

Word notes Sunday 30/1/2011 Tony Hodge
Faith AND Works

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: James 2:14-26

Throughout the history of the Christian Church God's love has been poured out to those around as His body, moved by the Holy Spirit, expresses it's faith in good deeds, some small and individual, others world changing.

James is writing to fellow Christians exhorting them to live out their faith and in this section talks about how good deeds are a natural expression of true faith in Christ Jesus. In the past some have mistaken this for a contradictory teaching to Paul's famous "The righteous ("just" KJV) shall live by faith" in Rom 1:17, but this is not the case. Paul speaks against reliance on works under the Law for salvation, James is saying that good deeds naturally flow out of a life lived by faith in Jesus.

Jesus said we would know the false prophets "by their fruits" (Matt 7:18-20) likewise false faith will not result in good deeds – or any other fruits of the Spirit, while a life lived by faith in Jesus will as the Holy Spirit works in us and through us.

The key difference is motivation. If we're relying on doing good to get in God's good books we'll fail and all our effort will be wasted – worse than that we are "like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away" (Is 64:6). Good deeds that arise from a life lived by faith are simply a natural product of God's love and compassion within – we respond to having received God's love and grace by loving and being gracious ourselves..

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Look at verse 14: "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?"

Explore this by discussing the following verses, how would you answer James questions?

- What good is it? - vv15-17
- If a man claims to have faith but has no deeds – vv 18,19
- Can such faith save him? – vv20-26

What key thing did Abraham and Rahab do to find themselves mentioned here?

Read Hebrews 10:19-24. After describing the amazing new relationship Jesus has forged between ourselves and God in 19-23, he immediately adds how we should express what's been done in us in v 24.

How can we spur one another on to love and good deeds?

Would the Cell like to research, plan and launch a project of good deeds – great things start with an idea!

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

The first part of this year is shaping up to be a time to proclaim the Gospel in Newmarket. There are two big evangelistic events at the upper school in March/April:

7pm 19th March "Tough Talk" - guys from the world of sport sharing their faith at Newmarket College
www.tough-talk.com

7pm 2nd April - All Saints have some partners from the US over to help encourage mission who will do a full-on classical Gospel Meeting at the College.

Who might you invite – how can you get to the point of asking them?