

The Faith that Does Not Save (James 2:14-20)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on September 20, 2009

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When people apply as members of this church usually one or more of the Elders will get to know them and will interview them and let them ask us questions and we will want to hear the person's testimony and how God has changed their life since they trusted in Christ. We ask that they read and be in essential agreement with our philosophy of ministry and constitution and doctrinal statement and if they desire to commit themselves to this local body in an official way we ask that they sign our church covenant as well. If they are transferring membership from another church, of course we want to make sure they were in good standing and did not cause a split at their last church, and are not under church discipline from past church, before the Elders would unanimously agree to welcome an individual as a member of this church.

Some churches do it differently and bring prospective new members before the congregation at a congregational meeting to vote on whether the individual(s) should be accepted into membership. While our constitution doesn't require that, this morning I want to bring someone before you, as kind of a special case, which you'll understand why and what I mean in a little bit.

Before I was even born, this person was a worshipper of the Lord, the One True God, with an unusually deep personal understanding of God and His attributes and glory. This person has led worship in another context, and not only believes in Christ but seems to have a real fear and trembling before the Lord that affects him. Unlike many churchgoers who rarely pray and who live mostly independently of God, this person really lives under the sovereign will of God and recognizes that, and often brings himself before the throne of God above for direction. This person has meaningful conversations with God on a regular basis, speaking freely with God. God has spoken to this person in unique, special ways, which impact his behavior. This person definitely knows Scripture, probably more verses by heart than I do.

I have gotten to know this person, some of it second-hand and a little personally, and as best I can tell, this individual would be in complete agreement with our church doctrinal statement.

- The Bible alone is God's Word, inspired, infallible, inerrant
- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Holy One of God
- This person knows Jesus personally, and that Jesus died, rose again, and now sits at the Father's right hand in heaven
- He knows there's no other way to heaven but through Jesus and it's by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone
- He knows there is coming a day when there will be a real 1000 yr kingdom where Christ reigns and destroys demons and devil, casting into the abyss (Rev. 20) to be tormented at the appointed time, no longer permitted to deceive men
- He knows there's a literal heaven and hell and a judgment at the end of all things and he lives in light of that day

So even though we don't have to do this, I want to know if you all would join in welcoming this person as a member of GCBC?

What's his name? You all know him. He goes by Lucifer. Other names he goes by include Satan and the devil. Everything I just said about him can be demonstrated about him in the Bible.

Luke 4:1 *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness² for forty days, being tempted by the devil ...⁹ And he [the devil] led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;¹⁰ for **it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,'¹¹ and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'**"¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'¹³ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him ...*

4:33 *In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,³⁴ "Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? **I know who You are—the Holy One of God!**"*

4:41 *Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because **they knew Him to be the Christ.***

Luke 8:27 *And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons ...²⁸ Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, **Son of the Most High God?** I beg You, do not torment me." ... [Mt. 8:29 "Have You come here to torment us **before the time?**"] ...³¹ They were imploring Him **not to command them to go away into the abyss.**³² Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to **permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.***

In Luke 22, Satan asks Jesus permission to tempt Peter. Satan in Job 1-2 comes before the throne of God above to ask permission to test Job and isn't allowed to lift a finger against man without God's sovereign will which Satan must submit to. I also said he was a worshipper of the Lord, and a worship leader with deep personal understanding of God, which he certainly had as an archangel in heaven before he rebelled and fell. He and his demons certainly believe many true and orthodox facts about God and even facts about Jesus in particular as we just read, and they know many Bible doctrines and can quote Bible verses, and have a faith in and even a fear of God ... but all that is not necessarily enough to save!

James 2¹⁴ *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.¹⁸ But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."¹⁹ **You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?*

James wants us to know that possessing sound theology is good (“you do well”), but it’s not enough until that sound theology also possesses us. The devil and the demons are expert theologians, educated up close and personal with God in the perfect seminary, heaven itself, before Satan led a rebellion of a third of the angels in heaven (Rev. 12:3-4). Demons believe a lot of accurate facts about Jesus, and in fact their belief goes deeper than many churchgoers, because v. 19 says their faith in God makes them shudder/tremble in fear, more than can be said for many professing Christians.

Not all are truly saved who believe or have faith (same Greek word *pisteuo* or *pistis*). There were many who believed the miracles of Jesus; even his fiercest critics could not disbelieve or deny them. If our faith is not better than them or demons, we cannot expect to be in a better place in eternity, James is saying. Orthodox beliefs in a creed (like the classic Jewish one alluded here, “God is One”) do not guarantee a place in heaven automatically. Not all faith saves.

