

What Saving Faith Looks Like (James 2:21-26)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on October 27, 2009

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A.W. Tozer wrote several decades ago: ‘There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and which in its effect upon the Christian religion may be more destructive than Communism, Romanism and Liberalism combined. It is the glaring disparity between theology and practice among professing Christians.’¹

This problem has been long observed by Christianity’s friends and foes, from inside and outside the church. The philosopher skeptic Kierkegaard tells a parable of Duckland: ‘It was Sunday morning, and all the ducks dutifully came to church, waddling through the doors and down the aisle into their pews where they comfortably squatted. When all were well-settled, and the hymns were sung, the duck minister waddled to his pulpit, opened the Duck Bible and read: “Ducks! You have wings, and with wings you can fly like eagles. You can soar into the sky! Use your wings!” It was a marvelous, elevating duck scripture, and thus all the ducks quacked their assent with a hearty “Amen!” – and then [after the sermon] they plopped down from their pews and *waddled* home.’²

That parable is not far off from many Christians, whose “faith” doesn’t fly or do much of anything besides agree and believe up here. This is a great concern of the book of James, a theme that runs through the book but especially comes to a head in this text. The big idea of today’s text is that you cannot separate behavior from belief. Tozer again said: ‘faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin and are always found together in the Scriptures. As well try to pry apart the two sides of a half-dollar as to separate obedience from faith. The two sides, while they remain together and are taken as one, represent good sound currency and constitute legal tender everywhere in the United States. Separate them [good luck!] and they are valueless. Insistence upon honoring but one side of the faith-obedience coin has wrought frightful harm in religious circles. Faith has been made everything and obedience nothing. The result ... is moral weakness, spiritual blindness and a slow but constant drift away from New Testament Christianity.’³

I heard of a Gallup Poll this past week where 33% of participants described themselves as “born-again,” but they had essentially no difference in lifestyle from those who said they were NOT born-again, and in illegal drugs and illicit sex, these “born again” had no change from before their conversion -- some sins even increased.⁴

Many have said a sinner’s prayer, walked an aisle and “*they profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.*” (Titus 1:16)

Saving faith will not just be on the lips, it will also show up in life.
Last week we looked at what non-saving faith looks like (2:14-20):

1. **No more than words (v. 14)**
2. **No mercy practiced (v. 15-16)**
3. **No movement or life (v. 17)**
4. **No manifestation outwardly (v. 18)**
5. **No measurable fruit (v. 19-20)**

But saving faith believes in the Lord and doesn't tremble in terror-- it sees Him as glorious, the Lord of glory (v.1), satisfying splendor, and wants to live for the glory of such a Lord. It's marked by loving trust, fruit of the Spirit: works from a heart changed by God. Unlike demons who believe and hate God as a result, saving belief results in love for God (v.5b, 1:12b) and for others (2:8). Unlike non-saving faith without works (v. 14-20), saving faith works.

WHAT SAVING FAITH LOOKS LIKE (v. 21-26):

F.A.I.T.H. acronym:

Forsaking
All
I
Trust
Him [Jesus]

What does it look like when someone truly has done that? That's what James explains here. Like the song title, faith "Trusts and obeys." Two words, two sides of the same coin, two twins joined at the hip, two wings of the plane, and if either wing is lost, you're in trouble. Two illustrations are given in this text (Abraham and Rahab who trusted and obeyed, demonstrating their righteousness from God) to make the singular point that faith and works are as inseparable as the body is from the spirit. Living saving faith will have both.

²¹ *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?*

²² *You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;* ²³ *and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.* ²⁴ *You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.* ²⁵ *In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?* ²⁶ *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

The Reformer Martin Luther in the 16th century debated the Roman Catholic scholars of his day on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, apart from human works or merit, as the Apostle Paul so clearly taught in Romans and Galatians, and other places.

