

## Show Me Your Faith

Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1987

### James 2:18

*“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”*

I'm going to get around to a verse of Scripture found in the book of James Chapter 2:18 in a little while. I'm going to speak on this subject: “SHOW ME YOUR FAITH.”

Let me lay a little ground work and make some introductory remarks. In the book of Romans Chapter 1 and 2 the apostle Paul exposes the evil and corruption of human nature, both in the pagan Gentile and in the religious Jew.

He spends the entire two chapters exposing the corruption and evil of the human heart which is found in the world and in the church among the Gentiles and among the professing religionists. He exposes the evil of the fallen human nature.

Paul comes to several conclusions; there are about four that I want to give to you today. These are the conclusions that Paul comes to as he writes on this subject.

First of all: In Romans 3:9, he comes to this conclusion and says; *“All are under sin.”* All are under the guilt of sin, under the rule of sin, under the judgment of sin and under the curse of sin. He says in Romans 3:9; *“I have proved both Jew and Gentile that they are all under sin. There is no difference. They have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.”*

He is talking about you, me and every person in this world, in the church, out of the church, on the street, in the home, old and young; *“all have sinned and come short of God's glory.”*

In Roman 3:20, he comes to a second conclusion: He realizes man has an evil heart by the fall and man has an evil nature. Sin is a principle. Sin is not just a deed without; sin is a principle within. Sin is the principle that motivates the deed.

We do what we do because of what we are. We sin because we are sinners and we steal because we are thieves. We lie because we are liars. You see; that is the problem. He says in Romans 3:20, *“Therefore, by the works of the law, (by the deeds of religion, by doing good deeds), shall no flesh be justified in God's sight.”* That is because of man's sinful state and nature.

He cannot by the law of works and deeds justify himself before God. Everything that we do just adds to our condemnation. Every breath we draw, every word we say, every thought we think, every deed we do, every step we take and every movement about us adds to our condemnation.

The law can no more save you than a mirror can wash your face. The law can tell you what you are, but the law cannot do anything about what you are. That is the reason that Jeremiah asked three questions:

*“Can the Ethiopian change his skin?”* Can a black man change his skin? No sir; he can’t! Why can’t he? The reason is because that is his nature. *“Can a leopard change his spots?”* No sir; he can’t change his spots or a zebra his stripes because that is his nature.

*“Neither can you do good that are custom (by nature) to do evil.”* You cannot do it. There is no good thing about us. *“In the flesh no man can please God.”* That is Paul’s conclusion under divine inspiration.

Some people talk about there is being a “little good” in every man, but there is no good in man by nature or by birth. Only God is good. Romans 3: 21 and 22, Paul comes to the third conclusion; God is holy, there is holiness of God.

I’m not talking about the holiness that some people confess down at the local assembly; I am talking about real holiness. I’m not talking about what people profess by wearing their hair a certain length or their clothes a certain length or a certain color. I’m not talking about those that say; “Praise the Lord” every breath or “hallelujah.” This is not the holiness that I am talking about.

I’m talking about real holiness, genuine holiness, and God’s holiness. Paul says that there is holiness and there is righteousness. Righteousness and holiness is the same thing. There is righteousness for sinners that God will accept. There is righteousness for sinners that God will receive.

There is righteousness for sinners, but it is not by that sinner’s works. That righteousness is by the faithfulness and the obedience of a perfect man, the Lord Jesus Christ our Representative, our Redeemer, our Substitute.

That is right! That is what he says in Romans 3:20. He comes to these conclusions; *“I’ve proved; all are under sin.”* Face it now or face it at the Judgment. Admit it now or

admit it in the judgment (that all have sinned). *“Therefore, by the deeds of the law, (by the works of religion) there shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight.”*

You can justify yourself in your momma’s sight or your preachers sight. You can justify yourself in your neighbors sight but not in God’s sight because *“God looks on the heart.”* He says, *“Now, without the law, (without your obedience to the law); there is a righteousness without the law;”* it is even the righteousness of God Almighty.

