

## FAITH AND WORKS

Faith and Works; these two words seem to trouble people.

In James 2:14-16, it would seem that James is questioning the fact that we find salvation in Jesus Christ. However, his writing is very clear. He could not countenance a profession of faith without deeds which showed that faith in action.

He chooses a vivid illustration as follows of what he means:

Suppose a man has neither clothes to protect him, nor food to sustain him, and suppose his so-called friend comes to express the sincerest sympathy for his sad plight; and suppose that sympathy stops with words and the friend does nothing at all to alleviate the plight of the unfortunate man.

What use is sympathy without some attempt to turn that sympathy into some practical assistance?

Here, James is simply challenging hypocrisy. What kind of faith is it that gives others platitudes rather than compassion?

Verses 14 and 15: What kind of faith in the Lord Jesus does nothing to show Christ's Love to others? The answer is a faith that has no value and is not acceptable to God. Saving faith is different. It is visible; active.

There are three main challenges in the passages.

1. Our faith is not only defined in words but how we live. The words we speak should tell how we live. Very often we get involved in all manner of arguments about world issues and forget about showing Christ to the world.

2. If we really do have a faith, then we have great responsibility to be mindful of how we conduct ourselves and how we relate to other people.

3. We have to act responsibly when our emotions come into play. Emotional responses seldom serve a purposeful solution to a practical problem.

This kind of active faith is practiced by people who are mentioned in the Bible. The Bible also gives us many examples of such people. People who were very different. People who put their faith into action and helped others.

Mothers' Union has entered into partnership with Anglicord for the Consultative Parenting Seminar in Honiara, and in addition, MU Australia has provided funds for the Facilitators' training.

**January 2011.** Our Disaster Fund: Money was given to this fund to assist those who suffered hardship from the floods in Queensland and Victoria. In January 2011 I attended the Mothers' Union Conference in MYANMAR. I was overwhelmed by the depth of faith the Christians in that country have, even though the wages are extremely low and the people have very little.

When I asked the women who were fortunate enough to have employment how they manage to exist, every person replied that each day they pray and ask God to provide food for them and each day their prayers are answered.

Yet, although the people there are struggling to provide food for themselves, they are the most generous people I have met for as long as I can remember. It is a testimony to the Christian faith that they practice, and a witness for Christ to other religions about how they live. People are not convinced by what we believe, only by how they see us live. Only if our faith is shown in action will it touch the lives of others

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