But Luther's RCC opponents would bring up James 2 to support their view that it's faith *plus* works that is the basis for God to declare man righteous (justification). Luther struggled over how to respond, and stumbled over how to explain this very text. In his preface to the New Testament of 1522, as a younger Christian he called James "an epistle of straw." He did not reject James as part of inspired Scripture, but he once said "that he would give his doctor's [hat] to anyone who could reconcile James and Paul."⁵

James and Paul actually are friends like faith and works, and divine sovereignty and man's responsibility – we don't need to reconcile friends who have never had a falling out, in fact we need what both bring to the conversation. It's complementary, not contradictory messages they bring, and rather than viewing James and Paul as in conflict thrusting the sword of Scripture at each other, we should view them as standing back to back with their swords fighting two different enemies of the gospel – empty faith vs. trusting works.

v. 21: *Was not Abraham our father justified by works ...*

v. 23 quotes Genesis 15:6 in regards to Abraham's trust in God (not trusting his own works, but his faith was not alone). v. 24: *You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.*²⁵

In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works ...

This is no mere little theological fine point or minor matter of doctrine, this is the most important question ever, one that you will be asked at some point, by a knowledgeable Catholic or cultist or a confused Christian: How can sinful man become right with God and a holy God, and how does James 2 fit into that? Is it faith *plus what we do* that earns us grace and a place in heaven? If someone we know well (maybe even a family member) at one point a long time ago seemed to have faith and maybe even still knows and claims to believe all the right things about God, but her life is now lived with no fruit / works that match up, is she truly saved? Was she ever?

James says 3x in the text we just read that faith without works is dead (one of the times it's a different word for dead: useless / worthless). He says the *type* of faith that is only on the lips (v. 14) or in the head (v. 19) does not save anymore than demon's faith. Not all who profess faith possess true saving faith. A mere said faith is a dead faith. Don't *trust in such empty faith* to save

Paul in Romans 3, on the other hand, it is writing to counteract a *trust in works* (like obeying the Law) as justifying us before God:

Romans 3:28: ... *a man is justified by faith apart from works ...*

James 2:24: *a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

Sounds like a contradiction if there ever was one! It gets worse:

James 2:21: *Was not Abraham our father justified by works ...*

Romans 4:1 also brings up "Abraham, our father" but with another point. Paul in Romans 4:2-3 argues Abraham was **not** justified by works, and cannot boast or take credit for his salvation before God.

v. 3: *For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."* [same verse James 2:23 uses right after he says Abraham's justified by works!]

So are we to conclude that this is a flat out contradiction and that the Bible is not inspired, as liberals and critics want to argue? I actually look at this as evidence that the Bible *is* inspired by God and was not tampered with by human editors. Those who copied the ancient Scriptures had such a reverence for the text as God's Word that they didn't try and fix or edit what it said that didn't fit so easily in their minds, including *apparent* conflicts or anitomies. Mere human authors and editors wouldn't publish such a book. But since this is God's inspired Word, how do we understand the 2 God-breathed passages before us that seem to be in tension on the surface? I want to encourage you that every time I have studied a difficult question as to how two passages fit together (which may trouble us as it did Luther), my faith is not shaken in the process. My faith is always strengthened and my appreciation for God's Word is deepened. And my prayer is that your faith would be strengthened as we apply Bible study principles (hermeneutics) today, that you'd be equipped to explain salvation more deeply, whether it's a cultist at the door, your kids at home, or a co-worker.

These are 2 passages from the same NT, inspired by the same Holy Spirit, same guy Abraham used in both passages as the prime example of their point, same description of him (our Father), same OT verse quoted as the hinge and proof of their argument (Gen. 15:6), same words (man, justified by, works, faith), but it's not the same point and it's not the same context and readers and emphasis. They're 2 soldiers defending the same gospel from 2 different enemies.

Context Principle of Bible Study

Immediate context– James writes to dispersed Jews (1:1) who grew up in Judaism-works religion but now (2:1) had professed faith in Jesus and were attending Christian church/assembly abroad. James knows and earlier taught in ch. 1 that initial salvation/regeneration is all of God, completely outside of us and what we do, a gift from God above down to man. But also when that genuinely takes place, there is a born-again new nature implanted by the gospel that saves the soul and as new creatures in Christ we will bear fruit from new hearts. He also was equally concerned that lives that lack the result of God's life within may deceive themselves to their eternal peril.

James 1 ¹⁶ *Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.* ¹⁷ *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.* ¹⁸ *In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures ...* ²¹ *Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.* ²² *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves ...* ²⁶ *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.*

This is the context of James, and the concern obvious in his letter.