John 2:23 *Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed [pisteuo] in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself [pisetuo – continual tense] to them, for He knew all men, ²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. 3:1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ² this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

There were many who believed in Jesus but Jesus did not believe in them! Many knew and believed the right things about Jesus and His divine origin, but that’s not the same as being born again. Many in Israel diligently studied the Scriptures, and believed *sola scriptura*, that Scripture alone is sufficient for salvation and life. In one sense of word, they believed Scripture; in another, they didn’t.

5:39 *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ⁴⁰ and you are **unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.** ... ⁴⁵ “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is **Moses, in whom you have set your hope.** ⁴⁶ “For **if you believed** [tense for continual over time] **Moses,** you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ “But **if you do not believe his writings,** how will you believe My words?”*

It’s not that they had no belief in the writings of Moses, in fact v. 45 affirms they had put their hope in him, and every orthodox or conservative Jew believes in Moses, none of them disbelieve him or his writings in that sense. But Jesus says you don’t truly believe Scripture unto eternal life if you don’t truly come to trust in Christ.

6:14 *Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”*

But in v. 63, Jesus says *“It is the Spirit who gives life; **the flesh profits nothing;** the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. ⁶⁴ “But there are some of you who do not believe.”*

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.⁶⁵ And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

8:30 As He spoke these things, **many came to believe in Him.**³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews **who had believed Him**, “If you **continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;**³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

...⁴² Jesus said, “If God were your Father, **you would love Me** ...

...⁴⁴ **“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.**

...⁴⁷ **“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.”**

...⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”⁵⁹

Therefore **they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.**

It’s possible to believe in Christ and not be saved. I know in my own life I never disbelieved Christ or the Bible; I was always a ‘believer’ as far back as I can remember, but I wasn’t always saved. My parents told me I even prayed to Jesus to be My Savior when I was 4 years old (I was so young I don’t even remember it) but I don’t believe I was truly regenerated until I was a young adult. God convicted me of my lostness, giving me a deep understanding of my sin and a longing to be free of it and to follow Jesus as my Lord. Then I began to see inner changes, a hunger for to read Scripture, growing fruit of the Spirit, etc. I was a ‘believer’ years before I was born again and truly saved. James 2 says there’s many like me in churches, with faith but not yet saved. It’s vital we understand this, for ourselves, and to explain to others.

The Faith that Does Not Save (the marks of non-saving faith):

1. No More than Words (v. 14)

¹⁴ *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*

In the Greek language, this type of rhetorical question with the negative requires the answer NO. Wuest’s Greek NT says this “faith is not able to save him, is it?” NLT: “that kind of faith doesn’t save anyone.” Another has: “Could that sort of faith save anyone’s soul?” (Phillips). KJV/NKJV can be misleading into a serious error here when it says “can faith save him?” Faith *does* save in many other NT passages, but the original language has a definite article before faith, literally “*the* faith” (i.e., the faith in the first half of the verse that says something but has nothing to back it up to indicate it’s more than words). NIV has “can such faith save him?” Another version: “can this kind of faith save him?” (NET)

The word “faith” appears 14x in 12 verses and is the obvious theme. The question James is addressing is not whether or not faith in Christ can save a sinner, but he’s addressing what kind of faith in Christ can save a sinner. A faith that is no more than words, even the right words about the Lord doesn’t get to heaven, as our Lord Himself said at the end of Matthew 7: “*Not everyone who says, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven ... many will say ... but I will say to them, ‘Depart from me, I never knew you’*”

When James 2:14 says this man *says* he has faith, it's in the tense for a continual claim, a perpetual profession of faith. But the whole time he is not in possession of works that accompany saving faith. He is ever saying, but never obeying (both verbs refer to patterns, not an occasional or irregular incident). You've probably heard the old question: "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict and convince in a court of law?" The answer for the man in James 2:14 is no, just his words.

Mere words can't save, James says. There must be visible conduct to support verbal claims of what you believe. What use is it for a man to *say* he is a fireman if he never works as a fireman; is he really a fireman and is anyone ever really saved by such a claim?

Saving faith will not just be on the lips, it will also show up in life.

2nd mark of Non-Saving Faith: No Mercy Practiced (v. 15-16)

¹⁵ *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,* ¹⁶ *and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*

We also saw this in last week's passage, where v. 8 says we are to love our neighbor, and then v. 13 says right before this text that "*judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy.*" Those who show no mercy in this life to others can also expect no mercy on judgment day for themselves. Christ said "*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*" (Mt 5:7).

