



PV Household Worship

February 12-17, 2018

❖ **Daily Memory Verse:**

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" – and he was called a friend of God.

❖ **Song:** Jesus Shall Reign Where'er The Sun

Monday, February 12, "A closer friend than Abraham"

Read James 2:21-26

James 2:23 says, "*And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God"*. We may look at the life of Abraham in the Scriptures and say, "*I wish I could have been him. I wish I could have a friendship with God like he had.*" Do you realize that the friendship that a Christian can have with God is actually closer than the friendship Abraham had with God. Although Abraham was God's friend and was greatly used by Him in so many ways, God was not as close, even to those who were His friends. Yes, God revealed certain aspects of Himself to Abraham; His Holy Spirit He didn't live inside of him. The new covenant makes things different. In John 15 Jesus begins to talk about the coming Holy Spirit and says in verse 15, "*I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me"* (John 15:15). Those who have saving faith in Christ are a friend of God. Even though we don't always perfectly understand God, He tells us to follow Him and obey Him because He loves us. When God is your friend there is a trust level that actually drives your willingness to radically obey Him with great joy. If Abraham and Rahab can display this, how much more can you? Their faith was on display evidenced by the radical action taken as they trusted their friend...God.

- What are some characteristics of true friendship?
- Why do you think God called Abraham His friend?
- Memory Verse James 2:23
- Prayer – Father, thank you that I am no longer Your enemy but I am now called Your friend through the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus!

Tuesday, February 13, "Are you God's friend?"

Read James 2:21-26

Who do you consider your best friend? Why did you choose this person? Do you have anything in common with this person? Do you have mutual respect for one another? Are you truthful to each other? Are you drawn to the same things? Is there loyalty, trust and mutual love....? Is it a burden to be with this person? Do you want to serve them or harm them? God wants to be our friend and abide with us even more than we want to be with Him. As we consider how Abraham trusted God and was declared God's friend, let's consider the words of Jesus in John 15:9: "*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love"*. Abiding means more of Him in our actions, activities, thoughts and desires. This happens not because of command, but because of relationship. When we trust God, we willingly obey Him. Too often in our rush to "*perform*" for

God, we fail to simply enjoy His company. Do you pursue intimacy by spending time with the Lord? There are many who say they want to be a friend of God without obedience. But, it's out of relationship that obedience flows. Are you ready to do whatever He tells you? God called Abraham His friend. In the same way, Christ calls us His friends. We are God's friends because of our faith in Him, shown by our willing obedience to Him.

- Why is it easy to love and serve a good friend? (relationship)
- Read Romans 5:10. What did God do to make us His friend?
- Memory Verse James 2:23
- Prayer - Jesus, help me to serve and obey you out of friendship. May my actions glorify You and point others to You.

Wednesday, February 14, "Fair weather friends."

Read James 2:21-26

Saving faith in Jesus requires an active obedience. Some people think it is enough to merely avoid what God forbids. They might say, "*I am not a thief, an adulterer, or an alcoholic.*" That would be like saying to someone, "*I am your friend because I don't rob you or cheat you or insult you or beat you up.*" Granted, your friend will appreciate the fact you don't do these things. But maybe you can go a little further in the friendship than that. It is not just a matter of refusing to do the wrong things. It is also a matter of doing the right things. That is what God wants. That is what it means to be His friend. Friends of Jesus obey Him because they want to. Obedience becomes a desire and not a duty if we really have a friendship with Jesus. No one who is in Love with Jesus says, "Do I have to read the Bible again?" or "Pray? I don't really feel like praying right now." When God is your friend, His Spirit puts within us a desire for these things and more. You find joy in serving and reflecting the glory of Christ to others. Jesus had a lot of fair-weather friends when He walked this earth. He was popular when He was handing out free lunch. When He fed the 5,000, He was the most popular guy in town. But when He started challenging the crowd to enter into a trusting relationship with Him as God's Messiah, many of them turned away. They were fair-weather friends. Don't be a fair-weather friend. Be a true friend of God. Let your works flow from trust.

- Is your love for Jesus displayed more by what you do or what you don't do?
- Is James emphasis in chapter 2 more on what you do or what you don't do or both?
- What is James challenging believers to do? Not to do?
- Memory Verse James 2:23
- Prayer - Father, help my spiritual life find meaning in what I do and not in what I don't do.

Thursday, February 15, "The wonderful power of faith that transforms sinners!"

Read James 2:21-26

James 2:25 says, "*Was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?*" James likely mentions Rahab to contrast Abraham. Abraham was the revered patriarch; Rahab was the redeemed prostitute. He was the father of the Hebrews; she was a pagan foreigner. He was a man; she was a woman. Rahab's story is told in Joshua 2 & 7. She ran an inn in Jericho that also was a house of sin. When the two Hebrew spies came to town, she hid them from the king's men and then sent them out by

another way so that they could escape. But before she sent them off, she testified of how she had heard of what the Lord had done for Israel in delivering them from Egypt and in the victories that they had won in the wilderness. Joshua 2:11 gives us Rahab's words: *"For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath."* This was her confession of faith. Then she believed the spies' pledge to save her family from the coming destruction of Jericho. James' point is that Rahab didn't just say, "I believe in your God," and then allow the king's men to arrest the spies. Rather, at the risk of her own life, she helped these men escape and then carefully obeyed God's instructions about how she and her family could be spared when Israel invaded Jericho. Her faith was not just empty words. Her faith worked itself out in radical, obedient action. Oh the wonderful power of faith in transforming and changing sinners!

- How did Rahab's actions give evidence that she was trusting God?
- Why does using Rahab as an example give hope to every believer?
- Memory Verse James 2:23
- Prayer - Father, thank you for choosing to redeem sinners like me to use to display to the world Your great love, mercy, and grace.

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Friday, February 16, "Faith without works is like a dead body without life."

Read James 2:21-26

James 2:26 says, *"For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."* Let me ask you, why are you alive? Because you are walking around? No! You walk around because you are alive. Why does a Christian feed the hungry and clothe the poor? To be saved? No! Because they are already saved! The works and deeds that are done by a human body don't give it life, the works and deeds of a human body reveals life. No life = no works. A body without works is dead. Apply that spiritually. No faith = no work. A faith without works is dead. Paul would say that works apart from faith are dead (or useless) works. And James is saying that faith without works is a dead faith. These statements are both true and do not contradict each other! Works can be counterfeited (good deeds for self praise), and faith can be counterfeited (all talk, no walk). As James finishes up chapter two he wants us to be clear: If a body has no life (spirit) it is dead! If faith has no works/actions, it is dead! What kind of faith do you have?

- What is James' point in saying, *as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead?*
- What are some other ways to illustrate *"faith without works is dead?"*
- Memory Verse James 2:23
- Prayer – Father, thank you for the spiritual life you have given me. Help me to display Your life to others by my actions.

Saturday, February 17, Read James 3:1-5

Review memory verse.

Prayer: Father, make us ready to hear your Word. Reveal your truth to our hearts. Give us grace to listen and obey. Bind the enemy of our souls and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Give us joy as we meet with your people for doctrine, prayer, and worship.