I’m not talking about some little tin-horned religious professor’s righteousness; it is God’s righteousness. It is not some little silly rules or regulations that some church has come up with that says, *“This is our standard by which we are holy.”*

This is God’s righteousness and it is by the *“faithfulness of Christ; it is unto all and upon all them that believe for there is no difference.”*

This perfect holiness of Christ and this perfect righteousness of Christ justifies and makes the sinner righteous in God’s sight; it gives me holy acceptance before God. That is what He said in 2 Corinthians 5:21; *“He was made sin for us who knew no sin in order that we might be made in Him the righteousness of God, the holiness of God.”*

In 1 Corinthians 1:30, it says; *“Of Him, (of God), are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.”*

Do you know that this perfect obedience of Christ, this perfect life of Christ, this perfect holiness of Christ which He performed and He perfected for you and me not only justifies us before God but it justifies God? This holiness of Christ enables God to be just and righteous Himself and still accept us.

That’s right, because Christ perfectly obeyed God’s Law. He did before God what God requires us to do. He did before God what we don’t do, can’t do and have never done. Christ did what no man has ever done. This is what we call imputed holiness, imputed Righteousness.

In the event that some Bible scholar makes fun in your presence of imputed holiness and imputed righteousness; turn to the Fourth Chapter of Romans and you will find the words *“counted”* or *“imputed”* nine times. *“Abraham believed God and it was counted, (imputed or reckoned) to him for righteousness.”* Faith brings us a righteousness that God will accept that is in Christ.

The hymn writer wrote:

Oh my soul, with wonder tell  
Jesus has done all things well.

And through His atoning blood, I have perfect peace with God; there is justice, mercy, truth and love. Every attribute of God joins to make this peace secure and it must and shall endure.

Paul came to the fourth conclusion: In Romans 3:28, he says; *“I’ve proved all have sinned; I’ve proved by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in God’s sight.”* You need not tip-toe your way around it; this is so! I have proved that there is righteousness to be had. There is holiness and acceptance with God but it is not in you; it is in Christ.

Now, he says; this is my final conclusion, in Romans 3:28; *“Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* That is my conclusion and that is the way that Paul sums it up and that is the Gospel; *“For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works less any man should boast. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”*

We are not created because of good works, but unto good works. Romans 5:1 says, *“Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God.”*

Paul is so strong on this point. He labors it again and again. He said, *“Abraham believed God; it was counted to him for righteousness.”* He said again in Romans 11:6, *“If it be of grace; it is not of works; otherwise, grace is not grace.”* It is of grace it is not of works. If it is of works then grace is not grace.

Here is a question that I have to ask and probably some of you have already asked it; if Abraham is justified by faith alone, not of works, how do you reconcile James 2:21? The reason Paul selected Abraham as his example is because Abraham is the father of the faithful.

God promised to him a seed as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore. God promised that through his seed all nations would be blessed. Abraham is the father of the faithful and Paul chose Abraham as an example of how a man is saved.

How do you reconcile James 2:21 which says; *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac?”* My friend; one cardinal rule that you must observe when you are reading God’s Word is, find out who is speaking, find out to whom

he is speaking, and then find out the subject which he is treating. This is the cardinal rule.

In this portion of Romans that I have just been dealing with, Paul is speaking to the religious Jews, the folks who were “do, do, do.” They kept days, holy days, feasts, tithes, Sabbaths, rituals and were working their way to heaven. They were trying to work their way to God.

Paul said, *“They were going about to establish their own righteousness and would not submit to the righteousness of God which is Christ.”* They were ignorant of how God saves sinners. They were trying to save themselves. They were trying to make themselves acceptable to God.

These are the people that Paul is speaking to, these religious Jews. He is speaking to them about what? He is speaking to them about the justification of the soul before God in His sight. Don’t lose that right there; *“By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God’s sight (before God); therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without works in God’s sight.”*

He talks about how a man is justified from sin and the curse of the law in God’s sight. That is only by faith through the merits of Christ. But here in James now, this is something different; James is not writing to the religious Jews who are trying to work their way to heaven. James is writing and speaking to people who were misusing the grace of God, who were abusing the grace of God.

