

How to Deal With Tough Times:
Being Quick to Hear, Part 3
A Study of James 2:14-26

Characteristic of Completeness: Giving Away My Life

Big Idea: Put your faith to work.

Related Scriptures: Luke 9:24; John 12:24-26; Acts 20:22-24;
Philippians 3:7-14; 2 Peter 1:5-8

Introduction:

- A. Today I am going to try to unravel one of the most misunderstood and misused passages in all of Scripture. It's James 2:14-26. I am committed to working our way through the entire text verse by verse in the time we have this morning, doing my best to explain what it means.

- B. Right up front, I beg your patience and your attention. Because of the widespread misunderstanding and misuse of our text, and because our text can be just plain hard to understand, I'm going to spend more time than usual trying to explain what James does and does not mean. As such, I'm going to spend less time than usual with stories, illustrations, and specific applications to life. I'm not entirely comfortable with the tradeoff, but we can't properly apply what we don't understand. So our time this morning will be spent

primarily on laying a foundation of understanding on which application can be built later.

So let's gird up and dig in. If we can lay the foundation, we can call it a day.

- C. I want to begin by reminding you of a couple of things we have already covered in our study of James. They provide an important context for our study.
1. First, James is writing this letter to those who have already believed in Jesus for eternal life. He addresses them as "brethren" fifteen times. James describes himself and his readers in the language of new birth in James 1:18. And in James 2:1, he says his readers have faith in Jesus. So it is very clear that James is writing to believers.
 2. Second, in the first 18 verses of his letter, James introduces the primary topic of his letter: How to deal with tough times. Then in James 1:19, he provides a handy three-point outline for how to deal with tough times. In dealing with tough times, ► James says,

^{NAU} **James 1:19** . . . everyone must be [first] quick to hear, [second] slow to speak *and* [third] slow to anger;

For the rest of the letter, James ► expands on what he means by these three things, in order. Our study this morning finds us in ► the midst of James' expansion on what it means to be quick to hear.

Recently, we have learned that being quick to hear means more than just listening to God's Word; it also means doing it. And the doing of God's Word does not involve superficial religious rituals; it involves the hard work of truly loving people.

With that in mind, let's ► work through our text.

- I. In ► Verse 14, James poses two questions. First, he asks,

^{NAU} **James 2:14** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? . .

.

The assumed answer is, "It is of no use." It is of no use for someone to say he has faith but not act on it. It is useless to have the talk without the walk.

Then James asks a related question about the man who has faith but no works. He asks:

^{NAU} **James 2:14** . . . Can that faith save him?

The assumed answer is, “Of course not.” Faith cannot save the man with no works. Faith minus works can’t save the guy.

In this first verse, you may already see the controversy of this text. Does this mean that simply believing in Jesus for eternal life is not enough to save us from hell? Are we wrong to think that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone? Is there more to it?

We’re going to spend considerable time unpacking this first verse because it sets the table for the rest. Our first task is to try to understand the various terms James uses.

A. For example, what does James mean by the term, ►
“save?”

1. “Save” comes from the original Greek word, *SODE-zoe*. It means to preserve, to rescue, or to save (BDAG).
2. Whenever we see that word, “save,” we must ask ourselves an important question: “Save from what?” From hell? From physical death? From difficult circumstances? From enemies? From the presence of sin? From the power or consequences of sin? “Save” is used in all these

different ways in the Bible (BDAG; Zuck, *Bible Interpretation*, 108).

3. Many people automatically interpret the word, “save” as describing salvation from hell. But, we are bound to misinterpret the Bible if we always make this assumption because it doesn’t always mean that. In fact, one Bible scholar observes,

*About half of the New Testament uses of the words save and salvation refer to salvation from physical death, from disease, and from various temporal difficulties. That means that you are just as likely to find a given occurrence refer to deliverance from some problem in this life as to eternal salvation (Wilkin, “Can Faith Without Works Save?”, *Grace in Focus*)*

4. Well, how does James use the term, “save?” James uses the term, “save” five times in his letter. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever uses it to describe being saved from hell. Rather, he uses the term to describe being saved from trouble in this life that can come in the midst of trials. This makes perfect sense because the primary purpose of his letter is to tell us how to

handle trials. Let's ► look at some examples of how James uses the term, "save."

