

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to continue one in our series in James weren't going to be in James Chapter two this morning this so you can go ahead and flip over there and your Bibles James is a letter that's in the New Testament and you can go ahead and look for that if you have an electronic version of the Bible I read out of the New Living Translation If you want to see the same what words that I'm going to be reading. If you've got your own favorite that's fine too but James Chapter two we're going to be in the back half of that and I just kind of want to go over some things again with you guys James is the brother of Jesus OK He is the pastor of the church in Jerusalem and he's writing this letter to the scattered church that we see this massive wave of Roman persecution and Jewish persecution for that matter come rolling over the city of Jerusalem in the Christians and they go they go all throughout the Roman Kingdom or in Pyar whatever word you want to use there to save their lives they have they flee they run they spread everywhere all right and they're facing intense persecution most of the places that they move as well and and so James writes this letter to them and it's such an important thing for us to kind of understand that context because this letter can be difficult enough to read and actually put into practice but when you realize that James isn't writing the people were everything is going good and he's still saying this is what God wants from you it kind of brings it to a whole nother level of All right well I guess this is important all right this is this is an important thing and we talked last week about how James was in James Chapter one he's kind of he kind of gives a big overarching picture of what faith should look like about how much surety in the faith begins to look and then in James Chapter two he starts to break it down a little bit and last week was how we treat people right do we immediately judge people based on how they look and how they. Fit into our minds things and we treat them different based on our own preconceived notion notions James says that has no place in the Christian faith that has no place whatsoever it was funny for me this week because you know sometimes you preach something and all week long people remind you of what you said on Sunday that happen to me a lot this week maybe you don't know what it's like to preach a sermon like that because you've never done that but you've maybe said something to somebody and then all week long they kind of were like hey do you remember what you said to me Will that happen to me all this week at different times not just because of things that I did or said but just you know people were like oh I did this or is this or you know I mean it just it was one of those weeks where that happened because this is something that we all struggle with that sometimes every one of us at some point in time in our life has made a judgment about somebody else based on nothing more than our own preconceived notions and we treated that person as less because of it every single one of us has done that at some point time and James says for followers of Jesus we need to carve that out of our lives it does not belong all right he starts to get really practical about how to treat people and today he continues on and some of that for practicality practicality we read this and we're going through a day by day remember this is one letter this is something that was meant to be read in one sitting James writes this to all these people and they would normally read it all but James starts to talk about our faith again what mature faith looks like faith is a key doctrine in the Bible right Faith is one of those things that is talked about over the sinner is saved by faith in the feet in Chapter two verses eight three nine a believer must walk by faith and second Corinthians five seven without faith it is impossible to please God Hebrews eleven six whatever we do apart from faith is sin Romans fourteen Chapter twenty three I mean faith is talked about over and over again in the Bible. So James gets really practical and he says what should faith look like then like there is faith we all have faith in something what should faith look like for a believer if you choose Jesus what should your faith look like how how does that come about practically what do we show when we do that and he launches into this this section that is is actually pretty amazing he's talks about in this section the relationship between faith and works and this is an important discussion if we're wrong in this matter we jeopardize eternal salvation I mean if we get things out of order when we're talking about faith and works and all these things this is a major deal what kind of faith saves a person. Is it necessary to perform good works in order to be saved how can a person tell whether or not they are exercising true faith James starts to just answer some of these questions that many of us ask. That many of us at some point in time. Have wrestled with

