

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	Yes, there are notes and scripture throughout the sermon.

## Key Questions

### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the kind of faith that brings salvation - faith and action.

### ***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because while faith alone saves us, it is a certain kind of faith.

### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This is the second in the James worship series. This sermon is adapted from a sermon preached at the Village Church and found online at

### ***What are the next action steps?***

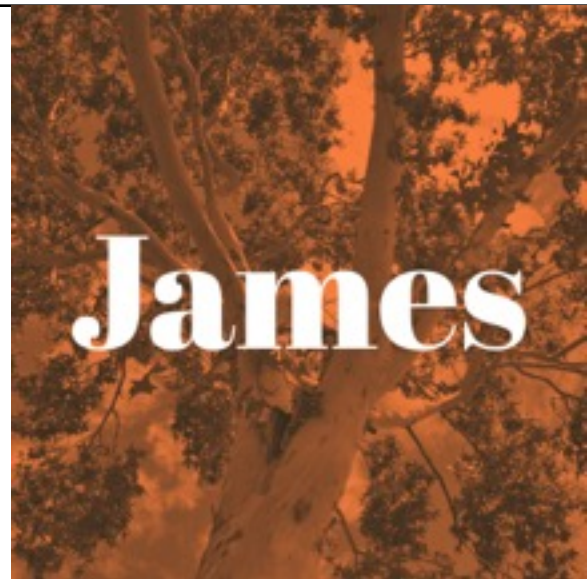
Live a life that really is life.  
Show your faith by your actions.

### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

When we consider faith and action, the good news is that God, in Christ, has acted first. In the cross, we see God's love in action.

### ***What are other key takeaways? (140 characters or less)***

- While faith alone saves us, it is a certain kind of faith.
- God is love.  
Love is the most important and profound description of God.  
More than that, God loves you. God has forgiven you.
- John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan movement, talks about God's love at work in our life before we even recognize it. There may come a time when we recognize God's love for us, confess our sins and receive the forgiveness that God offers us. Then, the rest of our lives is growing more and more in the knowledge and love of God and living our lives in a way that demonstrates love of God and neighbor. This is our Christian faith.



- The way that we talk about the fruit of our faith here at First United Methodist Church is our discipleship pathway. We live as disciples of Jesus Christ as we worship, grow, give, serve and share.

---

## Metadata

### Topic(s)

1. Change Lives
2. Grow

### Sermon Books of the Bible

1. James
2. Matthew

### Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, James, faith, actions

---

*This work by Andrew Conard is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>.*

---

<b>James 2:14-26, CEB</b>	<b>5</b>
Response to Scripture	5
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Sermon Starter Video	5
Series Review	5
Sermon Notes and Scripture Study	5
Take Notes - Bulletin	
God Speaking	
Tool for Spiritual Growth	
Prayer	6
<b>God is Love</b>	<b>6</b>
Transition	
Thesis of James 2:14-26	6
<b>Faith without actions is no good</b>	<b>7</b>
Example: Brother or Sister in Need	7
James 2:15	
James 2:16	
Spiritually Constipated	7
Sheep and the Goats	8
The Way of Salvation	8
<b>Faith without actions is dead.</b>	<b>9</b>
Illustration - Spurgeon Tree Example	9
Discipleship Pathway	10
Worship	
Grow	
Give	
Serve	
Share	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>10</b>
Good News	10

3rd Sunday after Pentecost  
James - Faith / Actions  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/250sudA>

June 5, 2016  
James 2:14-26  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,886  
Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/25GpT92>

Call to Action	10
Invitation	10
I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.	
Not ready to pray	
Ready to pray	
Logistics	
Closing - contextual to sermon	
Closing Prayer	11

---

## James 2:14-26, CEB

My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people say they have faith but do nothing to show it? Claiming to have faith can't save anyone, can it? Imagine a brother or sister who is naked and never has enough food to eat. What if one of you said, "Go in peace! Stay warm! Have a nice meal!"? What good is it if you don't actually give them what their body needs? In the same way, faith is dead when it doesn't result in faithful activity.