- a. In Chapter 1 we learned that in the midst of trials, Satan tempts us to sin. James 1:14-15 describes ► the process. In the midst of trials, our desire leads to temptation. When we give in to temptation, it leads to sin. And sin leads ultimately to physical death.

We later learned in James 1:19 and following that we can ► deal with temptation and stop the death process by being quick to hear. When we are quick to hear and obey God's word, resisting temptation, we can be saved from the problems that come from yielding to temptation. James 1:21 ► says,

^{NAU} **James 1:21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive [or be quick to hear] the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

Here, ► "to save your souls" means to be saved from the negative consequences of

yielding to temptation, including physical death. Salvation from hell is not in view.

Bible scholar, Zane Hodges, who taught Greek for 27 years at Dallas Theological Seminary, explains the phrase, “save your souls” in James. He says,

Many readers as well as expositors have an automatic reaction to the phrase “save your souls” in English, which leads them to understand it of eternal salvation from hell. But none of James’ readers were at all likely to get such a meaning out of this text. The Greek phrase . . . was in common use in the sense of “to save a life.” It is used in both the Greek Old Testament as well as in the New Testament in exactly that sense. . . . It may even be said that there is not a single place in the entire Greek Bible . . . where this phrase signifies deliverance from hell. . . . It is unfortunate that most interpreters of James are either unaware of this data or dismiss it

as irrelevant (Hodges, The Epistle of James, 41).

- b. ► Another example of James' use of *SODE-zoe* comes in James 5:15. It ► says,

^{NAU} **James 5:15** and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick . . .

The word, ► “restore” comes from our word, *SODE-zoe*. Clearly, salvation from hell is not in view here. James is talking about being saved from the problem of illness.

- c. In yet another example of the use of *SODE-zoe*, ► James 5:19-20 says,

^{NAU} **James 5:19** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will ► save his soul from death .

. . .

Notice that the one who strays into sin appears to be a brother from ► “among

you.” So the straying brother is a believer. When another brother turns the straying brother from his sin, the straying brother’s life is saved. Here, the word, “soul” once again means earthly life (BDAG). And to save means to deliver from the temporal consequences of sin, including physical death. Salvation from hell is not in view.

It is interesting to note that James mentions saving the soul in ► two places: in 1:21 and at the end of the letter in 5:20. This is a literary framing device known as ► an inclusio. An inclusio marks the beginning and the end of a unit of thought by repeating a word or phrase or sentence. These literary bookends indicate that the stuff in between is related to saving the soul. And it just so happens that these bookends contain, in order, James’ explanation of the ► three ways to save your soul from the temporal consequences of sin: be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

So, it seems clear that James uses the term, “save” to describe being saved from the problems or consequences of sin in this life that can come in the midst of trials. He’s not talking about salvation from hell.

- B. Now, ► returning to Verse 14, what does James mean by the term, ► “faith?”
1. “Faith” comes from the original Greek word, *PIS-tis*. It is often used to describe belief directed toward a particular object and is synonymous with having confidence in, or having faith in, or trusting, or relying on that object (Friberg).
 2. But, whenever we see that word, “faith” used, we must ask ourselves an important question: Faith in what? What is the object of faith? To the extent that the object is different, one faith can differ from another. Even when there is a single object in view, one faith can differ from another to the extent that the focus is on different aspects of the same object.

Take faith in God, for example. I might believe that there is one God and that He is the Creator of the universe. That would make me a monotheist. But having faith in one God as the Creator is different from having faith in God as the Giver of eternal life through Jesus Christ. One is faith in one God as the Creator; the other is faith in God as the Redeemer. They’re different.

And having faith in God's promise of eternal life is different than having faith that God will take care of us in the midst of trials day by day as we follow Him. One is faith in God as the Redeemer of those who believe; the other is faith in God as the Provider for those who obey. They're different.