what does it look like what what should faith do what what should how how do I really know I have faith in God I mean we we ask these questions all the time sometimes we're afraid to ask them in church you know we ask them to somebody else and that's a sad thing to me when we feel like we can't ask questions about our faith and church we should this should be a safe place to ask questions and I hope for you that you feel like you can come and ask questions because it's such an important thing for us but James starts to talk about this in this letter what does real faith look like how is real faith practiced what should we experience when we're talking about real genuine faith in Jesus we all like I said we all have faith in something if you don't believe in Jesus if you don't have faith in God you have faith in something you walk around this earth in total faith in something right we've talked about this before you all didn't hesitate with the fact that when you rolled out of bed this morning and put your feet on the floor that you were going to float right like you had faith that gravity was going to do its thing even if you didn't think about it right how many of you drove here this morning or somebody drove you. How many of you had faith that when you came to the red light or the stop sign and you touch the brakes the car was actually going to stop and you were going to go right into an intersection the of the wrong way you just had faith that your brakes were going to do what they were supposed to do and they were going to you were going to stop right you also had a lot of faith in other drivers this is hard for some people I know to have faith in other drivers right but you had to believe and have faith that other drivers were going to veer into your lane and kill you otherwise you'd never drive anywhere right you have faith that as we're sitting in here breathing that we're going to keep breathing right and that the air that we're breathing isn't going to kill us we have faith in so many things throughout our day we just trust in them absolutely but then it comes to our faith in God I'm like I just don't know how that's supposed to work and that's OK I'm not trying to say you should never question those things James actually answers some of those questions because so many people for so long have had those questions let's look at it James Chapter two verses fourteen through seventeen James actually gives three kinds of faith in this short so few short short wow. All right and this short section of scripture James gives us three examples of of faith all right in the first one sadly is dead faith he gives us an example of dead faith. James Chapter two verses fourteen through seventeen What good is it dear brothers and sisters if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions can that kind of faith save anyone suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing and you say goodbye and have a good day stay warm and well but then you don't give that person any food or clothing what good does that do so you see Faith by itself isn't enough unless it produces good deeds it is dead. And useless those are not my words those are words from the Bible if your face doesn't produce good works. James would say your faith is dead. Useless Dan. There's no way to soften those words right but again there's no way to make this anything other than a black and white statement that James makes right he says right here that if our face doesn't lead to good deeds it's dead and useless and he uses this example right this guy walks in and he's cold and he's hungry and many of us can relate to this especially this time of year right as it's starting to get called It's actually funny more people are going to complain about the cold like in the fall than they do in January because our bodies are still getting used to it right and so when it's twenty below we're like all this isn't cold you know but it hits forty and people are like I'm dying you know if it's hilarious how it happens this time of year and so somebody comes in and they're cold and they're hungry and you look at I mean you shake your head and you're like man go have a great lunch and stay warm it's not helpful and most of us laugh because it's silly even. And yet most of us at some point time in our faith have walked around talking a lot about what we believe and not allowing it to cause anything that we do to change and James would say that that faith is. Dead. And useless. That's a big deal that those are strong strong words that James says Jesus said in Matthew chapter seven twenty one not everyone that says under me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven people with dead faith substitute words for actions they know the correct vocabulary they know how to say what they want to say they know how to look the part but what they do doesn't measure up to what they say and James says there's no place for that in the kingdom. The priest in the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan had

religious training but neither of them stopped to help the dying man at the side of the road in Luke Chapter ten vs twenty five and thirty seven Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan each of them would defend their faith each one of them probably could have eloquently said why God was the God of the Hebrews and why should serve him. But when the practicality came that faith did not. Do any good to help the hurting individual. Instead it was somebody that most of them would have immediately judged and said That person cannot help me. That actually lets their face bring about something important James words would have stark would have would have sparked a debate here. Is James denying salvation by faith like James is saying this is he's saying that faith alone isn't enough to see you become saved because I mean if you just stood back and you looked at this you could get there you could take what he's saying and make it look like that's what he's saying is that really what he's saying that salvation can be secured by doing enough good stuff. And I would say that is absolutely not what he is saying he is not coming against Paul they're giving two different sides to the same coin James is not saying that we are not saved by faith he's saying that when we get saved it should always produce good works he's not saying you can do just enough good to balance out the bad and then everything's OK we are saved by faith but that faith the evidence of that faith in us. Will always produce good works. Otherwise it's dead and useless I would say that our good works are like the exhaust coming out of the car right you turn on the key and the car produces something right something comes out and