Human mercy doesn't earn God's, it evidences God's mercy in us. A person may *say* they have faith in Christ all they want, but if there's no mercy or love they express to the body of Christ, they are not showing evidence that God's mercy or love is within them.

1 Corinthians 13:2 ... ***if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*** [or even if I do the greatest works of charity without God-given, God-produced love, it says in v. 3 "*it profits me nothing*"—certainly not salvation]

That passage makes clear acts of mercy in and of themselves don't mean you're saved, but no acts of mercy seem to mean you're not. It doesn't mean you always give money to beggars (in Acts 3 the Apostles didn't, but they did feed widows in the church, Acts 6).

Growing up as a missionary kid in a 3rd-world country like the Philippines there are literally beggars everywhere that can overrun you and some sad-looking kids are literally hired out by men who take advantage of them and most everything they get. Our family wouldn't just throw pesos out, but we might give food if we had it.

The context of James 2 seems to be especially in the church (v. 2b a poor man in local church with shabby clothes) and v. 15 resumes this "*brother or sister [family of Christ] is without clothing and in need of daily food.*" KJV has "naked" but the Greek word doesn't mean someone stark naked walking into the body of Christ, the Amplified has literally "*poorly clad.*" Perhaps he or she had no outer garment or whatever they were wearing was so thin and worn it would not keep them warm (cf. v. 16 "be warmed"). They need daily food.

In v. 16 saying, “Go in peace” (*shalom* for the Jews) is probably equivalent to us saying “God bless you, brother / sister.” It was a way to end a conversation and wish them well on their way.

NAB: “Good-bye and good luck.”

“Hope it works out. Peace, bro.”

So long, farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, goodnight.

Adios, amigo, que Dios te guarde.

Daniel Doriani explains the Greek phrase means: ““May God go with you.” The statement itself is not objectionable. The problem is that it functions “as a religious cover for a failure to act.” “May God go with you” stands in the place of “I will go with you.” “Keep warm and well fed” (as the NIV puts it) ... could be reflexive or passive, so that it might be translated two ways. The first translation is, “Warm yourself and feed yourself.” That is, “I wish you well as *you take care of yourself*. You look cold; you ought to try to get warm. You look skinny; you should eat more.”

... The second translation is, “Be warmed and well fed.” That would mean, “May God feed and clothe you, because I certainly won’t.” This amounts to counseling someone to pray that God will help him. But perhaps the poor brother has been praying, and God expects *us* to answer the prayer!’¹

Maybe she *is* praying for daily bread, and God wants you to bring a meal by to her. Sometimes praying for someone is all we can do, but on other occasions, we *can* help, and if we don’t, the end of v. 16 says “what use is that?” Mere words without any mercy don’t profit your needy brother or sister, and when it comes to faith, mere words while not showing any mercy won’t profit or save you.

1 John 3 ¹⁴ *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death ...* ¹⁷ *But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?* ¹⁸ *Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.* ¹⁹ *We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him.*

The principle of mercy of course can be practiced in many settings less extreme than a nearly naked person about to die of starvation (James has already talked about orphans and widows and people going through trials). The key in 1 John 3:17 is you have the ability to meet a need, and you see your brother in Christ in need - it might not be clothes or food but even an emotional or spiritual need. He needs someone to invest time and show mercy, and you have the ability to meet that need – love him, do pray with him and for him (people know when it’s not just empty words) and put your arm around him and give of your time, listen and ask if there’s anything more you can do -- that’s real faith. John says (v. 19) love *in action* to our family in Christ is what gives our heart assurance.

But non-saving faith has: No More than Words
 No Mercy Practiced
 No Movement or Life (v. 17)

¹⁷ *Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

If something's not moving or doing anything to indicate life, you can't be sure there is life there. This verse shouldn't be difficult to understand – even a little kid looking at a something that looks like a little lizard that doesn't move like lizards do, a kid will question whether it's alive, and maybe feel it to see if it's a fake rubber toy.

Spiritually, people may look like Christians, but if their faith has no works, no movement--not that they do nothing physically at all in general or even in church--but no mercy practiced as Christians do, no motive in what they do to please Christ and glorify God, no Christ-loving living faith, it's not the real thing and it's not alive. At our first place we rented on Meder Road, I saw a possum in our back porch trashcan. I knocked the can over and it was totally motionless for the longest time (I had to question if it was alive). I found out later it was pretending, and I knew it was alive because hours later it got up and ran off. But if days and months went by and it never moved or did any possum works, I'd know it's dead.

