

TITLE: James (Lesson 13)

TEXT: James 2:18-20

INTRO: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:" (Rom. 3:22a) "To be justified by faith is not to be justified because we have faith, in the sense that our faith now is the supreme work that makes us righteous. The language here of being justified by faith or through faith simply means that faith is the means by which we lay hold of Christ." *R.C. Sproul*

I. (vs. 18) The great contrast!

A. The problem.

NOTE: "...the theme of James is that authentic faith always produces spiritual fruit; if there is no visible spiritual fruit, then you can assume there is no saving faith." *Jeffress*

1. A dead faith does not lead to *possession* of salvation.
2. The good news is genuine faith can be tested!

B. The solution.

1. True faith leads to *fruit, life and power*.

NOTE: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." *Rom. 1:17*

C. Missing heaven by 18 inches.

1. Having a head knowledge without a heart conviction.
2. Knowing truth but not incorporating it into your life.

II. (vs. 19) Having religion (orthodoxy), but not knowing Christ.

NOTE: *Matt. 7:21-23*

A. Dead faith may even be theologically sound. (intellect alone)

NOTE: Judaism was based on the concept of the oneness of God. See *Deut. 6:4*. In a world characterized by polytheism the Jews were confident in their religion.

B. Knowledge without faith (trust) in Christ is not enough.

1. Even the demons believe the Bible and are terrified. (emotions)

NOTE: *Matt. 8:28-34*

III. (vs. 20) "O vain man" (O senseless man!)

A. When common sense is no longer common.

NOTE: "This is a strong rebuke. It is a moral judgment more than an intellectual judgment, recalling the judgment that falls upon 'the fool' in the Wisdom Literature of the OT." *The Reformation Study Bible*

B. Faith without substance is truly empty.

1. "But are you willing to know?"

NOTE: Sometimes the problem resides in the *will* and not so much the knowledge.

CONCLUSION: "One of the greatest dangers for us preachers of the gospel is that we like to see people converted, and we are willing to accept a brazen and flippant yes from some individual who says, 'Yes, I'll trust Jesus.'" *J. Vernon McGee*