



**Title: Signs of Life**

**Date: October 15, 2023**

**Scripture Text: James 2:14-26**

**Series: The Behavior of a Believer**

## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We are continuing the series The Behavior of a Believer, a study of the book of James. Today's message wraps up chapter 2 as we look at the association between faith and works. James was not writing his letter to address theological issues, but to describe what a growing, effective Christian life looked like. It is not a life of idleness, but of action. Works don't save but are evidence of salvation. In today's passage we'll take a look at three types of faith, only one of which leads to salvation.

### **I. Spoken Faith – No Service ([James 2:14-17](#))**

James is addressing those who profess being a Christian, yet there is no indication of changes in their lives. He states that workless faith is worthless faith. Works manifest themselves in meeting needs in the name of Jesus. It's not enough to just wish someone in need well, but to address their need as you've been equipped from above.

- What does the term '*works*' mean?
- Define '*faith*'.
- Describe the relationship between faith and works.
- Why is it important to understand that salvation is not obtained through works, but that works are evidence of salvation?
- Describe the characteristics of the workless Christian.

### **II. Satanic Faith ([James 2:18-20](#))**

James describes having a conversation with someone claiming that faith is all that's needed to live an effective Christian life. James points to the fact that this perspective is no different than what the demons believe. This person has gone through the motions without truly accepting Christ. Jesus taught that if you were going to be a follower (disciple) of His, you'd need to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him ([Mark 8:34](#)). To follow Jesus requires works.

- What does it mean to deny yourself and take up your cross?
- Why are there changes in an individual's life when they accept Christ as their personal Savior?
- If your works are an indication of your faith, how much faith would others think you have? Describe your works.

## Morningside Church

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### III. Saving Faith ([James 2:21-25](#))

James gives us two examples of what saving faith looks like in Abraham ([Gen. 22](#)) and Rahab ([Josh. 2](#)). Both acted out of their faith. It was faith that was working in their works and as a result, their faith was perfected (completed) ([vs. 22](#)). Our faith doesn't grow without being tested. That testing can occur in several ways, including taking a step of faith through works. By actively serving God, He can transform you more and more into His likeness. This transformation has already been done spiritually upon accepting Christ as your savior. As we serve Him with our works and building our 'faith muscles' we become more and more like Him mentally and emotionally. This is the process of *sanctification*.

- Describe how works can help build your faith.
- Describe a time when you exercised your faith by your works.
  - How did that affect your faith?
- How can faithful works help us to be a better representative of Jesus to others?
- What advice would you give someone who doesn't believe that works are a required aspect of the Christian life?

Although the apostle Paul preached that we are justified by faith without works [see [Rm 3:28](#)], those who understand by this that it does not matter whether they live evil lives or do wicked and terrible things, as long as they believe in Christ, because salvation is through faith, have made a great mistake. James here expounds how Paul's words ought to be understood. This is why he uses the example of Abraham, whom Paul also used as an example of faith, to show that the patriarch also performed good works in the light of his faith. It is therefore wrong to interpret Paul in such a way as to suggest that it did not matter whether Abraham put his faith into practice or not. What Paul meant was that no one obtains the gift of justification on the basis of merit derived from works performed beforehand, because the gift of justification comes only from faith.

Bede (672 – 735)