Don't misunderstand v. 17; you don't have to do a whole bunch of Christian works *before* your faith becomes living saving faith. It's not if *you do* certain Christian works you *definitely are* saved, but it is saying that *without* such Christ-produced works, you can't be sure Christ is within you; your faith may be empty and dead.

Life is not caused by activity, it is *manifested by* activity. Newborn babies don't become alive after coming out and actively moving around and coughing and kicking and breathing and doing what babies do, we know the baby is alive because it's doing the things babies do. The point of James is simple: just as there are signs of life physically, there are signs of life spiritually. A faith that doesn't have the vital signs, an empty faith *by itself* is dead.

4. No Manifestation Outwardly (v. 18)

¹⁸ *But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."*

In the original Greek manuscripts, they didn't use punctuation marks, and in a few cases it's hard for us 21 centuries later to know exactly where to put quote marks (NASB puts whole statement in v. 18 in quotes, NKJV/NIV/ESV put quotes around just the first part: "You have faith and I have works."). From Greek writings we have, it seems that this type of introductory phrase in v. 18 is always used for an objection. I don't want to drag you through all the technical and scholarly arguments as to where the objector's quote begins and ends, but the basic gist I think is clear: Some will want to separate faith and works (i.e., "this person has faith and this person has works, to each his own, I'm ok, you're ok"). But you are not ok spiritually if you only have one without the other.

Verse 18 says "*show me your faith without your works.*" How can you show you have faith without any outward manifestation? How can you demonstrate your faith without some demonstration of it? Impossible! It's obvious – you can't show what you have nothing to show for! Works don't *make* faith, they *manifest* saving faith. The end of the verse says (probably James speaking to an objector) "*I will show you my faith by my works.*" True faith is demonstrated by conduct that backs up the claim. It shows up in works, not just words.

In sports, an opponent may talk a big game all he wants, but on the court is what counts. Put up or shut up. Scoreboard talks. You may know a lot about the game of basketball, you may religiously watch Sportscenter every evening, you may have memorized all the stats of your favorite teams and players and know all the rules intellectually and can talk it with the best of them – that doesn't make you a baller. On the court is where it becomes evident if you have it or not ... also in the court of life.

The reformers recovered the biblical truth that man is saved by grace through faith alone (not by works themselves) but they also emphasized the equally biblical truth that man is not saved by the kind of faith that is alone (with no resulting works to show for it).

There is a type of faith that is empty and does not save a soul:

1. No More than Words
2. No Mercy Practiced
3. No Movement or Life
4. No Manifestation Outwardly
- 5. No Measurable Fruit (v. 19-20)**

¹⁹ *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.* ²⁰ *But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?*

That word “useless” is different than the words used before, it's the opposite of working – literally this is a faith that does not work. A work-less faith is a worthless faith. The word can be translated as “fruitless.” In at least one other place in my Bible it's translated “barren” which indicates dead in the sense of lack of fruit being produced, like a tree bearing no fruit, or like a field not giving any crop, worthless. One translation has “unproductive” (Wuest). It's not about “works” in the sense of how Paul would use the term more technically writing 2 decades later to speak of the works of the Law or works of the flesh, which do not save, but when you're saved, both James and Paul agree there will be fruit.

If you see some of this fruit in your life, even if it's very little now, but you have seen growth in your life in areas like this, and want to increase more, be encouraged. Assurance comes from what God is doing in your life now, not what you think you did for God in past. This is God-produced fruit in a heart cooperating with inner grace. These aren't works of the flesh, they're works of the Spirit within. If you want assurance that you have the Holy Spirit within you, isn't it reasonable to look for the fruit of the Spirit? In Matthew 7, Jesus speaks of a lack of good fruit in a similar context. If you wanted to study deeds of the flesh vs. fruit of the Spirit further, Galatians 5 develops this further (not things like being baptized, going to church, outward religion). The fruit of the Spirit showing the Spirit is within=*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.*

Matthew 7 ¹⁶ *“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?”* ¹⁷ *“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.”* ¹⁸ *“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.”* ¹⁹ *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”* ²⁰ *“So then, you will know them by their fruits.”* ²¹ *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven ...*

A fruitless faith is a useless faith. Bad fruit reveals a bad tree within, even if it looks like a tree outwardly, the test is what it produces. As fallible humans, we need to be careful not to presume to be infallible fruit-inspectors of others, to know their heart or the state of their soul perfectly, but Scripture does command us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. And it also says we will know others by their fruits, even those who say right things – if the pattern of life is not biblical fruit, there may be a problem with the roots. And as unpopular as it may be, it's not unbiblical or unloving to be concerned with habitual sinful patterns in us/others.