that's evidence that the car is running in our Christian faith we are saved by faith and there should be some evidence of that in James says the evidence of that. Is doing good works. I want to get to the next kind of face that's maybe even a little freaky to talk about. All right James Chapter two verse eighteen through nineteen. Now someone may argue some people have faith and others have good deeds but I say how can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds I will show you my faith by my good deeds you say you have faith for you believe there is ONE GOD good for you even the demons believe this and they tremble in terror. There's a demonic kind of faith that James talks about. They're like well I believe in Jesus right or I believe in God and James like who cares. If all it is is just saying you believe in something the demons do that too if you ever noticed as you read through the Gospels that the the things on earth that most accurately state who Jesus is are the demons. I mean if you've ever paid attention when you read through the Gospel the most accurate descriptions of who Jesus is are given when he encounters a demon. It happens over and over and over again in in Scripture they say they bear witness to the fact that he's the son of God in Mark chapter three they believe in the existence of a place of punishment in Luke they recognize that Jesus is going to be their judge and Mark Chapter five they submit to the power of His Word in Mark as well it is but it is not it does nothing to change what they are or what they do they believe everything correctly about who God is but it has made no difference you can have every correct answer about the face but if it doesn't change what you do and who you are on the inside it just matter. James compares that the faith of a demon. Wow. I've been there. Anyone else where you knew all the right answers right you could say whatever you wanted to say. You had you had it reasoned out in your brain but it made absolutely no difference in your daily walk I can tell you that I've been that man. I've been that person in my past I believed in God but it didn't matter on a day to day basis. I believed in what he said but it didn't make any difference in how I live. I just continued on through my day doing what I wanted to do the way I wanted to do it and lived as though I had all the time in the world and that kind of faith. Is compared to the faith of a demon by James it's pretty weighty. Kind of scary even and yet I would argue that probably most of you in this room if you've been serving Jesus at any point or for for any amount of time have struggled with this very thing at some point time in your journey you had the answers. You got lazy people look at your life and be like yeah I. Don't really see much different happens. Difficult. There's no hiding from it in scripture. But that's not the kind of faith. That pleases God. So we've talked about two pretty depressing things so far. But he closes this section by the scribing by describing the kind of faith that matters he describes a dynamic faith and in verses twenty three twenty six James Chapter two verses twenty three twenty six How foolish Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by

his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar you see his faith and his actions worked together his actions made his faith complete and so what happened just as the Scriptures say Abraham believed God and God counted him as right just because of his faith he was even called the friend of God So you see we are shown to be right with God by what we do not by faith alone Rahab the prostitute is another example she was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messages and sent them safely away by a different road just as the body is dead without breath so also faith is dead without good works so what does he say right there I mean he uses a lot of words right there this is the most detailed You know the most lengthy portion of these things that he talks about right here but he talks about faith that is real dynamic faith that is real is faith that has power face to face that results in changing our lives James describes is this true saving faith and he talks about all of these things he talks about in in James one eighteen as the spiritual rebirth through God's Word when we receive the Word and this saves us James one twenty one then Faith comes by hearing hearing by the Word of God In Romans ten seventeen and then he uses Abraham and Rahab as illustrations of dynamic. These are at least one of the stories is pretty well known and the other one can't be as well but he uses Abraham and he uses Rahab right and so he lets He talks about Abraham first let's talk about him first because that's who James talks about first and he says that Abraham is faith is demonstrated by his actions right and so Abraham it actually says in the first place that it talks about Abraham was found righteous because of his faith is actually when Abraham just believes when when God tells him you're going to have a kid and he's like seventy years old eighty years old. They come to Abraham they're like you're going to have kids and your offspring are going to be as though the sands of the earth right you're going to all these and Abraham's not old because some of you are his age Abraham is older than some. But most of you if God came to you in your eighty's or seventy's even let's just say seventy's and said hey you're going to have some more kids. Who by the person I know who would be crying for weeks if that actually happened we would be like I mean you would start laughing right or maybe we being you know I'm not sure what your response would be in your seventy's or eighty's but most of us want to be like sounds good God I believe you. Abraham does he just takes. The angel of the Lord at his word says that's that's awesome and it says