3. Well, how does James use the term, "faith"? He uses the term sixteen times in his letter. Only once, in James 2:1, does he seem to use it to describe faith in Jesus for eternal life. Other instances suggest that James uses faith primarily to describe trust in God as the Provider for those in the midst of trials, particularly those who obediently endure. Let me give some examples.

- a. James ► 1:2-3 says,

^{NAU} **James 1:2** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your ► faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

What kind of faith is being tested here?
 What kind of faith is sorely tested by trials?

As a believer, my trials most often do not test my belief in Jesus for eternal life. More often, my trials test my belief in God as My Provider, My Sustainer, My Rewarder when times are really tough. My crisis of faith in the midst of trials is not usually, “Do I really believe in Jesus for eternal life?” My crisis of faith is usually, “In the midst of my trials, do I yield to the temptation to satisfy my own desires, or do I take the risk of following God, trusting that He will provide for me, that He will sustain me, that He will complete me, that He will reward me for following Him, even when it’s tough?” The faith that is being tested is not usually my faith in God as my Redeemer; it’s my faith in God as my Provider.

- b. James uses the term, “faith” again in ► James 1:5-6. He says,

^{NAU} **James 1:5** But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in ► faith without any doubting . . .

What kind of faith is in view here? Is it not simply the faith that God will provide the wisdom we ask for in the midst of trials? God as Provider is in view, not God as Redeemer.

After examining every use of the term, “faith” or “believe” in James, it seems reasonable to me that, in our text, the object of faith is God as Provider for those who follow Him in the midst of trials. James’ purpose is not to tell unbelievers how to get to heaven. That issue has already been resolved for his readers; they are believers for whom heaven is secure. James’ purpose is to tell believers how to get through trials.

- C. Now, ► returning again to Verse 14, what does James mean by the term, ► “works?” The Greek word is *ERGON*. It simply describes the things a person does. It describes actions or deeds or activities.

In the most general sense, everybody has works because everybody is doing something. Nevertheless, James must not be using the term, “work” in this most general sense because, in James 2:14, he describes a man who has no works. So James must have some specific works in mind that some have and some don’t. What are the specific works? In Chapter 1, James

exhorts his readers to be doers of the word and not merely hearers (1:22). In ► James 1:25, he explains,

^{NAU} **James 1:25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

Here, the translation, ► “an effectual doer” comes from our word, *ER-gawn*. The phrase could be translated ► “a doer of work.” So the works James seems to be talking about in our text are not just any works; they are works done in obedience to the word of God.

Moreover, it appears that the specific word of God James may have in mind is the “royal law” of loving your neighbor as yourself, mentioned in the immediately preceding context, in James 2:8.

- D. Having unpacked ► all these terms, what is James saying in Verse 14 of our text? What’s his point? Here’s what I think James is saying: In the midst of trials, faith in God as our Provider is of no value when we don’t obey His word. It does no good to say we believe that God will provide for us if we’re not doing what He says. If we’re not obediently following God, we won’t be saved from the deadly consequences of our sin, no matter what we say we believe. If we persist in

disobedience, our faith can't save us from the trouble sin will bring. Faith alone is not going to save us from ulcers if we continue to harbor anger and bitterness. Faith alone is not going to save us from harm if we continue to drive recklessly. Faith alone is not going to save us from liver damage if we continue to abuse alcohol. Faith alone is not going to save our marriage if we continue in adultery.

This fits nicely in the context of James' argument. In Chapter 1 (Verses 2-4), we learned that God uses trials to refine and complete us. We used ► a diagram to chart the process. Our faith in the midst of trials produces endurance, and endurance leads to completeness. God uses trials to complete us. But we can short-circuit the process when we disobey. Saying we have faith doesn't do us any good if we don't keep obeying. We will not grow in completeness if our faith is not accompanied by obedient, enduring works.