The gospel of God's grace received through faith, righteousness as a gift we cannot earn or work for, was a major paradigm shift for 1st century Jews. And the tendency for many was to swing the pendulum to the far other side, beyond what Jesus taught, and to think grace means *how they live doesn't matter* (cheap grace).

“Non-Lordship” teachers today say Jesus can be Savior but not your Lord. Easy-believism assumes as long as you believe the right things about Jesus, you can be sure you'll be with Jesus when you die, even if your life doesn't look at all like Jesus or love Jesus or seek to obey Jesus, don't worry; He's within you as long as He's within your mind (as apparently some readers of James wrongly thought). So James writes in 2:19 even the demons believe right things! There is (2:14) a type of faith that does not save, (v. 17) a dead lifeless faith, (v. 26) as lifeless as a body without spirit/breath, a useless (v. 20) faith that's barren, like a tree that has no fruit.

Works to a Christian are like breathing is to a body – it shows there is life. Your body could stop breathing for a while, but not for long and be truly alive. Verse 26 compares the body to faith and the spirit/breath to works; together they indicate real life. There may be a temporary time for awhile without the breath (works), and there may be a season where a tree doesn't bear much fruit, but it won't remain that way if it's alive. Neither will faith w/out works.

Works are inevitable fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation.

Paul, on the other hand, wrote Romans perhaps 10+ years later, to those in Rome (1:7) who had grown up in pagan environments for the most part, and who were now coming to see the importance of God's Law. So Paul gives systematic doctrinal gospel teaching on how one gets into the faith to an audience of former pagans from lawless irreligious backgrounds whose pendulum could swing too far the other way and think to get saved they must obey the Law and be religious *first before they can be* declared righteous by God.

So if you study Romans 3-4 (which I would encourage you to do this week) Paul makes clear that you cannot trust in the works of the Law to save you. Justification (God the Judge declaring a man or woman just / righteous) is a work of God alone by His grace alone based on Christ alone and what Christ did, not what we do.

So do our works save us or does our faith save us? Neither! You can get yourself all tied in knots trying to determine if it's faith or works that justifies, but ultimately the answer is not one or the other individually, and it's not both together. What do I mean?

Romans 3 ²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ²⁴ *being **justified as a gift [or freely] by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus ...***

Broader Context Principle

Both James and Paul in the prior verses affirm that salvation is a work of God alone and it is by grace alone, a gift from above that we cannot earn or pay for by human works or even human faith. Neither faith *in works*, nor faith *in faith* saves (esp. type of dead faith that James 2 describes). It is the LORD that saves by grace alone. But that saving grace is not alone in a man, it's accompanied by faith, and saving faith is not alone either, but is accompanied by works. The content of faith saves ultimately, not our creed *or* our conduct. Faith is never in the grammar of the Greek NT presented as the cause of salvation (*dia pistin* – “because of / on account of faith”) it's always “by / through faith” in sense of means or agency (*dia pisteos* or *ek pisteos*)⁶ and the same is true of our “works.” It's all of grace and all a gift, and faith and works *result* in that order.

So it's not faith **or** works that initiates grace, **God** in grace initiates both true faith and true works from regenerated new life within:

Ephesians 2 ⁵ *even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us ... [saving faith = gift of life to spiritually dead] ...*⁸ *For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith [means or agency, not cause]; and that **not of yourselves**, it is the **gift** of God;***⁹ ***not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.***¹⁰ *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

[salvation's not the result of works, it results in works!]

God's prior work saves us *to do* good works as His workmanship. He works in us, and we're saved *for works*, not saved *by works*. So we do good works, but as Paul elsewhere says, don't trust in them.

Ultimately neither *faith nor works* is the grounds or cause of justification. The grounds is the righteousness of Christ that God graciously sovereignly judicially credits to the account of a sinner, through faith alone as a channel. It's all part of a gift from above and is God-produced, therefore such faith is never alone but works.