he's counted as righteous because of his faith but then Abraham continues on. Through his life and. It takes longer than he wants it to right now you ever had Let's even just take God out of it but let's leave God out of it for just second somebody promised you something OK and it took a little longer than you would have preferred So you took that promise in your own hands and tried to make it work out for yourself how that go. Most of us not real good right somebody promises you something you want to happen in your own time will God promises Abraham that this son will be born that his offspring will be as though the sands of the earth and it takes a while. And so what happens is Sarah his wife comes to him and he's like you know what God promises but it obviously isn't going to happen to me I'm all here's my mate have her as a wife have a baby with her and get this thing started right. And if you know the story of Scripture you know that Ishmael is born and if you are a student of the word you know that Ishmael. Like found most of the countries that Israel fights against for the rest of his existence. Because they got tired of waiting for God's promise his way they just try to do it their way and that never works out good in Scripture. God actually blesses Ishmael I mean Abraham and Sarah drive them away God blesses him because it's not his fault that his parents didn't wait. On the promise of God But there's consequences. And eventually Sarah gets pregnant. She has a son and they named him Isaac and God asks for Abraham to kill a son. One of the most messed up things got us anybody to do it all Scripture. Doesn't bat an eye. He takes Isaac out the son that he was promised the son that he waited years for his only boy not only is only boy his only kid he lays him on an altar and he's preparing to in this life because of his faith in who God is. And if you know the story you know that God says not actually asking you for the life of your son. Seen if you're going to do what you say you do. Provide the sacrifice. And Abraham and Isaac sacrifice together and go back home and God says it is favorite favorite hymns it is Abraham's faith and his actions together. That are actually proof of what Abraham believes crazy story but I think James anticipates his writers objections that's Abraham he's called a

friend of God he hears God he prays in cities don't get destroyed can't relate to that guy at all. Right like that's Abraham. That's I'm not Abraham so god like well there was this prostitute in Jericho that wasn't raised in a Christian home. Her name is Rahab. Israel is getting ready to come in rehab is there Rahab hears about what Israel is doing somehow because when she's confronted by the spies she actually gives a very accurate assessment on who their God is and who are and how to believe in him what he what his heart is read how has faith in their God But what happens is their spies get caught or they're about to get caught and Rahab goes about this lengthy process to hide them. And it is by her actions. That her faith is shown. Like OK you can't relate to Father Abraham had many sons OK I get that how about the prostitute who was raised in a completely different way than any of you can you relate to heard all what's your excuse now true faith in God according to James should always result. In US doing good things for God That's what real faith looks like what this faith look like what does faith really mean to me. It is a saying that I believe God enough to do what he says I believe got enough to where I'm going to actually live this out on a day to day basis. I'm going to make sure that I'm doing what God asked me to do nothing more nothing less I'm not responsible to fulfill the the things that God has asked you to do. I'm responsible to fulfill the things that God has asked me to do. That's important might be slightly different than what God is asking you to do and that's OK. There was a quote as I was studying for this section there was a quote that really jumped out at me so if you're a writer get ready if you're not that's fine. But there was a quote that really jumped off the page to me as I was studying and it says this face is not believing in spite of evidence faith is obeying in spite of consequence it must say that again faith is not believing in spite of evidence. Faith is obeying in spite of consequences. The demons believe. Right the demons believe in God no matter what they believe but it doesn't make any difference in their life Abraham. Had faith in God and he was willing to do what that God asked him to do regardless of the consequences on this earth your thought about so many of the stories in the Bible and what actually happens in those things if you ever thought about Noah building an ark right and how it literally took decades to build this ark and there's no rain. How you ever thought about how much you know must have been march of mocked building this gigantic boat and saying that God is told me to do this and never seeing any results of that until it's too late for it to matter for anyone else. They were waiting to see something first. And know us and I don't care what the consequences are I don't care what people ask me I'm just going to do what he says to do it's a huge deal. True saving faith leads to action dynamic faces not just intellectual contemplation. It leads to obedience on the part of the Will true faith will not allow us to walk through life without ministering to people and caring for their needs. True faith in Jesus will never allow us to just walk through life without caring and ministering we do not have a works based faith but we believe that faith brings about works we might say that good works cannot produce salvation but salvation most certainly will produce good works. All right I want to say that last thing again we could say that good works will not necessarily good works will