

Faith that Works The Book of James

We just got done singing “Mary Did You Know”.

It’s hard to imagine all that Mary thought/experienced as the mother of Jesus!

But what about Jesus’ brothers? Can you imagine what it must have been like living in the shadow of big brother Jesus?!?

James, the writer of this 59th book of the Bible, was Jesus’ younger brother!

He didn’t believe that Jesus was the Messiah until after the resurrection!

Put yourself in the sandals of James, the younger brother of JESUS!

- **James did you know that your big brother will one day walk on water?**
- James did you know that your big brother will save every son & daughter?
- **James did you know that your big brother will give sight to a blind man?**
- James did you know that your big brother will calm a storm with his hand?
- James did you know that your big brother has walked where angels trod?
- **James did you know that your big brother is Lord of all creation?**
- James did you know that your big brother will one day rule the nations?
- James did you know that your big brother is heaven's perfect Lamb?
- **James, that brother of yours in the next room, He is the great, I Am!**

How do you think James responded to all this? How would you/I respond?

With doubt? Sure... Yeah right... You are funny... and I’m Santa Clause!

With anger? I don’t want to hear any more - Jesus this/that! I’m done!

However he responded, it had to have been hard to live in the shadow of Jesus as your older brother. **So it’s understandable that it took until James saw Jesus alive after he was crucified, for him to believe in His true identity!**

But after the resurrection, everything changed for James! He now saw Jesus as Lord & Savior, & he never looked back from that day forward.

James became a major leader in the Jerusalem Church, and was very influential in the spread of Christianity throughout the city and beyond!

Whatever doubt, anger, jealousy... James may have expressed publicly about Jesus, had now been replaced with *“Let me tell you about my big brother!”*

And James didn’t stop there! **He not only cared about people’s belief in Jesus, he also cared about them living in response to what Jesus has done!**

It’s easy to say you believe in something, it’s harder to live out of that belief!

James would say, **“Talk is cheap, but a transformed life is of incredible worth!”**

This is what James pursued, and what he challenged others to pursue as well!

This earned him the nickname “James the Just”, because he cared so much about how people lived in response to the sacrifice Jesus made for them!

Jesus lived a perfect/righteous life, and died the death we all deserve for our sin! How can we not live differently knowing this truth?

Some say that James was in opposition to the teaching of the Apostle Paul who said that we are justified by faith alone, and not by works!

But Paul’s emphasis is on justification – the gift of faith, **whereas James’ is on sanctification – the response of faith!** They complement each other!

James wants our faith to make a difference in the world – to have an effect on the lives of those around us! **James 2:14-26**

So what does a faith that works look like?

- **Confident Steadfastness** - Chapter 1 (vs. 2-4) It’s an example we can set!
When troubles come, we can choose joy b/c of what Christ has done for us!
- **Compassionate Service** - Chapter 2 (vs. 12-13) It’s what we can do!
We can show mercy because of the abundant mercy we have been shown!
- **Careful Speech** - Chapter 3 (vs. 8-10) It’s how we can use our words!
We can speak blessings rather than curses because Jesus is our King!
- **Contrite Submission** - Chapter 4 (vs. 7-8,10) It’s a different way of living!
We can live humbly & dependent upon God because we know the outcome!
- **Concern for Sinners** – Ch. 5 (vs. 19-20) It’s how we can care for one another!
There is still work that needs done in our hearts/lives/world, & God can use each of us in the lives of one-another to bring about that transformation!

A faith that receives much, gives much! A life that has been truly changed is one that will bring change in the world for the sake of Christ & His Kingdom!

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