Someone might claim, "You have faith and I have action." But how can I see your faith apart from your actions? Instead, I'll show you my faith by putting it into practice in faithful action. It's good that you believe that God is one. Ha! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble with fear. Are you so slow? Do you need to be shown that faith without actions has no value at all? What about Abraham, our father? Wasn't he shown to be righteous through his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? See, his faith was at work along with his actions. In fact, his faith was made complete by his faithful actions. So the scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and God regarded him as righteous. What is more, Abraham was called God's friend. So you see that a person is shown to be righteous through faithful actions and not through faith alone. In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute shown to be righteous when she received the messengers as her guests and then sent them on by another road? As the lifeless body is dead, so faith without actions is dead.

### Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

---

## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

### Series Review

We all have choices in life. Often, it seems, that we have to choose one or the other: Right or Left. This or That. True or False. Stop or Go. Sometimes, the answer is Both / And. Join us for a four-week series in worship as we consider the message of the book of James and how to live as disciples in our everyday life.

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

#### *Take Notes - Bulletin*

I invite you to take notes during the message today. You can find a place in your bulletin or if you have a mobile device you can take notes and save them in the Bible App. Just open the Bible App,

click on "More"  
and then "Events"  
You'll find us on the map.

### ***God Speaking***

I pray that you will hear God speaking to you sometime during the service today. Listen for God's word for you – something that helps you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Whenever you hear it, write it down.

### ***Tool for Spiritual Growth***

Then, take this bulletin home with you so that you can grow in your faith outside of worship by reflecting on what you heard today, praying for others connected with our community and reading scripture.

### **Prayer**

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

---

## **God is Love**

God is love.

Love is the most important and profound description of God.

More than that, God loves you. God has forgiven you.

I'm not talking about some future version of you, but the real person that you are today – especially with all of the ways that you mess up, and even the ways you don't know that you mess up.

I hope and pray that you will find your life anchored in the hope and forgiveness of God's love. That you will be assured of your forgiveness and unmoved from the hope of Jesus Christ. God's love is for you every day, as your week goes on, in the ups and downs in everything – not because of you did anything, but instead because of who God is and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You have been adopted as a child of God.

### ***Transition***

I want you to be crystal clear about this, because the passage we're in this morning is one of the difficult passages of the Bible. I don't want you to leave with the impression that you need to do stuff for God to love you.

So, let's take a closer look at the passage of scripture for today.

## **Thesis of James 2:14-26**

Here is the thesis of this passage from James:

While faith alone saves us, it is a certain kind of faith.

It is a faith which produces actions which saves us. The actions do not save us, but a faith that does not produce actions is a faith that will only deceive and cannot lead us into the fullness of life.

Faith without actions is no good.

Faith without actions is dead.

Let me be clear, I am not suggesting and I do not believe that James is suggesting that you must add actions to your faith to validate your faith, but rather legitimate faith leads to action – actions that indicate love of God and neighbor.

---

## Faith without actions is no good

### Example: Brother or Sister in Need

Let's take a look at the illustration that James uses, beginning in verse 15.

#### **James 2:15**

Imagine a brother or sister who is naked and never has enough food to eat.<sup>1</sup>

What James is describing here is not a little inconvenience. He is not asking us to imagine someone who doesn't have the clothes that they would prefer or doesn't get to eat out whenever they like.

James is describing someone who is part of the church and has found themselves in a place in life in which they are not able to survive day to day. They are naked and cannot eat. They are completely and utterly in trouble.

#### **James 2:16**

We continue in verse 16:

"What if one of you said, "Go in peace! Stay warm! Have a nice meal!"? What good is it if you don't actually give them what their body needs?"<sup>2</sup>

The question that James has for us is this: "What good is that?"

It's no good.

Where there is perceived faith with no actions, it is no good.

### Spiritually Constipated

See, what happens when faith is still, it's not moving, we have a tendency to become spiritually constipated. Do you see what I mean?

I don't really want to explain that anymore than I have already. Just those two words are all I'm going to give you. We have the opportunity to be a conduit through

---

<sup>1</sup> James 2:15, CEB.

<sup>2</sup> James 2:16, CEB.

which God is at work in the world. We are the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in El Dorado and Butler County.

You see what this person did in James?

---

*"Hey, God bless you, my friend, in your nakedness. You're not going to survive the day. Children starving to death. Be warmed. Hey, do you know what you should do? You should eat dinner. That's what I would do. If I were you, I'd put some pants on and I'd eat some dinner. God bless you."*

---

What good is that to the one in trouble and what good is that to the one who has been blessed by God to help his brother in the day of trouble?

Faith without actions is no good.