James brings out some of his strongest words for this last point: “You believe the right things about God and Christ and you think that qualifies you for heaven – that by itself only qualifies you to be a demon! You are being foolish (literally empty in your mind) if you think an empty faith keeps you from the destiny of demons!”

That's not a very seeker-friendly verse, that's a sinner-shocking verse. James hasn't read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. This text may not sound loving to some, but it is the most loving thing he can do if God's Word is true. Scripture says the fool says in his heart there's no God; it's also foolish to live as if there's no God but expect you'll be with Him when you die. A dead orthodoxy is useless to save. The demons also believe.

But I want to end on a positive note. Not dead faith but a Living Lord whose sovereign majesty makes demons tremble and fall on their faces before Him, and whose sovereign mercy brings sinners to their knees before Him in true faith. His glory shines brightly in this chapter as well (2:1) and can shine light to the darkest deadest soul.

John 1 says also in the context of darkness, that Jesus is the light and glory to those who believe: ¹² *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name ...* ¹⁴ *the Word [Jesus] became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

James 2:1 speaks of true “faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ / the Lord of glory” – a phrase hard to translate, because literally it's “Jesus Christ *the glory*.” He is the very radiance of resplendent glory, and we don't shudder in horror before Him like the demons do, we bow in adoration and affection before His precious feet. Demons believe in Christ and hate Him, but we believe in and love Him. It's not mere head knowledge, but heart love for Christ marks His own.

James 1:12 *Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

James 2:5b also says the kingdom is for those who love God, and v. 1 describes the Lord as “*the glory*” – emphasis on visual beauty

1 Peter 1 ⁷ *so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;* ⁸ *and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,* ⁹ *obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

1 Peter 2 ⁶ *For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."* ⁷ *This precious value, then, is for you who believe ...* [NKJV "To you who believe, He is precious"]

Those who trust in Christ see Him as precious. They place supreme value on and in Christ.

One pastor said it well: 'What is it that distinguishes saving faith from the faith of demons? What are the sure signs of God's grace and the saving work of his Spirit in your heart? True faith is grounded in an attitude towards God that is totally different from the attitude of demons, and this attitude shows itself in actions that are very different from the actions of demons [love at its heart].

The attitude of saving faith is to delight in God, to rejoice that God is who he is, to see beauty in God's holiness and purity, to glory in the wonderful things he has done in Jesus, to relish the sweetness of the truths revealed in the Bible, and above all to have a supreme satisfaction in all that God is for you in Jesus Christ.

... it's a matter of finding the Lord overwhelmingly attractive, of longing to be with him forever, of valuing and treasuring him far more than any person or thing in your life--including yourself. Saving faith has a special sense of God's beauty, a spiritual taste for God's goodness. If you have this kind of appetite for the things of God and you want to enjoy God's goodness in Christ, then your faith is a saving faith that really does differ from the faith of demons. The demons know a lot about God, but they don't see anything beautiful or lovely or desirable in what they know. They find God repulsive and terrifying. Why? Because they prefer their own way to God's way, and they know God insists on his way.'²

John Piper said it this way: 'When you have faith in Jesus Christ:

- You rejoice in His glorious deity as Christ
- You rejoice in the humble, sinless, virgin-born humanity of Jesus.
- You're satisfied by the universe-creating, miracle-working, power of Jesus.
- You're satisfied by the covenant keeping, law-fulfilling, righteousness-performing, perfection-providing obedience of Jesus.
- You're satisfied by the wrath-bearing, justice-satisfying, sin-atoning death of Jesus.
- You're satisfied by the death-defeating, devil-destroying, heaven-opening, resurrection of Jesus.
- And you're satisfied by the sovereign, interceding, ever-present, never-leaving-us-alone triumphant reign of Jesus at the Father's right hand.

... joy in your heart in Jesus above all things. So will you embrace that? ... so that Jesus Christ would be seen and experienced as the supreme treasure of your life in all that He is for you.'³

If you do not yet love the Lord, come to Him in humble true faith. He is full of grace and truth to those who will come on His terms, who don't trust in their own works, but who plead for God to work on their behalf and by His Spirit to change their life and grant them a new heart and new life and new desires to love the Lord and live for His glory.

¹ Daniel Doriani, *Reformed Expository Commentary Series: James*, P&R Publishing, p. 84-85.

² <http://www.awakeosleeper.org/index.php?p=1> 4 *The Faith-Of-Demons-Is-Yours-Any-Greater-*

³ <http://toddpriitt.blogspot.com/2007/10/john-piper-god-exalting-grammar.html>