- II. ► Faith in God as our Provider is of no value when we don't obey. Moreover, it is of no value to those who may suffer from our disobedience. James provides a case in point in ► Verses 15 and 16. He says,

^{NAU} **James 2:15** 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?

The assumed answer is, “It is of no use.” It is of no use from two perspectives.

- A. Clearly, saying, “be warmed and be filled” but giving no clothing or food is of no use to the naked and hungry. They are not saved or delivered from cold or hunger.
- B. But it is also of no use to the one who withholds the provisions. He is not saved from the consequences of his own selfishness.

The one who is presented with an opportunity to help a brother with clothing and food is faced with a trial—a trial with which James’ readers could certainly relate. You may recall James is writing to believing Jews who fled Jerusalem under persecution (James 1:1). There is some evidence to suggest that many of these believers are poor. Acts 11:27-30 indicates that the church at Antioch took up a special collection for them.

Imagine you’re a poor, persecuted believer barely getting by and uncertain about your economic future. God brings into your path a brother in Christ who is worse off than you and in need of clothing and food. God may be testing you to see if you will be “quick to

hear” His word and follow the royal law of love in helping the needy brother. At the same time, Satan may be tempting you to be selfish and ignore the royal law of love in order to protect yourself.

Verses 15 and 16 present an example of a believer giving in to the temptation to selfishly disobey the command to love. This believer’s faith will not save him from the negative consequences of his own selfishness. The negative consequences can include a guilty conscience, a hardened heart, divine discipline, or even death. And the negative consequences can include the loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ. Indeed, ► James 2:13 says,

^{NAU} **James 2:13** For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy . . .

The idea of faith not saving the believer who does no works is conveyed by Jesus Himself in ► Luke 9:24. He says,

^{NAU} **Luke 9:24** “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

This speaks directly to our example. The believer who selfishly withholds the work of providing for his

brother is selfishly trying to save his own life. In doing so, he actually loses. If he had only put his faith to work, if he had only been willing to “lose” himself for the sake of Christ’s command to love, he would have been saved—saved from the death-dealing consequences of his own selfishness.

Remember, we’re not talking about being saved from hell. Everyone who believes in Jesus for eternal life is saved from hell. In ► John 6:47, Jesus could not be clearer on this point. He says,

^{NAU} **John 6:47** “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”

Nevertheless, only the believer who puts his faith to work, only the believer who takes the risk of following hard after God in the midst of trials, only the believer who gives away his selfish life—only that believer is saved from the deadly consequences of his own sin in this life. It is appropriate, then, that our key characteristic of completeness in Christ is, ► “giving away my life.” That’s what we’re talking about this morning.

- III. James provides a summary statement in ► Verse 17 of our text. He says,

^{NAU} **James 2:17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

Faith is like a bicycle. It is energized by work. Without pedaling, the bike goes nowhere. Without works, our faith goes nowhere. It is dead.

Some have concluded that James must be talking about a false or counterfeit faith because real faith, they say, would produce works. But nowhere does James suggest that faith is not real. Arguing that faith is not real because it has no works is no more valid than arguing that the bicycle is not real because it is not moving. A bicycle without motion is still a bicycle. Faith without works is still faith. It's just dead or useless faith. James is not calling us to have faith; he's calling us to put our faith to work. In fact, that is the big idea of this message: ► Put your faith to work. The reason we are to put our faith to work is that faith without works is dead or useless. It cannot save us from trouble. And we can't really show or prove our faith to others without works.

- IV. James ► anticipates an objection to his argument, beginning in Verse 18. He uses a literary device known as a diatribe. The diatribe presents an imaginary objector or opponent who says something that is clearly wrong. The author then gives a sharp response to correct the error of the objector. The diatribe is in ► Verses 18 to 20. James says,

^{NAU} **James 2:18** 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?

A challenging aspect of this diatribe is in determining where the remarks of the objector end. According to the *New American Standard Bible* that I am using this morning, the quote from the objector ends at ► the conclusion of Verse 18. But some other English translations close the quote earlier in Verse 18, after the clause, ► “I have works.” Why do they differ?

