people will pick up some sort of cause and they just devote themselves to it, religiously. This can be sexual orientation. This can be political affiliation. This can be economic dedication. And so there is this secular form of faith and works. I'm trusting someone or something and they're going to make life better for me. And this leads to a whole slew of social justice categories, where people have faith in someone or something to fix the pains problems and perils on the earth. There's also a religious form of faith and works. And what happens in all religions, primarily apart from Christianity is there is faith, but it's faith in me and it's faith in my works. That I can do something that will please God, I can make God happy. I can pay God back. I can fix the mistakes that I have made. This is true in cults, which are offshoots of Christianity like Jehovah's witnesses or Mormonism. It's all about works and performance and deeds. And your relationship with God is not at the starting line. You work from it, it's at the finish line, you work for it. And if you mess up along the way, you could undo everything and end up being an enemy of God, even if you've tried really hard. And so there's a lot of pressure, a lot of guilt, a lot of fear, a lot of shame, a lot of control within religion. This is true of the world religions.

I made a little list for you, but this is what happens in Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Judaism, and Islam works religions. It's not faith in God. It's faith in you. And it's not trusting in what God does for you. It's trusting what you do for God. The third category is Christianity. Our faith is not in us, but it's in Jesus. It's not in anyone or anything in addition to or alongside of Jesus, and the works that need to be done to fix the mistakes and errors and sins that we have made, that is done by Jesus, not by us. So Jesus is God, He comes down, He lives a perfect life without any sin. And He does all the work to pay the price for your sin, by dying in your place on the cross and then he rises from death to conquer Satan, sin, death, hell the wrath of God. He then returns to heaven to prepare a place for you. And a Christian is one whose faith is in Jesus and we're trusting in His works, not our own. Sometimes people will say you're saved by grace, not by works. Well actually we are saved by works. It's Jesus works. So Jesus does all the work. We trust Him, He gives us the grace. Jesus said this on the cross, "It is finished." It is finished. So all the work is done. The perfect life is lived and the perfect sacrifice has been made for we who are imperfect to be brought into relationship with God. These are the categories of faith and it works. This lecture is going to be a little nerdy and a little complicated. But we're going to look at now is how this plays out these category of faith and works in James 2. And the first point he makes is lazy Christians prefer lip service over lifestyle, James 2:14-17, "What good is it my brothers, if someone says he has faith," lip service, "but does not have works," life style, "Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister," somebody in your church, or maybe someone in your family. "Is poorly clothed, can't make ends meet, lack in daily food," they've really hit a rough patch, "and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warm and filled,' praying for you brother, hope for the best, "Without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not produce works, is dead." What he's saying here is this, lots of people will give lip service to Christianity but not live the lifestyle of Christianity. The lip service is easy, lifestyles hard. It's really easy on your wedding day to say, I love you, and then it's hard to spend the next 50 years loving. Every day, making the practical decisions to walk out the promise that you've made. When all is said and done a lot more is said than done. We live in a world where everyone is speaking and few people are doing. And what he's talking about here is similar to what he said previously he says, "Don't merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves, do what it says." What he's saying is that Christianity is manifested in fruitfulness, obedience and works. That if you're going to say something, you need to live something. If you're going to give lip service, you need to give lifestyle. I was a hypocrite of this before I became a Christian. Grace asked me on were 17 she's like, "Do you believe in God?" I was like, "Okay, sure. I do." I gave lip service, but for me it was not lifestyle. Lip service costs you nothing. Lifestyle costs you everything. And what he's talking about here is the way that God saves us is threefold. I'm going to take 25 years as a Senior Pastor and a Bible teacher. Let me summarize it into a very simple flow and process. God works for you, in you, through you. God works for you through the sinless life, the substitutionary death and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's God's work for you. God works in you. He sends the Holy Spirit, to cause you to be born again, to give you new nature, new desires, new heart, you're a new creation. You get a new mind. You're not perfect, but you're new. And you're changing at the deepest level of your being from the inside out. God works for you in you and as a result, God works through you. The Bible calls this fruit. It says that the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. So God works for you, in you and through you. And what he's saying here is if someone says, "Well God works for me, but He