He says, *“If a man comes into your assembly and doesn’t have enough clothing and food and you say to him, be warmed and filled; that won’t do him any good. You have to put clothes on his back and food in his belly.”*

These people were claiming that they were saved by faith without works, by a faith that was dead, by a faith that had no love for God or anybody else. We know a lot of people in this world in religion today that hold to that same belief. They say, “Well; I am saved, once saved, always saved, never can be lost because I believe.” They are saying, “I don’t do anything else but I believe.”

Do you know what James says? He says, *“A faith that has not works is dead.”* I’m talking about his faith being dead as a doornail. A faith that does not love and a faith that does not give and a faith that does not obey God can’t save. A faith that does not pant after holiness and a faith that does not pant after God is dead and can’t save anybody. That is when he says, *“Show me your faith.”*

Paul was writing a while ago about how a soul is justified in God's sight. Here, James is talking about you justifying your faith in His sight. He said, "*Show me your faith.*" He said, "*I'll show you my faith by my works;*" that is how I will show you my faith.

You can't see my heart. I say that I love God but you can't see love in my heart. I say that I believe Christ but you can't see that faith in my heart. So, I will show you that I believe God; you "*show me your faith;*" let me see your faith. Do you see that?

The apostle Paul is writing and speaking to a religious-minded, works-minded, self-righteous people. They are trying to observe all the rules, rituals and ceremonies. They are trying to establish righteousness of their own. He tells them that it won't work, it won't work, it won't work. He tells them that they can't be justified. Your soul is not justified in God's sight by works but by Christ alone!

James comes along to these people who say that they believe in Jesus and they made their profession and they walked down the aisle when they were ten years old and joined a church and got their name on the roll. But they have not been back since. They haven't been back, but they will say that their names are on the church roll.

I know that they show up on Christmas, Easter or Mother's Day. They will wear a big flower on Mother's Day and sit on the front row and sing, "Oh, how I love Jesus." James says, "You are a liar; you don't love Jesus; you don't even love your neighbor; you love yourself."

He says, "*You show me your faith.*" Don't you know that "*faith without works is dead?*" A so-called faith that does not produce love, which does not produce peace, which does not produce joy that does not produce humility, that does not produce works of righteousness, is dead and it will not save. "*Show me your faith.*"

I'm not talking about outward deeds all together. I don't believe God is talking about outward deeds. I'm going to give you some evidences of a "*show me thy faith.*" I'm going to give you some evidences of a true love for Christ. These things are obvious.

First of all: A true believer in Jesus Christ will so trust Jesus Christ and so believe on the Son of God as to renounce, absolutely renounce, every other ground of confidence. A true believer has no other ground of confidence except Christ.

This is what Paul is saying when he says, "*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.*" I count my religious heritage, my experiences

and my feelings and my works. That is what Isaiah is saying, *“He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was laid on Him. By His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”* Christ is my hope! That is what Job is saying. He says, *“I know that my Redeemer liveth.”*

This is what David is saying, *“Although it be not so with my house, (these being the last words of king David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel), God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: And this is all my salvation and all my desire.”* Everything is wrapped up in that covenant of mercy in Christ Jesus. That is trust and that is faith. That is Christ!

Second: A true believer will glory, boast and brag, only in the righteousness of Christ. Yes sir; he will never glory in his own works. You can't get him to brag on himself or praise his works. He counts his works as *“filthy rags.”* That's right!

He counts the best prayer that he ever prayed to be unacceptable by God Almighty except in Christ. He counts the best gift that he ever gave to be unacceptable. The best sermon he ever preached he claims as totally unacceptable.