First of all, with very few exceptions, ancient Greek manuscripts have no quotation marks (Moo, *The Letter of James*, 127), so we are left to determine where they go. Secondly, there is some ambiguity concerning what the objector is trying to say. So there are differing opinions about where the quote ends.

Where does that leave us? Let me show you where I think the quote ends and what I think it might mean. Without the use of quotation marks, ancient writers of Greek use other grammatical markers to signal the beginning and end of quotations. In using a diatribe, it is common to signal the end of the objector’s quote and the beginning of the author’s

response by calling the objector a name. (In Greek, the name is in the vocative case.) Let me give you some examples.

In ► Romans 9:19-20, the Apostle Paul uses a diatribe. He says,

^{NAU} **Romans 9:19** You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? . . .

The end of the objector’s quote and the beginning of Paul’s response is signaled by Paul calling the objector a name. Where’s the name? In this case, it’s ► “O man.” When Paul says, “O man,” we know that the sentence in which it appears is Paul’s first sentence in response to the objector, and that the immediately preceding sentence is the last one voiced by the objector.

Consider ► another example. In 1 Corinthians 15:35-36, Paul again uses a diatribe. He says,

^{NAU} **1 Corinthians 15:35** But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶ You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

Where does Paul call the objector a name? It’s where he says, ► “You fool!” So we know the sentence containing,

“fool” begins Paul’s response to the objector, and the immediately preceding sentence is the last one attributed to the objector. See how this works?

Now, ► let’s apply this pattern to the diatribe in our text. Where does James call the objector a name? It’s in Verse 20, where he says, ► “you foolish fellow.” Based on this, we would attribute all of Verse 18 and all of Verse 19 to the objector, and the ending quotation mark would ► not be at the end of Verse 18, but rather, at the end of Verse 19. Indeed a number of Bible scholars make this case. I agree.

If that is true, what is the objector saying? It’s not entirely clear. Further complicating things is that fact that we don’t know for sure if, in Verse 18, the objector is saying, “Show me your faith *without* the works,” or if he is saying, ► “Show me your faith *by* the works.” Some ancient manuscripts differ. (It’s called a textual variant.)

So where does that leave us? In spite of all the difficulties in determining what the objector is saying, I think the basic point of the objector is this: Faith and works have no discernible connection. You can’t show faith by works. Zane Hodges provides the clearest and most plausible explanation I’ve seen of the objector’s point. Hodges says,

“It is absurd,” says the objector, “to see a close connection between faith and works. For the sake of argument, let’s say you have faith and I have

works. Let's start there. You can no more start with what you believe and show it to me in your works, than I can start with my works and demonstrate what it is I believe." The objector is confident that both tasks are impossible. The impossibility of showing one's faith from one's works is now demonstrated (so the objector thinks) by this illustration: "Men and demons both believe the same truth (that there is one God), but their faith does not produce the same response. Although this article of faith may move a human being to 'do well,' it never moves the demons to 'do well.' All they can do is tremble. Faith and works, therefore, have no built-in connection at all (Hodges, 65-66)."

Against this objection, James argues that there is indeed a discernible connection. Faith *can* be shown through works. In fact, works bring faith alive. And his argument against the objector takes up the remainder of our text, through Verse 26. James begins his response in ► Verse 20,

^{NAU} **James 2:20** But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

The unwritten but unmistakable application is this: Put your faith to work. Demonstrate it. Show it so others can see. And, in particular, put your faith to work in loving others.

As an ► important aside, I've heard countless people, including preachers, say, "even the demons believe," in an effort to refute the idea that we are saved from hell by simply believing in Jesus for eternal life. I hope you can now see how misguided this is. First, the person who argues that, "even the demons believe" is taking the words of the objector James describes as foolish. Second, the context has nothing whatsoever to do with being saved from hell. Third, the text says only that demons believe there is one God; they're monotheists. Monotheism never saved anybody from anything. It doesn't say they believe in Jesus for eternal life. And fourth, the argument is irrelevant because there is no plan of salvation for demons that we know of. So don't fall for this misuse of "even the demons believe."