Think of the lightning storm we experienced recently. It's *lightning alone that is the channel* of light and electricity from heaven to earth. But lightning is never alone. Whenever lightning strikes, it leaves evidence behind it. You see the light, if it touches a tree or object on the ground, what's hit is changed in some way, it doesn't remain the same, and the most obvious result of lightning is thunder. During that recent storm some strikes were dramatic and powerful, some flashed quite a while before we heard the thunder. But the thunder was sure to follow. The flash came first, but its work (thunder) follows. Light would flash and my daughter would say "where's the thunder?" "Just wait, sweetheart, it will come ...". Some people's spiritual conversions and life change seem more dramatic and powerful to the outside observer. Some are slower to manifest the result, but good works follow faith as surely as thunder follows lightning, and both actually produced from above.

Last Sunday night Pastor Jerry talked about what Paul said in 1 Thess. 1:3 "*your work of faith and labor of love*" (works of love are not an addition to faith there, but flow naturally *from* faith of those who are already believers). Both Paul and James (and Jesus and all the NT writers) were concerned with a type of faith that doesn't work or bear fruit as empty self-deception – works are very important in Scripture, but the question is their source and motive.

Paul wrote against pre-salvation works of the Law or works of the flesh (i.e., done in the flesh to earn grace), but the same chapter (Gal. 5) describes fruit of the Spirit (once you are saved) in a similar way to how James uses the word "works" as the fruit of a saved Spirit-indwelt believer. In same chapter (Gal. 5:6) Paul says the only thing that counts is "*faith working through love.*" This is the type of "works" James is speaking of; faith-works, not flesh-works, love-works, not Law-works. Paul speaks of "*work of faith*" in 2 Thess. 1:11. Paul did not see faith and work as unrelated or separable; in fact the phrase in its grammar there can be translated "faith-produced works," i.e., a faith that is alive and active.⁷ Paul is looking at life like an obstetrician; James more like a pediatrician. Different emphases, and both are important and needed.

Look at Romans 1. We could look at many passages in Paul where he links "trust and obey" similarly to James, but we don't need to even go outside the book of Romans to see this in its own context:

1:4b ... Jesus Christ our Lord, [5] through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the *obedience of faith* ...

Romans 16²⁵ *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,*²⁶ *but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, **leading to obedience of faith***

So from beginning to end Romans links obedience with faith, and from beginning to end of James, you can tell James is challenging the idea that behavior is unrelated to belief, or that God's saving a soul doesn't also result in transformation of the outer person that can be seen. James and Paul know when God changes someone's destiny for the next life He also changes their direction in this life. Reformers: salvation by faith alone but saving faith is never alone.

Word Study in Context Principle:

Words in English and biblical languages can have more than one meaning, depending on context. With any controversy, apparent or real, it's important to ask each side to define their terms, what they mean by them. I'm convinced that many, if not most, interpersonal controversies among us grow from failure to truly listen to the other side. It's much easier to latch onto one phrase or statement the other said, and to take it as an attack and be defensive and to judge their heart or assume you know why they said what they said, rather than humbly seeking to get to the heart of what is said, with a sincere desire to understand where they're coming from (and it's easy to think of others who do that but not how you do it).

We need to get to the details and definitions of the key words:

FAITH – if you have Strong's dictionary you can lookup the English word "faith" in Rom. 3 and see its usual meaning includes (depending on your edition, something like) "trust / entrust ... commitment / constancy in such profession ... esp. reliance upon Christ for salvation." But as we saw last week in James 2 and the gospel of John, "faith / believe" can also refer to a temporary or shallow or superficial mental assent that does not continue (like the disciples who walked away from Jesus when He made demands). There's a faith that's no deeper than demons who also believe. There is a faith that does nothing, and is nothing, dead, useless.

WORKS – we've already discussed how the context of Romans 3-4 is addressing the root of how life begins, while James 2 uses the word "works" for the fruit that shows life is truly present. We are not infallible fruit-inspectors of others, but Jesus did say "By their fruit you will recognize them," and where we consistently see lack of fruit or bad fruit, there is good biblical reason to be concerned and to in love express concern as Paul also did (2 Cor. 5:17, 13:5). Augustine: 'Paul said that a man is justified through faith without the works of the law, but not without the works of which James speaks.'⁸ Reformers: saved by faith alone, not a 'faith' that is alone.