doesn't work in me or through me." The question is, "Have you really met God?" Because God's work is not just for you, it's in you and through you. It doesn't just forgive you, it changes you, and then it changes the life that comes out of you. And lots of people want God to forgive them, but they don't want God to rule over them. A lot of times you'll hear in the Bible, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and a lot of people so I love Him to be Savior, but I don't want Him to be Lord. I want Him to forgive me, but I don't want Him to tell me what to do. I want Him to clean up the mess that I've made, but I don't want Him to be the Lord over my life. I don't even understand that, to be honest with you. Jesus is not Savior or Lord, He's Savior and Lord. And His Savior is His work for you. His Lord is his work in you and through you. The big idea is this, if meet Jesus, things are going to change. Now you're not going to be perfect, but you will be in a change process that ends in the kingdom with you being perfected. God's work in you, for you and through you. And what he's saying is this, If you say that you believe in God and that he's worked for you, but we don't see any works coming out of you. We have to, or you should at least look at your own life and ask if I really been saved and born again? God's work for you is called regeneration justification. It's being born again and declared righteous in the sight of God. God's work in you is really where you change at the deepest level of your being. The Bible again, uses the language of being born again. When you're born, then you live your life. When you're born again, you live your new life. So God's work for you or correct that is justification, you're declared righteous in the sight of God, because of Jesus. You are accepted by God because of Jesus. God's work in you is you're born again. And that God's work through you is just like a kid is born and then lives their life. You're born again. Now you live a new life. You live a different life. That's God's work through you. What he's saying is if you look at your life and you say I'm not seeing anything changed in my life, well that might indicate that you haven't been changed in here, which means that you've not met Jesus and you have not received the Holy Spirit. The big idea is this, you can't meet Jesus and not change. You can give lip service all day, but lifestyle is really the evidence. And so what he's talking about here, and let me give you an example of this. Jesus had one disciple who had lip service, but not lifestyle, his name is Judas Iscariot. He would go to the meetings, Bible studies, take notes, take the test, he would pass, he would sing the songs and he had lip service. I mean, he could answer the questions, but he didn't have the lifestyle. He wasn't living for Jesus, he was living against Jesus. He was conspiring against Jesus, he was stealing from Jesus and ultimately he was plotting to destroy Jesus. So he had lip service, but not lifestyle. You and I a lot of times we betray with our deeds, the one whom we say we belong to with our words. And so the question is not just to use this sermon for everybody else. Like, oh yeah, I know people need this. This is for you first. This is like on the airplane, when they say put the oxygen mask on yourself and then your neighbor, this is for you first, before them. Have you seen change in your life? Have you seen change that comes out of you being changed by God? God changes you in here, so that life changes out there. And the result is works. What he's talking about here is works. So Christianity is about two things, it's about faith and works. But you gotta get them in the right order. Faith is trusting God's work for you and then works is evidence of God's work in you. You got to get this order right. And oftentimes what happens is in religion, we get the order wrong. And that is I'll start

with my works and then eventually God will reward me with faith. No, no, no. We start with faith in the works of Jesus, and then we work out our salvation with fear and trembling because it is God who has worked in us to willing to do according to His good pleasure. What the Bible says is God works for you, and then He works in you. And once He saves you to work it out with Him in the fruit of your life. And the big idea is this, the order is really important and the truth is, God doesn't need your works. This is where religious people and also secular people who are works oriented with their causes and their isms and you know, their rage of the day and their hope of the month. What happens is ultimately those people are trusting in someone or something other than themselves, and the result is that sometimes we tend to think that God needs our works. Like God can't save me unless I do something like get baptized or pray to Mecca three times a day or reincarnate and pay off my karmic debts or whatever the religious work might be or the secular work might be. Unless I give to that cause, unless I repost that hashtag, unless I march in that parade, unless I support that candidate, unless I signed that petition, you know, the world can't change, my participation is absolutely needed. And the point is when it comes to salvation, God doesn't need your good works, but here's who does need your good works your neighbor. Your neighbor. What he's talking about here is a guy who's got no clothes and he's hungry. And what he does need is something to eat and some clothes. And sometimes love is what we say. But love is often what we do. And you can't say that I love God and I love you. And just say things without doing things. This is like the dad who tells the kids, he loves them and then never speaks to them. This is like the husband who says he loves his wife and never takes her on a date. Love is sometimes what you say, love is sometimes what you feel, but love is ultimately what you do, what you do. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. God demonstrates His love for us in this while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We know that Jesus loves us and the Father loves us because They did something. What he's saying is this lip service is easy, lifestyle is hard. You don't really have faith and you really don't have love unless it comes out of you and others are blessed by it. But your neighbor needs your works. God doesn't need you to give him a sandwich, He's not hungry, but your neighbor does. God doesn't need you to love your spouse and to pray with your kids, but they need it. The people that don't have a Bible And you know them, God doesn't need you to give him a Bible, He's fine. But they need a Bible just like Grace gave me one. And so the question is, what's coming out of you is an indication of what is in you and who ultimately you belong to. And this is where the order is really important. So God works for you, in you, through you. What he's saying is look at what's coming out of you and does that indicate that the hazard has not been changed in you. Then you may have not come to saving faith in what Jesus has done for you. And again, the order is important. Faith comes before works. This is something called the Order of Salvation, theologians debate about it. But faith comes before works. That God saves you and gives you faith. I believe something regeneration, being born again, precedes faith even. So God saves you. God saves you. He doesn't work for you. Then He gives you faith and puts the Holy Spirit in you. And then God works through you. What happens with religion? They tend to think that it starts with the works. If I work really hard and do the right things and don't do the wrong things, then God will, you know, use those things to sort of self-discipline change me in here and then I'll be acceptable in His sight. So what happens with secular and also a formal religion is it works backwards. God, then you work, and then that God uses that to work in you and then ultimately

you become acceptable to God. It's backwards, it's inverted, it's a counterfeit. Give you an example. Some years ago, Grace and I, as a young married couple, we got our first apartment, we're flat broke, just out of college and we needed to get some furniture and we really needed a dresser. And so Grace came up with an idea. She's like, "Hey Mark, let's go to Ikea." Now Ikea is a four letter word. Ikea is a four letter word because when you get there, you're going to not buy furniture, but you're going to buy the hypothetical possibility of furniture, if you can figure out how to put it together. And they give you something, a tool, they call it a tool and it's not a tool. It's just, it's just a, if you've ever seen a monkey on an organ grinder, it's the lever on the grinder and its So I think that all of Ikea is just a way of making fun of humanity and turning us all into monkeys grinding organ. So I tell Grace, I was like, "I don't want to go to Ikea and buy the hypothetical possibility of a dresser. I'd like to go somewhere and just buy a full blown, crazy idea dresser." She's like, "No, no, no, there it's cheaper." And we're broke and we're newly married. So we go to Ikea and she picks out a dresser and we come home and I decide, you know, we're newly married. I'm the man, I'll put this together. I worship a carpenter, my dad was a carpenter, I got a few tools, how hard can this be? So what I decided to do is not read the directions because I'm a man. And so I start putting it together and this is not working. It is not coming together. So I went and got a screw gun and a hammer and I figure more force and just put screws in where I think it... So Grace can see that all of a sudden this is not going well. So Grace in her very kind sweetness comes and say, "What are you doing, honey?" I was like, "Putting the dresser together," she's like, "What's up with the hammer and the screwdriver?" I was like, "Well the organ grinder for the monkey here, isn't doing it." She's like, she asked this crazy question, she asked, "Did you read the directions?" I was like, "No, I'm a man. I did not read the directions. She said, "Well, maybe if you just threw out as a hypothetical possibility, just consider this, maybe if you read the directions and followed them, maybe the dresser would, would get put together." As a guy, I don't know. So Grace actually started doing something crazy, I mean, just blew my mind, she read the directions. And first thing we had to do is undo about 50% of the work that I had done, that I was doing it in the wrong order. Had I done it in the right order, everything would have just slipped right together and been fine. I wasn't doing it in the right order. What oftentimes happens in Christianity is God gives us His Word and He gives us an order of things, okay, this, then this, then this, then this. When it talks about your walk with God, which it does often this step, this step, this step, this step, this step first, this step next. And what happens is we get out of order. We miss step and the result is everything is a total mess. When it comes to faith and works, it's really important to read the directions. Faith precedes works and works evidence faith. He then continues in the next section