- V. James ► now gives an example of someone who demonstrated his faith through works by being willing to sacrifice his own son. In ► Verse 21, he says,

^{NAU} **James 2:21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

The term, ► "justified" comes from the Greek word, *di-kai-OE*. It means to be declared righteous (Friberg). The assumed answer to James' question is, "Yes, Abraham was justified; he was declared righteous."

But, by whom? One could argue that James does not have God in view as the primary judge here because, according to the Bible, God had already declared Abraham to be righteous on the basis of Abraham's faith over 30 years before. We will see that James alludes to this in Verse 23 of our text. So, James does not seem to be talking primarily about God as judge; rather, Abraham's offering of Isaac justified him in the eyes of countless other people who look back in awe at his work of faith. Indeed, is this not one of the greatest works of faith in all of history? We see the connection between his faith and his works, and it prompts us to declare Abraham righteous. Abraham put his faith to work; so should we.

VI. James goes on to say in ► Verse 22,

^{NAU} **James 2:22** You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

Notice that the faith of Abraham was ► “perfected;” it was made complete. We are reminded once again of ► the process God uses to bring about completeness in us: faith plus trials produce endurance and, ultimately, completeness (James 1:2-4). God tested Abraham's faith. Through Abraham's enduring obedience to God's word, God brought Abraham's faith to completeness.

Put your faith to work.

VII. ► I mentioned that God had declared Abraham righteous many years before God tested him with the sacrifice of Isaac. That's what we're told in Genesis 15:6. James quotes this Scripture in ► Verse 23 of our text, saying,

^{NAU} **James 2:23** 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.

Abraham was ► justified before God the moment he believed God. He was saved from hell in that moment. This also began God's ► process of bringing Abraham to completeness. Abraham put his faith to work, and over 30 years later, we see in Genesis 22 how complete his faith had become in his willingness to sacrifice his son. James says, ► "the Scripture was fulfilled" or brought to completion in the sense that the faith of Genesis 15:6 was perfected and showed itself in the works of Genesis 22.

As a result, Abraham was "called ► the friend of God." God adopts Abraham and us as his children the moment we *believe*. But God calls us friends only when we *obey* (Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7). Jesus says in ► John 15:14,

^{NAU} **John 15:14** "You are My friends if you do what I command you."

So, put your faith to work.

VIII. By faith, ► we are justified in the eyes of God. By works, we are justified in the eyes of the world. That's what James is saying in ► Verse 24:

^{NAU} **James 2:24** You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Notice James says, ► “you see.” “You” is plural, and “see” comes from the word *ho-RA-o*, which means to physically see or perceive something. This seems to agree with the notion that James is talking about being justified in the eyes of human observers.

Of greater significance is the word, ► “alone.” Here, it is used as an adverb that can be translated “only,” and its form indicates that it actually modifies the implied verb “justified,” not the noun, “faith.” So, we can legitimately translate James 2:24 ► this way:

You see that a man is justified by works and not only [justified] by faith.

Worded in this way, James seems to confirm the existence of two ways to be justified: one before God by faith, the other before men by works.

- IX. And ► lest we come to think that the connection between faith and works applies only to spiritual giants like Abraham, James shows us that it works for lowly prostitutes as well. In ► Verse 25, he says,

^{NAU} **James 2:25** 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?

James is talking about the Old Testament account of Rahab, who showed her faith by doing the work of protecting “the messengers” of God’s people sent to spy out the Promised Land (Joshua 2:1-21). If a lowly prostitute can put her faith to work, so can we.

- X. James ► then concludes our text with this clear summary statement in ► Verse 26:

^{NAU} **James 2:26** For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Is your faith dead or alive? Works are the heartbeat of faith. Specifically, our work in fulfilling the royal law of loving others demonstrates our faith to the world.

Without works, we are as useful to this world as a corpse. Without works, we are nothing more than dead faith walking. Without works, we have nothing but dead churches, full of

dead faith, preaching dead orthodoxy. The message of James to us is this: Come alive! Put your faith to work.