Faith and works are like fire and smoke. You see smoke from a distance, it shows to you there is a fire, but it's the fire itself that produces the smoke, and you know someone/something started it. When someone makes a real fire, combining fuel and ignition and fanning it into a flame, what is produced is fire and smoke. Smoke can be artificially produced outside a fireplace (ex: smoke and mirrors to deceive) but a real fire will normally produce smoke. The same is true with faith and works.

JUSTIFY – there are also 2 basic ways the Greek word "justify" can be translated, and both are seen even in Romans 3.

1. God declares a sinner righteous in His sight (v. 24) by grace through faith, based on the work of Jesus, not works of law or flesh of man (see v. 20 "... in His sight")

2. To demonstrate what is already right / just / true to others

Romans 3:4b ... *Rather, let God **be found true**, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “THAT YOU [GOD, NOT MAN HERE] MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”*⁵ *But if our unrighteousness **demonstrates the righteousness of God**, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in **human terms**.)*

Note the key phrase “demonstrates the righteousness of God” (ESV “serves to show the righteousness,” NIV “brings out ... more clearly”). This is a visible demonstration of what’s already right to others, not a new declaration by God in God’s sight. This context is in the eyes of man (end of v. 5 “I am speaking in human terms”)

v. 4 says “let God be found true” (another version has “let God be proven true”), i.e., a demonstration that God’s Word is right. It doesn’t become right or true, it is “justified,” i.e., shown to be righteous. When he says “as it is written,” that’s a quote from Psalm 51, where David is speaking to God, about God’s Word being seen or shown in the just / righteous character it already has (that’s how James 2 uses the term, if you want to turn there now).

Jesus in Luke 16:15 said to the Pharisees “*You are those who **justify themselves before men, but God knows your heart***” – same word “justify” but clearly not in God’s sight there, they were showing themselves to be righteous (they thought) before men.

1 Timothy 3:16 says Jesus was “*manifested in the flesh, justified by the Spirit,*” clearly not meaning He became righteous by God’s declaration, but He was *shown to be righteous* already to others.

Jesus Himself used the word *justify* similarly when He said His wisdom is justified by its deeds / its children, i.e., the fruit shows its character (Matt. 11:19, Lk 7:35; NIV translates it there “prove right”). And in the Greek version of the OT that James’ readers would have been familiar with, Joseph’s brothers used the same root word “justified” in Gen. 44:16 in the sense of how can we be shown to be righteous (i.e., demonstrate our just character) before Pharaoh whose servant accused us of stealing a cup in our bags.

Let’s read James 2 again now, this time in another translation:

²¹ *Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was **shown to be right with God by his actions** ...* ²⁴ *So you see, **we are shown to be right with God by what we do** ...*

Context indications “justify” here is demonstration not declaration:

- v. 18 “show” 2x: “**show me** [*deiknumi*] your faith without your works and I will **show you** [same word] my faith **by my works**”
- v. 20 “recognize” – know in the sense of perceive, come to know by senses or observation. NIV “do you want evidence,” ESV “**Do you want to be shown** ... faith without works is useless?”
- v. 22 “**you see**” [*blepo*]
- v. 24 “**you see**” [*eidon / hora-oh*]

- v. 26 just as a body is visibly dead without breath/spirit, so faith is spiritually dead without works. If you can't see the chest moving up and down, or if you don't see the vital signs of life, it's dead.

Cross-reference principle / analogy of Scripture:

You could study Acts 15 further, where this same James presided over the Jerusalem council which was all about the question as to whether keeping the law was required to be saved, and both Paul and James were there and all the leaders were in agreement with what Peter said that is only by the grace of the Lord that any can be saved, Jew or Gentile. James and the Elders wrote that converts of pagan background didn't have to keep OT Law, but needed to be sensitive in 3 areas of life that could offend their Jewish brethren.