not produce salvation alone but salvation will always. Produce good works because that's what we're called to do Paul I talked about two different sides of the same coin Paul talks about we are justified by faith alone that is pre-sell basin we come to know Jesus based on faith alone and then James steps in and he says now step two. We are justified by faith we are made right in the sight of God through faith alone and now that's just going to produce change in your life that causes you to do good when we talked about last week the faith or the law that sets us free James refers to the law as a good thing right here a few he refers to it as something that is liberating it keeps us from wrong and brings about freedom to enjoy good. The law he referred was love God and love people. Not the thousands of things that they added to what God said in the Old Testament. Love God and love people it's the law that brings freedom and James says that that law that brings freedom is going to cause us to do good. In the world here is just real simple today. If your faith is only about you coming in here on a Sunday and sitting in a chair. Taking in some things for an hour and forty five minutes and leaving exactly the same and never doing anything good for God outside of this place James would say that that faith is dead and useless. And I'm sorry that that is so like black and white gut punch level. But that is what he says and there is no way to sugarcoat that in any way shape or

form James says our faith should always lead us to do good things. It should always lead us to get involved in people's lives and to make a difference to not just see a need and be like oh yeah. Stay warm be blessed but that's actually step into the situation. And make a difference God hasn't called us all to the same thing. I don't want to pretend like that's true God has not called us all to do the same thing some of you are going to react differently because God is asking to do something different that's OK but we should all be doing something for God every single one of us that has a faith in Jesus. That faith brings about. Stewing good things in this world I can't tell you exactly what that is but I can tell you at the end result is the same I want to make it absolutely clear before we move on. Good works cannot bring about salvation. I just want to repeat this because I don't want people walking away from here with the wrong idea you can't be good enough to earn salvation you can't just be a good enough person to be made right with God It is an act of faith Jesus has already done all of the work we choose Him we give our faith in Him we are saved. Then we demonstrate that God did something in us by doing good for others. Step one step two. OK We're on the same page there we're going to leave here be like oh man our pastor is just about as bad as they get. I mean you might say that anyway but. I want to make sure the theology is right we are saved by faith. Another way to say it is we are saved by faith for good. OK. That's what we're called to do. We are saved by our faith and then God calls us to go make a difference in people's lives I say one more thing before we go to prayer we live in a busy society. Busy there's a million things calling for most of your time right there just is there's I mean most of you right now if I asked you what you have to get done this week you could list off like thirty things without having to stop and think about it like you could just listen even if you're on vacation you're like yeah we got to this this this this and this. It would be hard we're busy we are a busy people and some of us very closely guard some of you are like me and you're an extrovert you just love being around people and some of you are like my wife and your introverts and you just need time alone neither one of those things is bad but some of us we're so busy with doing stuff for work or whatever that then when we feel like God is asking us to do something good in the life of someone else like I just don't have time. I'm just so busy. God I'll get there eventually but right now I'm busy I know I have to just take some time for me listen that's what the Sabbath is for I'm not saying Sabbath the way they did in the Old Testament but rest is holy not laziness but rest if God rested and God is holy then rest is holy but God still calls us to do stuff. Jesus doesn't only ask people with a whole bunch of extra time to do things for him right if that was the case no one would ever do anything. Through all busy. There's all there is always going to be reasons not to do what God is asking us to do. But true faith is going to say yes God. Will do what you're asking me to do that can be your job I can be in your work. That doesn't always have to be like well I better carve out this Saturday to goes walk through the parking lots and pray for random strangers if God asked you to do that also but some of you what God is asking you to do is be the person at work that's dependable. Be the person at work that can make a difference in the lives around you you can't do good at your job I know that's surprising to some of you but it's possible what is God asking you to do Jesus or get. I thank you for your work. It's not always fun it's not always simple it's certainly not always light but it's always correct. Got it shines lights and areas that need light shone on them. And this morning I just pray really simply. That you speak to us some people in this room they are doing it right I mean you ask them to do something and they don't even hesitate they just do it. Some in this room. Have been struggling with that. They believe in you they believe you are the way to go. Hasn't made a whole lot of difference lately in what they're doing. And I just pray that you speak and pray that you were change where it needs to be work and pray that you build up. Their needs build. Your get.