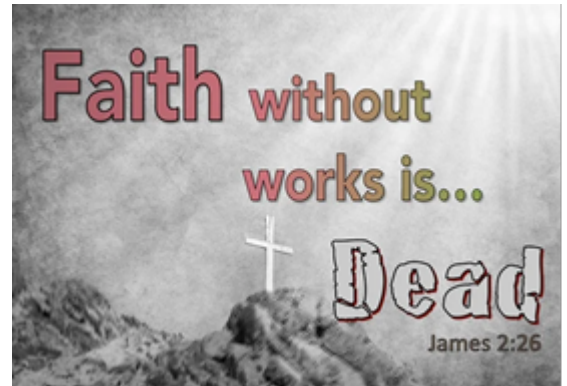




**THE EPISTLE OF  
JAMES**  
**Theme:**  
**“The Testing of  
Your Faith”**

Lesson: 20  
Text: 2:24-26  
Date: 7-23-23



Trinity Lutheran Church - Pastor David Nehrenz  
[www.tlcnorman.org](http://www.tlcnorman.org)

**TEXT AND STUDY NOTES**

(24) You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

(25) And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

**(Josh 2:1-27; Mt 1:5; Heb 11:31)**

(26) For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

**(Gen 2:7; Eccl 12:7;  
Mt 27:50; Mk 14:38; Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30;  
Acts 7:55-60;  
Php 1:23,24; Heb 12:23)**

**Commentary on James – “The Epistle of Faith” – Dr. David Scaer - CPH**

**The Superior Faith of Rahab (2:25)**

The inclusion of Rahab as an example of works by James would be less problematical if the congregation addressed were facing the crisis of Gentile Christians in their services. But there is no evidence for this. Outside of the reference to Rahab there is no hint that James is at all concerned about Gentiles entering the congregations. The inclusion of Gentiles in the church was later a major problem for Christian Jews, but it does not seem one at this time. Matthew in writing the genealogy of Jesus included her with Ruth, though women are usually not included in Jewish genealogies. In Matthew's gospel Rahab and Ruth are included because as Gentiles they are examples of those who believe the message which was intended for the Jews and not for them. They are prototypes of the Canaanite woman who believed in Jesus, even though He explicitly stated that His ministry did not embrace her (Matt. 15:22-28). Rahab is the ancestress of David and part of the Messianic line leading to Jesus. Matthew's message is that Gentiles have always had a place in God's plan of salvation.

Abraham is an example of works because he follows God's explicit command in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac. By contrast Rahab is given no explicit command. She carries out God's will without command. She is in fact a better example than Abraham in demonstrating that faith must express itself in works, as she acts in response to no specific directive. Since she believes that God has chosen Israel as His own nation, she decides on her own initiative to do everything in her power to protect the representatives of God's nation. For this reason she provides a haven for the Hebrew spies and helps them escape back to their own lines (Joshua 2). The early Jewish Christians are really without excuse, because they had been given explicit directives for helping the poor in the preaching of Jesus as it was handed down to them. Even without such explicit directives, they should have drawn the theological conclusion and recognized the poor as sharing a special close relationship with Jesus. Rahab, the Gentile harlot, had drawn a theological conclusion to which they had been totally blind. They had the direct revelation. She did not!<sup>11</sup>

James here is referring to the not-so-uncommon problem of determining whether a body is really dead. One way to determine this is placing a mirror by the nostrils to see if a mist forms on the glass. Without the moisture from the breath on the glass, the body can be assumed dead, a corpse. It is as if James were saying that a body without a pulse is dead. A faith without works has all the right appearances but, like a corpse without breath, it has no functions and hence is pronounced dead. Breath proves life, but does not cause it. Similarly works prove faith, but do not cause it.

### LIFE APPLICATION

“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead,  
so also faith apart from works is dead.”

You and I are body and soul at the same time.  
You and I have faith and do good works at the same time.

Explain how this affects your daily vocation?