

A Faith that Works

Romans 3:28

The teaching of Paul for the first three chapters of Romans has been quite clear to all:

- (1). God's nature of righteousness and justice demands that sin be punished (Rom. 1:18).
- (2). All have sinned and fall under the righteous condemnation of God (Rom. 2:12).
- (3). No person shall escape this condemnation by self-righteousness (Rom. 3:20).
- (4). BUT God has justified sinners through the work of His Son (Rom. 3:21-27).

"Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified (by grace) through faith" Rom. 3:28.

Justification by faith is the short way of saying *justification by grace through faith*.

We must ask ourselves, "How do I know I am justified by God?" By faith in Jesus Christ.

I. There is a counterfeit faith that is not the product of justification.

James describes in his letter *three* kinds of counterfeit faith that mislead people.

(A). There is a dead faith . . . "*Faith, if it has not works, is dead*" (James 2:17).

There is something that accompanies saving faith (James calls it "works"), and if these works (we will explain what these works are in a moment) are not present, then there is no justification for saying, "*I am justified by God!*"

(B). There is a demonic faith . . . "*the devils also believe and tremble*" (James 2:19).

Demons are not justified, but they believe in Jesus. They are missing something.

(C). There is a deceived faith . . . "*what doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?*" (James 2:14).

Again, true justification (by God's grace) gives birth to saving faith which then produces something in the life (James calls it "works"), that validates faith.

"I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). What are these works?

II. There are all kinds of ideas of what these "works" are that prove justification.

These false ideas of what James means by "works" fall into two general categories:

(A). The works of all false religions: which cover every possible activity of man from different eating habits, prayers, ceremonies, clothing, rituals, and even the killing of other human beings in the name of God.

(B). The works of the Christian religion: prayer, giving, Bible Study, commitment, holiness (the kind of clothes you wear, movies you see, food you eat). These things may be good in and of themselves, but they don't prove justification.

III. There is one thing that proves you have been by justified by grace through faith.

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but faith (in Jesus Christ) which works through love. . ." Galatians 5:6

(A). This is what Jesus taught . . . (Read John 13:34-35). This new commandment is only new in the sense that Christ's love for the ungodly is newly revealed.

(B). This is what both Paul and James taught . . . (I Corinthians 13 and James 2). God justifies you, you then believe, you then love others as Christ has loved you.

"The past is a memory, the future is a dream, and the only time we touch the kingdom of God is right now as we relate to the person in front of us" C.S. Lewis.