

LIVING HD



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WEEK 4

12 - 16 July 2021

MONDAY – More than a prayer



James 2:14-26 (NIV) *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*



Ruth 2:11-12 (NIV) *Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”*

The Methodist doctrine of grace identifies God’s work before we are saved (prevenient grace), at the moment when we are saved (justifying grace) and for the rest of our lives (sanctifying grace). While some Christians often place a lot of emphasis on expressing our faith through a “sinner’s prayer” or a moment where we are “born again,” this really is just the beginning of the journey of faith.

Change my heart, O God

According to James, simply believing in Jesus is not enough.

A sinner’s prayer or even many prayers are good, but they are not the sole objective of the Christian life. We are called to something more. We are called to embrace God’s sanctifying grace which gradually helps us to live better lives and to allow faith to result in real, in-the-world action.



Prayer: Help me embrace a faith which changes me and changes those around me. AMEN

Grace Alone: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBaBacWu_bl

TUESDAY – Faith that feeds



James 2: 18-19 (NIV) *But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*



John 6: 9 *“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”*

It is rather sad how much time Christians have spent debating the details of our faith. Countless controversial topics have kept theologians and lay people alike trapped in circular arguments to try to identify exactly what it is that a good Christian should believe. But is what sets us apart as Christians the nuances of our theology or the radical love and grace which we demonstrate every day?

Some church friends and I had the opportunity, when the original xenophobic uprisings started in South Africa, to take some bread and water to a local police station where hundreds of terrified foreign nationals had gathered.

Living a radical life for Jesus

We didn't have enough for everyone, but at the police

station we met volunteers from two other church denominations. One group had brought soup, another warm mince. Our theology (the way we believed in God) may have been different, but our deeds worked together to enable God to provide a nutritious warm meal to foreigners in their moment of need. And together as Christ-followers from different backgrounds, we experienced our very own “feeding the 5000” moment.

- So which is more important to you, theology or action?



Prayer: Lord I know that belief is the easy part. Responding to the call you place on my life is difficult. Help me to know what it means to live a truly radical Christian life. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – The example of others



James 2: 20-22 (NIV) *You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.*



Hebrews 11: 8-9 (NIV) *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.*

There have been a surprising number of famous (or infamous) church pastors who have tried to demonstrate their faith through fake miracles. One I remember is a pastor who claimed to have terminal cancer and was then “miraculously saved”. His congregation celebrated God’s work and the pastor’s faith. Until they discovered it was all made up.

You probably aren’t inspired by someone with great faith but no action. You can’t fake faith. Faith is only demonstrated by deeds.

Be living example of Christ

Those who understand this seldom think about how they are perceived by others. They simply live out the reality of what is in their hearts.

Abraham stands as an exemplar of faith and deeds. His faith was inextricably tied to action. He didn’t just believe, he allowed his belief to direct his life.

God brings others into our lives to inspire us to live impactful lives that build His Kingdom here on earth. And He uses us to inspire others too!



Prayer: May my life tell the story of my faith. AMEN

THURSDAY – Good covers bad



James 2: 25-26 (NIV) *In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*



Luke 10: 33-34 (NIV) *But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.*

Many Christians live in fear of committing an unforgivable sin or

not asking for forgiveness for each one of their sins. Or some may nit-pick the sin of others and find new ways to define who are the “good Christians” and who are the “confused Christians”!

God doesn't keep the score of how bad we are, but He could be keeping score of the good we do! God doesn't look for reasons to exclude people from his Kingdom, He looks for reasons to include people!

We read in Scripture stories of outsiders like Rahab or the

Look for the opportunities

Samaritan who are celebrated because of the way they showed

love. Rahab had made many mistakes in her life. But she was considered righteous for getting one thing right! Many thought the Samaritan had picked the wrong belief system, but Jesus used him to illustrate the Christian life.

We should not live in fear of one sin or believing the wrong thing. We should live looking for opportunities to do good things for God. We should live looking for opportunities to share His love with anyone and everyone!



Prayer: Thank you Lord that you care more about the good in me than the bad in me. AMEN

FRIDAY – Go and bear much fruit



John 15: 5,8 (NIV) *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. ... This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.”*



Luke 13: 6-8 (NIV) *Then He told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”*

Jesus reminds us of the need to stay connected to Him, connected to what we believe. But we must never forget the reason for our faith, to bear much fruit! As the second passage shows, we need to keep our souls well-fed to ensure that we are able to bear the best fruit for God.

Feed your soul in order to bear fruit

Probably this week you sensed the need to be more intentional about putting your faith into action. But as you commit to doing this, also commit to working at the root of your faith.

- What can you do to stay connected to the living God?
- What can you do to grow your faith?



Prayer: Lord I want to bear much fruit for you. Help me to know how to care for my faith in a way that empowers me to live as Your disciple. AMEN

I’m Gonna Work for the Lord:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evPkMP8diGw>