and here's the big shots fired question of the day, is your faith dynamic or demonic? James 2:18-19, "But someone will say you have faith and I have works" this was Grace and I, she had faith and I had works. Neither of us had both when we first met. He says, well, you do need both, "Show me your faith apart from works. And I'll show you my faith by my works. Do you believe that God is one? You do well. Even the demons believe that in shudder." This was frankly me before I got saved. Grace came along she was like do you believe in God? Sure, I believe in God. And again, she looked at my life, she was like, I don't see any change life, repentance of sin, humility, love for God, this dud doesn't pray, he doesn't sing, he doesn't read his Bible, I don't see any flow of the Spirit coming out of the life of this guy. He's kind of moral, lives by his conscience, but he also

kind of arrogant and proud. And here's what he's saying, It's not enough to believe in God or believe that there is a God you need to know and love that God. What he says is demons problems are not mental, right? They're not mental, it's willful. It's not that they don't know who Jesus is. It's that they don't love and submit to Jesus as Lord. And there's a lot of people like I believe in God. Well that's easy that again is lip service, that's not lifestyle. That's knowing who Jesus is, but not living under his Lordship. And so there's people all the time that are going to be like the demons, they're very religious, they can answer the questions. If you got into an argument with a demon about the Bible, you'd probably lose because they know the Bible very well. Their problem is not information. It's just complete total internal rebellion. They believe in certain things that are true, but they won't behave according to those beliefs. Like James told us previously, they are hearers of the Word. Demons have been listening to Bible teaching since Genesis 3 and the fall of humanity, but they don't do what it says. And you and I can become religious and deceived like demons when we have a lot of information, but it doesn't cause any transformation. When it informs our mind, but it does not change our nature and transform our lifestyle. And so Christianity is not just like taking a math test because your life is really the test and how you live determines whether or not you have true faith. And so there is this, there is this thing where oftentimes people will think that if someone just knew about Jesus, then they would love Him. And here's what's hard to imagine for those of us who know who Jesus is and love of Jesus. There are people who know who Jesus is and they don't love Him and they don't, they don't follow Him, they don't obey Him, they don't trust Him, they don't care about Him. Or there were people in Jesus' day, they heard Him preach the sermons, they saw Him perform the miracles. Some saw Him risen from the dead and they still didn't convert. And they knew the story, but they didn't love the hero of the story. What's really weird in the New Testament, as Jesus goes around and He's preaching and teaching, different people are trying to figure out who he is, right? So some people are like, well, He's a good teacher or He's a good leader. The people who get it right are the demons or the persons I should say who get it right, are the demons. The demons know who Jesus is better than the disciples. Sometimes the disciples, they're bossing them around, telling them what to do, denying Him. I mean, the disciples are kind of reversible jerseys. They're on team Jesus, they're off team Jesus. They believe in Him, they don't believe in Him. They're kind of a mess until the resurrection. But when the demons show up, they know exactly who Jesus is. Their problem is not theological it's moral. It's not that they don't know who He is, it's that they don't receive and submit and surrender to who He is. I'll give you some examples. Mark 1:34 says, "Jesus would not permit the demons to speak because they knew Him." So that Jesus shows up, a demons in somebody and Jesus mutes the demon. 'Cause they're going to tell everybody who He is, they know exactly who He is. How about this one, Luke 4, "There was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon and he cried out with a loud voice, 'I know who you are, the Holy One of God.'" A demon is like, I know exactly who you are. You're the Holy One of God. Demons knew exactly who Jesus was. In addition in Luke 4:1, "Demons also came out of many crying. You are the Son of God, but He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak because they knew that He was Christ." Now what's interesting. You and I and demons have done the same thing. We have received commands from God, our Creator, the demons and the humans all rebelled against God. The demons were originally angels, but when they rebelled against God and defied Him, they