But the key cross-reference actually referred to in James 2 is v. 21 when Abraham "*offered up Isaac his son on the altar.*" If your Bible has cross-references in the margin, this story is in Gen. 22. It's interesting that James says Abraham was justified / shown to be righteous by works (plural), which also suggests that more than just 1 isolated event is in view; his lifestyle was obedience, but this 1 stands out. "Works" is probably a plural of category, and the point of v. 22 is that his real faith was shown to be working, living, active faith. ESV: *see that faith was active along with his works ...*

One author explains this 'has the force of working with in the sense of aiding and supporting; his works supported and sustained the fact that his faith was a living faith. The imperfect tense suggests that this working union of faith and works was not limited to this occasion but was characteristic of Abraham's life of faith.'⁹

When v. 22 says faith was perfected / completed in this event, it means it reached the goal or end that God intended. The subject doing the perfecting is passive, in other words it was produced by an outside source, in this case God. When God saved Abraham earlier in Genesis, He had this event in mind to display true faith once and for all. Jesus Himself is called the author and *perfecter* of our faith in Hebrews 12 after talking about Abraham in chapter 11.

The adjective form of "completed / perfected" in v. 22 was actually used in ancient Greek literature for mature full-grown good trees. A man plants an orchard or vineyard and may have to wait many years before the fruit blooms and reaches the full end intended by the farmer, but when it does, it's not *then* that the life started or became real, it's now reaching the fruition and full expression of its life that was intended back when the farmer first made it alive.

That's what James 2:23 goes on to say: *and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS" ...*

This is the crucial cross-reference, because it's the only place James actually mentions righteousness being given God from man, and the cross-reference this comes from is Genesis 15:6, several chapters before Genesis 22, and perhaps 3 decades earlier when Abraham received God's righteousness through faith in the Lord.

James quotes this verse to make clear that Abraham didn't receive God's righteousness or earn salvation by his obedience with Isaac many years later, it was a fulfillment (or filling full), fleshing out of or fruition of the Scripture back in Genesis 15; faith in action.

Verse 23 is the decisive text, saying clearly it was when Abraham *believed* the LORD, that God credited righteousness to Abraham's account and life. He was declared righteous by God alone in His grace alone, but Abraham was demonstrated or shown to be righteous to others by his obedience that flowed out of his genuine faith, a demonstration in the years that followed, as most vividly and visually seen in Genesis 22 to all of us. There may be no better picture of the acronym FAITH (Forsaking All I Trust Him): Abraham was willing to forsake and lay down what was most precious and beloved to his heart in obedience to the Lord, even when it didn't make sense and he had to walk by faith not by sight. I forsake all, I surrender all, I trust You no matter what Lord.

He received God's righteousness by grace through faith alone in chapter 15, and he revealed that righteousness in chapter 22 to others in a true faith that was not alone, but had living active fruit.

I want to come back to Luther, who I said early in his Christian life stumbled over verses like James 2:24. Some 13 years later when he wrote his commentary on Galatians, a book that so clearly teaches how true salvation is only credited upon true faith, Luther wrote:

'He who wants to be a true Christian or to belong to the kingdom of Christ must be truly a believer. But he does not truly believe if works of love do not follow his faith ... On the left he excludes the Jews [pursuing] work-righteous ... On the right he excludes the lazy, the idle, and the sluggish, because they say: "If faith without works justifies, then let us not do any works; but let us merely believe and do whatever we please!" "Not so, you wicked men," says Paul. "It is true that faith alone justifies, without works; but I am speaking about genuine faith, which, after it has justified, will not go to sleep but is active through love.'"¹⁰

¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Root of the Righteous*, 51

² As cited by Kent Hughes, *James*, p. 115.

³ Tozer, *The Size of the Soul*, 160.

⁴ Cited in audio message on James 2 from Bill Shannon, available at www.gracechurch.org

⁵ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* [Abingdon Press], p. 259.

⁶ Daniel Wallace, "Syntax Summaries," in *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*.

⁷ 'In both instances the existence of a verbal cognate (*pisteuo*) of the genitive substantive (*tes pisteos*) and the fact that both nouns are articular in the *nomen regens-nomen rectum* construction in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 suggest that these are subjective genitives. Therefore the words in this verse could be rendered, "your faith-produced works," and hence a faith that is "alive" and "active." -- *BibSac* 159:633 (Jan 02) p. 66. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 113–16.

⁸ As cited by Blomberg, 139.

⁹ Hiebert.

¹⁰ Luther, M. (1999, c1964). *Vol. 27: Luther's works, vol. 27 : Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 5-6; 1519, Chapters 1-6* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (27:30). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.