That is what old George Whitfield said so many years ago. He preached the great sermon on the subject: *“The Method of Grace.”* He had a point in there on repentance. He said, *“I will tell you this; no man has ever savingly repented, truly repented until first of all, he repents of his sin. That is what he is. No man has ever savingly repented until he repents in godly sorrow over what he has done and is doing and will do. No man has ever savingly repented before God Almighty until he weeps over and mourns over, and grieves over his best deed. He counts even his best deeds to be sin. There is enough sin in my repentance that I have to repent over my repentance.”*

That's right; there is enough evil in the Saint nearest to the gate of glory to send him to hell except for the blood of Christ. There is enough kindling wood; that old runny, piney-knot kindling wood from south Alabama in you to light another hell if God is pleased to light a spark except by His grace. That's right; I'm talking about the best deeds you have ever done.

We have never loved God like we ought to. We've never believed God like we ought to. We've never served God like we ought to. Anything short of perfection is unacceptable to God. You better get a hold of that!

You see; I am taking a different direction than you thought I would take when I said, *“Show me your faith.”* You show me your faith by confidence in Christ and a lack of confidence in yourself. I will tell you this; if I am saved by the grace of God, *“I hope by Thy good pleasure to safely arrive at home.”*

I'll tell you another thing, a true believer will rejoice in the cross of substitution. He knows substitution and he loves substitution and will preach substitution. He rejoices in substitution. Paul said, *“God forbid, that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Paul had some things that he might have gloried in if he had been like us. I read all these stories from prison to pulpit, from cocaine addict to preacher of the Gospel; everybody seems to be bragging about what they use to do.

They brag about how mean they use to be, how wild they use to be and the fun that they use to have. *“Forgetting those things which are behind,”* is what the Scripture says. You should be ashamed of those things instead of bragging on them. Paul could have gloried in his religious background but he didn't.

He could have gloried in his supernatural experience on the road to Damascus. If some of these preachers would have had an experience like that they would have been talking about it until they were ninety years old.

Paul could have gloried in his revelations. He was taken to the Third Heaven. Let a fellow go to Australia to preach and he will brag about it for a month. Go to Haiti and he will show scenes on his television program for six months.

Paul went to the Third Heaven and never mentioned it. He could have gloried in his accomplishments and in the churches that he organized. In the writings, he wrote 13 books in the New Testament. He said, *“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ.”*

Let me see your faith. Quit showing me your picture and start preaching Christ. Quit bragging on what you are doing and building, the money you are making and the souls you are winning; let me hear you preach Christ and I will see some faith. Up until then, I don't think that you have any.

The hymn writer wrote:

There is a fountain filled with blood



Drawn from Emanuel's veins  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

You legalists; on your way to Sinai, why don't you stop at Calvary? You charismatics, while on your way to Pentecost; why don't you stop at Calvary; that is where the work was done? That is where the grace flowed; that is where the mercy is; that is where the blood is.

You millennialists, (pre, post or a), on your way to Armageddon; I wish you would stop at Calvary and take your people there; that is where your people will be washed in the blood. You fundamentalists, on your way to the five judgments and 17 crowns, you ought to stop at Calvary and preach Christ. You ritualists; on your way down to the priest to confess your sin; why don't you go to Calvary where they can be put away? *"Show me your faith."*

A true believer will love Christ supremely and he will so order his life as to avoid commitments and associations which stand in competition with his Lord. Yes he will! *"What fellowship does darkness have with light;"* you tell me? What communion does Baal have with God; you tell me?

A believer is not going to form a business partnership with an unbeliever. A believer is not going to join a club or an organization and socialize with pagans. A believer is not going to identify with a religious organization which does not honor Christ. A believer will not marry an unbeliever; they marry only in the Lord. *"Show me your faith."*

I will tell you this; a true believer will continue in the faith and will never quit. They will never leave the fellowship because they cannot leave Christ. You see; repentance is not an isolated act; it is a continual coming to Christ. The Scripture says, *"To whom coming."*

Last of all; a true believer will obey the Lord's precepts and commandments. He doesn't do it in order to gain His favor but because he lives in His favor. The law is not made for a righteous man. You don't put locks on these doors out here for believers. They put locks on doors for unbelievers.

You don't have to threaten a believer to get him to walk with God. He loves God. You don't have to promise a believer a reward to get him to love God; *"he delights in His presence."*

What is this message called? It is called; "Show Me Your Faith."