became demons. Now we were given commands. We both categorically human beings and demonic beings, we defied those commands, we sin against God. We're cosmic rebels, guilty of treason. God takes all the demons and sentences them to the eternal flames and punishment of hell. There is no possibility of a demon ever getting saved. There's no possibility of a demon ever being forgiven, but there is for us, which is remarkable. So we'd be like, I don't know how God could send people to hell. I dunno how God can send people to heaven, that to me is the total mystery. Okay all the demons rebelled and went to hell. Okay all the criminals, you know, committed crimes and went to prison. Okay that makes sense to me, the guilty people go to the place that you put the guilty people, that makes sense. What God does, He turns enemy into family. And what God does, He sends His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth to live the perfect life that we have not lived, to do all the works that are required for our salvation. He dies and he rises and he returns to heaven to prepare a place for us. So Jesus does all of the work and our faith is in Him and His work is for us in us, by the power of the Holy Spirit and through us as the Fruit of the Spirit. Now here's the big idea God has given to each of us and each of you, an opportunity that He's never given a demon, that is the opportunity be forgiven and saved. They know that Jesus is God, but they do not know Jesus as Savior. I want you to know that Jesus Christ is God, but you need to receive Him as Savior. My question is, have you taken God up on this most gracious offer? The offer that never got extended to the demons. Jesus didn't come in the form of a demon. He didn't live for demons. He didn't die for demons. He didn't rise for demons. He's not preparing a kingdom home for demons, but He is for us. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will believe that Jesus is God and receive Jesus as Savior. I want you to do that right now, He knows your heart, He knows your mind. We've got baptism coming up over Halloween weekend. What a great time to declare your faith publicly. And I would just tell you, don't just talk about what you believe. Make sure that you know that Jesus Christ is God and your Savior by giving Him your sin and your life and surrendering all that you have in our, to his Lordship over your life, to live in obedience to Him. And the big idea is this. He's talking about faith and works. And what He says is the true Christian doesn't have one or the other, the true believer has both. In the same way, any loving relationship changes you. And the point is you can't have a loving relationship with Jesus and not be changed. So at the age of 17, I told you the story. I met my wife Grace and I adore her every day. I wake up with my favorite person. I love my wife with all my heart. And being in loving relationship with her, it's just changed me. God has used that relationship with Grace to make me a different person. And I'm sure in 20 years the changes will still be ongoing. I consider her, I work hard, I want to protect her, I'm faithful to her, I'm growing and how to care for her and God gave us five children. Every time one of those five children was born and they're in our hands and then we bring them into our home, that loving relationship has changed me. Every one of my kids, the fingerprints of their life are just all over my soul. And the point is this. If you have a deep, profound, significant loving relationship, it changes you. Now think about the relationship with Jesus. If you have a deep, profound, loving relationship with Jesus, that relationship is going to change you. What James is saying is if you're saying, I have a deep, profound, loving relationship with Jesus, there's just been no change in my life. The question would be, did you meet Jesus? Did you meet Jesus? Do you have a relationship? And it's not that he is seeking to cause you to be paranoid about your performance, but he wants it to be an

indicator and an evaluator of whether or not you actually have the relationship. The next thing that he's going to say is that a good trees, bear good fruit and bad trees, bear bad fruit. This is what Jesus says in Matthew 7, "A good tree bears, good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit." And here is little brother James is basically saying the same thing in different language. James 2:20- 26, "Do you want to be shown you foolish person. People who thinks that you can have faith without works or that works can replace your faith, that's foolishness. The faith apart from works is useless," and he talk about Abraham, "Was not Abraham our Father, justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar," back to Genesis 22. "You see that faith was active along with his works and faith was completed by his works, and the Scripture was fulfilled that was said, 'Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness,' belief there is faith. "And he was called a friend of God. You see there person is justified by their works and not by faith alone." In the same second historical example case study and sometimes its really good to learn about faith by reading biographies and reading the Old Testament and the New Testament and looking at people's life. "In the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them by another way?" According to the book of Joshua. "For as the body apart from the Spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead." So here's my definition of faith, faith is a Holy Spirit empowered in internal devotion to God that produces an external devotion to God. Okay? Faith is internal and then it manifests itself external. So this would be the root and this would be the fruit. It would be faith in here given as a gift from God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. God gives us saving faith. Faith in here produces works out there to use the language of the Bible. Root fruit, faith works. God works in here, God works through me and it is God's work. Now all of this is worship that as God works for us through the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus, He works in us by the presence, power and person of the Holy Spirit. And he works through us to begin a change process in our life. This life that