"FAITH WITH BOOTS ON"
BIG IDEA . . . Part 6: Show Me Your Faith (James 2:14-26)

ILLUS: The Lite Church . . .

INTRO: This passage is at heart of James' theme – Faith With Boots On. Real faith that brings (like calories) salvation is fleshed out. Why? Can't *see* saving faith, only see the results of it. Faith is key concept in Scripture. We are saved by faith, walk by faith, please God by faith, and whatever we do apart from faith is sin. So, faith is critical. So far James has . . . now, challenged his audience to show their faith is real through consistent works of obedience.

"DOES JAMES CONTRADICT PAUL?" M. Luther thought so and called it a "right strawy epistle." Does James disagree? See chart . . .

As God's people, we can show our faith is real through consistent works of obedience. If absent, then it's phony, non-saving faith. In these verses, James tells us first what real faith is *not* and what real faith *is*.

I. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU *SAY* (v. 14) – More than *verbal* profession.

A. James doesn't say this person actually has faith, just *claims* to have it. Can a "say-so only" faith truly save a person? Both questions are rhetorical requiring negative answers. Matt. 7:16-23

B. Many claim they are Christians. Gallup says 70mm say born again, but only one in eight say what they believe effects how they live! Real faith goes beyond talk. Saying you believe does not save. Not all who profess really possess. There must be evidence. Listen to Paul in Titus 1:16 . . .

II. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU *FEEL* (15-17) – More than *emotional* expression.

A. An *ILLUSTRATION* of one in need (v. 15).

B. An *EMOTION* (v. 16). "I feel for you" is no real help. Real faith more than feeling sympathy or sorry.

C. *APPLICATION* (v. 17) – Real faith does more than feel, it acts to meet needs. True faith shows in compassionate actions toward others, esp. believers (1 Jn. 3:17). If I only feel for others in need and fail to act to help, my faith is *dead*, says James.

III. REAL FAITH IS NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU *THINK* (v. 18) – More than *intellectual stimulation or mental assent.*

A. An *ARGUMENT* (18a) – Faith for some is only an intellectual exercise – something to be studied, discussed, debated. Objector argues to each his own. Take the course that suits you – beliefs or behavior? You choose.

B. *ANSWER* (18b) – James will have no separation – not free to choose. Circle *show me*. Real faith is visible. If you're really Christian, others will *see* it. Too many Lady Clairol Christians – nobody knows for sure! Claiming to have faith is easy (odorless, invisible). "Faith is like calories. You can't see them but you can sure see the results." James would have been a good Missourian, "Show me!" Actions must back words or else faith is false. More than an intellectual exercise. It's not faith *or* works, but faith *that* works. Works are not necessary TO BE saved; works are evidence that *YOU ARE* saved. Faith is what you *believe*; it proves itself by how you *behave*.

IV. REAL FAITH *IS* NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU *BELIEVE* (v. 19) – More than *doctrinal* understanding.

A. The *ENEMY is ORTHODOX*. Demons believe in God – got more sense than an atheist or a fool! Demons have right beliefs about Jesus (Matt. 8:29; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:41). They even have a work, they *shudder*. What they believe about God makes them bristle-up, quake in fear, tremble. But, are demons saved because they believe and shudder?

B. The *REALITY*. Many strongly believe in God, Bible, even Christ. They can cite creeds, quote verses, and talk doctrines. James says, "Big deal. It takes more than doctrinal "knowledge." What then is real faith?

ILLUS – Parable about Duckland . . .

V. REAL FAITH *IS* SOMETHING YOU *DO* (vv. 20-26) - cp. 1:22

A. *REPEATED EMPHASIS* (14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26b) – Real faith is not just something you say, feel think, or believe – it is something you DO. It's a verb. True faith is active, not passive. It has deeds. It works. These works do not bring salvation, only prove it's there.

B. *THREE EXAMPLES* (20-26)

1. Abraham, respected Jewish patriarch (21-24) – In Gen. 15 he believed, but in Ch. 22, he made that belief complete by his actions with Isaac.

2. Rahab, redeemed Gentile prostitute (25) – This street walker lay her life on the line for her faith (Josh. 2:9-11). Faith led both to action.

3. You and me - Human body (26) – How know if a body is alive? It moves. Faith brings actions, works, change. Faith that doesn't result in obedience is not sick or weak – but D – E – A – D!

CONC: I'll say it again, "Salvation is *by* grace *through* faith . . . *to* do good works" (Eph. 2:8-10). Faith and obedient works are inseparable. We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves us is *never* alone – it works. Saving faith is not determined by what we do, only demonstrated by it. Our behavior shows if we really have true faith. Jesus spoke to this in Matt. 7:24-27 . . . Back to Duckland – Those poor ducks . . .

2 Cor. 13:5 . . . Take the test. Examine it. Is your faith real? If it is, then show it. Do you understand that . . .? Have you examined . . .? I join James in his challenge: "SHOW ME YOUR FAITH!" You can't see a salvation; you can only see the RESULTS of one!