we live, it can be called works. It can also be called worship. And it is the decisions that I'm making, the dollars that I'm spending, the words that I'm speaking, the places that I'm going there to glorify God, Jesus as Lord, He is Savior. Meaning I don't live like I used to live because my Savior has saved me from that. And now my Lord is telling me the new way to live in obedience and worship to Him. That's the life of fruit or works or worship. And what he's going to give for us here are, and I would say this too, if you're looking at your own life, it's not perfection, but it's progress. None of us is perfect yet until we rise from the dead and we're in the presence of Jesus, then you'll be perfect. Right now you're not perfect. But my question would be, is there progress? Do you hate your sin? Do you love Jesus? Do you want to learn the Scriptures? Do you want to meet God's people? Are you learning how to worship God in song? Are you learning to be generous toward others? Are you learning how to give unto the Lord with a joyful heart? Not that you are perfect, but my question to you would be this since you've met Jesus, what has been the visible progress? The question would be asked another way. If you never met Jesus, what in your life would be different? It just horrifies me, it kind of traumatizes me to think about, okay what if I never met Jesus? How would I treat Grace? There's I don't think there's any way we're married. What would I have been as a dad? And I'm not saying I'm the world's gift to that, but I'm sure I would have been a probably harsh, domineering, overbearing, commanding dad. What would I be doing? Certainly not a pastor. How much time would I spend on the Bible? I don't even know if I would care about it or even

own one. If Jesus wasn't in my life, everything would be different and nothing would be better. Okay? And so it's not perfection, but it's progress. How have you seen God work and change you? And he gives you two examples. And what he's saying is this faith is internal manifesting itself external. Faith is what you believe and then it shows up in how you behave. I'll give you an example a story comes to mind. I'm just, I kind of see this in my mind. Some years ago, we lived up in Seattle, raise five kids, you know, cold, wet, winter lasted forever. Fall and spring, felt a lot like winter. And then summer comes and everybody's outside get some sunshine. And when the sun would come out, we didn't have a pool at the house, but oftentimes we go on vacation and the kids really love to be in the pool. And so, you know, I spent hours throwing the football boys are jumping in, making ESPN highlight catches, and taking the girls and flipping them by the feet and whoop and just playing in the pool. And there was always a moment with each of the kids when it was, they were little and it was their turn to get in the pool for the first time. And usually the little kids, you know, when they're little, let's say you're the parent in the pool. So I was the dad in the pool and the kids would get, you know, their feet, their toes right over the edge of the pool. And here they are they got their floaties, their wings. They, you know, you got them, they're going to be fine. But they don't know they're kind of freaked out. And as a dad, I'm like, "Okay jump," "uuuhhh," they're shaking, jump, "uuuhhh" jump. You have this conversation for a long time. And I would ask the kids, "Do you trust your dad?" "Dad, I trust you. I trust you. Then jump. If you trust me in the ear, it needs to result in an action out there. You need it. If you trust me, you gotta jump. You gotta trust that I'm going to catch ya, I'm your dad. I'm here for you. Oftentimes as God's kids, what we're saying is I trust you. I trust you. Okay but will you obey me? Well I don't know, I'm scared. Don't just hear the Word, do what it says. Don't just have faith, have obedience in your works. If God's telling you to do something, you need to do it. You need to jump into that job. You need to jump into that ministry. You need to jump into that marriage. Like you got to jump into it. A lot of times they're like, but I'm not sure it's going to work out. Well if the Father has called you, He will catch you. He will provide for you and he will save you. And so faith is sometimes in here, but ultimately it has to get out there. And he uses two examples. One is Abraham from Genesis 22. So here's Abraham. Abraham is a pagan guy. God shows up, saves him. Zoop! gives him faith as a gift of God. Faith is a gift of God. It's not something that we work up. It's something that God works in. And then we work out with the Holy Spirit. God saves him and says, okay, you are elderly, you've got a barren wife, no kids. You're going to have a kid and they're going to become the father of a nation. And you're going to leave your parents' house. And through your son is going to come Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the nations of the world. Abraham through your family line and your son, your seed, the world is going to be blessed. So in faith he moves. He leaves his parents' home to a place. He doesn't know where he's going, he's got a big household. He doesn't know what they're going to do for work. He doesn't know what's going to happen but that act was an act of faith. Faith is what he believed, but it's how he behaved. And then he waited decades. And then God finally gave him the son, Isaac, which means laughter because God always gets the last laugh. And then Isaac is teens, twenties, maybe thirties, God comes to him and says, "I want you to take your son, your only son, your son of the promise, your son born off the miracle. It sounds like Jesus, it's because it's a foreshadowing. And I want you to take him and slaughter him and sacrifice him like the pagan demonic religions do with child sacrifice. It's God's telling him to do

something and it's something horrifying. I can't even imagine being told, Hey, kill your son. So now Isaac, like Jesus is a grown man and he needs to journey, it's about 50 miles, if my memory is correct. So Jesus comes from heaven to earth. Isaac makes the journey of 50ish miles to Mount Moriah, which is where they later built the temple. All of this is foreshadowing the coming of Jesus, who would lay down his life as the son of God in our place for our sins. And it says that there was no wood in that region. So what Isaac had to do is he had to carry the wood on his back. This sounds like Jesus, it's because it's a foreshadowing. We'll get into all of this in Genesis next year. And then they get to the place and they laid down the wood for the sacrifice. And Isaac has to willingly lay himself down to be slaughtered at the hand of his father. Because Abraham is old and Isaac is young, he could have won that fight. And Abraham is holding up the knife and he's getting ready to obey God. And Hebrews 11 said that he had so much faith, that he believed that even if his son died, God could rise him from the dead, that's faith. And every time you have someone that you love, you visit them at the hospital, or you say something at their memorial service. You have faith that God is going to rise them from the dead. And so what happens is just as Abraham is about ready to sacrifice his son Isaac, his beloved firstborn, miraculous son of the promise. The angel of the Lord, which is Jesus Christ shows up an angel of the Lord is a messenger. The angel of the Lord, angel means messenger, is Jesus. He shows up and he says, stop, stop, stop. you've passed your test. You don't need to slaughter your son. And then the question is asked, well what's going to happen now? And Jesus says a sacrifice is going to be provided. Meaning he's coming to fulfill this foreshadowing that the Father would send His Son, that the Son would be miraculously born of a promise that He would carry His own wood and he would lay down his life to be the sacrifice for sin, to open up salvation to the nations. And what he says is Abraham who is repeatedly told in the Bible to be the human example after Jesus, of faith. Faith is something that demonstrated itself in works. He did trust the Lord and you can see it. In the same way if a husband loves his wife, you can see it. If a mom loves her kids, you can see it. They don't have to tell you. I love my kids they're like, I can see it. Husband doesn't need to say, I love my wife, I can see it. Someone who loves and trusts God, you can see it. And he says, as you look at Abraham, his action was faith. So sometimes faith and works are the same thing because works are the evidence of faith and faith works itself out in obedience. The second example given is Rahab from the book of Joshua. So there's a group of people called the Canaanites in the Old Testament they're as bad as it gets. They are demonic, cult, religion, sexual confusion. They murder their own children. They sacrifice them to demon gods. I mean, it's as bad as it can be. And so Joshua is going to a town called Jericho and he's doing a little spying through the spies. They're surveying the land. They're wondering, how could we take this over? How could we, how could we conquer our enemies? So they send a few spies in, well word gets out, Hey you know, our enemies are God's people are here and we're enemies of God, so we're enemies of God's people. And then there's a gal Rahab who intersects with the story. So the Canaanites are the worst people and she's a Canaanite prostitute. So in that culture, she is the least regarded, least respected, least honored. I mean, today this would be sex trafficking and prostitution and horrifying, traumatic, damaging, inexplicably painful life and she gets saved. Because when you're saved by grace and not by works, this is the good news. You're saved by grace not by works. It doesn't matter how bad you are. It matters how good He is. It doesn't matter how far you've run, it matters if he has tracked

you down. You don't need to be good. Here's what I'm telling you. You don't need to be good. You need God. Okay. So religion says, be good and we say, you can't be that good. You need God. She meets God, she gets saved. She becomes a believer. And so what she does is she spares and protects the lives of God's servants and soldiers. And as a result, their lives are spared in God's plan continues to conquer their enemies. Her actions of saving lives and preserving servants of God is this tremendous act of faith. She's mentioned in Hebrews is one of the great women in the history of the world. And if you read Matthew 1, where it gives Jesus' genealogy, she actually is listed in the family of Jesus Christ. And the point is you can be a prostitute in the morning and you can be a hero in the faith by the afternoon. If God's work for you, does its work in you and does its work through you. God can just change your life. God can save a soul. God can alter a destiny. God can absolutely re-hardwire the story of your life. And that's what he did with Rahab. So she's a great encouragement. And if you're here and you're like, I've done some bad things. Well, the good thing is Jesus did everything to deal with your bad things and He's going to do a work in you so that those things begin to change.