## Sheep and the Goats

There are several passages in the book of James in which the writing in this letter mirrors the teachings of Jesus. We find that to be the case here in this passage, as it mirrors Matthew 25. You may remember the story that Jesus tells about separating the sheep and the goats at the judgment of the nations.

He says to the sheep, "Hey, you fed me. You cared for me. You visited me in prison. You showed up." Then to the goats, he says, "You never did that." Here are the words from Matthew 25:40-43:

"Then the king will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Get away from me, you who will receive terrible things. Go into the unending fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry and you didn't give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you didn't give me anything to drink. I was a stranger and you didn't welcome me. I was naked and you didn't give me clothes to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'"<sup>3</sup>

So Jesus' point and now James' point is that as we experience the grace and mercy of God, as we rest in that saving faith alone, our heart begins to be transformed and changed by the power of God's love.

## The Way of Salvation

John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan movement, talks about God's love at work in our life before we even recognize it. There may come a time when we recognize God's love for us, confess our sins and receive the forgiveness that God offers us. Then, the rest of our lives is growing more and more in the knowledge and love of God and living our lives in a way that demonstrates love of God and neighbor. This is our Christian faith.

Faith without action is no good.

---

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 25:40-43, CEB.



---

## Faith without actions is dead.

James writes twice that faith without actions is dead. We read in verse 17:

**"In the same way, faith is dead when it doesn't result in faithful activity."**<sup>4</sup>

and in verse 26:

**"As the lifeless body is dead, so faith without actions is dead."**<sup>5</sup>

This is a strong statement.

James is saying that faith without works is not just outwardly inoperative but rather inwardly dead. He's saying faith without works isn't faith.

Here is an example from Charles Spurgeon, a preacher in London in the 1800s. He writes:

### Illustration - Spurgeon Tree Example

-----  
*"A tree has been planted out into the ground. Now the source of life to that tree is at the root, whether it hath apples on it or not; the apples would not give it life, but the whole of the life of the tree will come from its root."*  
-----

-----  
*But if that tree stands in the orchard, and when the springtime comes there is no bud, and when the summer comes there is no leafing, and no fruit-bearing, but the next year, and the next, it stands there without bud or blossom, or leaf or fruit, you would say it is dead, and you are correct; it is dead."*  
-----

-----  
*It is not that the leaves could have made it live, but that the absence of the leaves is a proof that it is dead. So, too, is it with the [person of faith]. If he hath life, that life must give fruits; if not fruits, actions; if his faith has a root, but if there be no actions, then depend upon it the inference that he is spiritually dead is certainly a correct one."*<sup>6</sup>  
-----

Do you hear the argument? It's not the leaf and the tree that make the tree alive; it's that the tree is alive that produces leaves and apples.

---

<sup>4</sup> James 2:17, CEB.

<sup>5</sup> James 2:26, CEB.

<sup>6</sup> Spurgeon, C.H. "Fruitless Faith" 1861, accessed on June 4, 2016 at <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/history/spurgeon/web/ss-0011.html>

## **Discipleship Pathway**

The way that we talk about the fruit of our faith here at First United Methodist Church is our discipleship pathway. We live as disciples of Jesus Christ as we worship, grow, give, serve and share.

### ***Worship***

We worship every Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m. by gathering to sing, pray, listen for God's word in scripture and consider what it means for us today.

### ***Grow***

We grow in love of God and neighbor by connecting with others in small groups and engaging in daily spiritual practices on our own.

### ***Give***

We give financially to invest in God's ministry and mission and create an opportunity for God to work through us and our church.

### ***Serve***

We serve others in our congregation, Butler County and beyond as part of God's transformation of the world.

### ***Share***

We share our faith by inviting others to connect with God and sharing our experience of life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

These actions will not bring you into relationship with God. They are evidence of a person of faith – one who loves God and loves neighbor.

---

## **Conclusion**

### **Good News**

When we consider faith and action, the good news is that God, in Christ, has acted first. In the cross, we see God's love in action.

### **Call to Action**

Jesus life, death and resurrection makes it possible for our faith to be alive, good, and useful in bringing about God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

God invites us into the richest life possible.

Live a life that really is life.

Show your faith by your actions.

### **Invitation**

You may find yourself saying, I think I want a life like that.

I want my faith to be evident in the way that I live my life.  
I want to follow Jesus and experience the power of the resurrection.

You can.  
All you have to do is ask.

***I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.***

It's a very simple thing to pray – I am sorry. Thank you. Please.

- Turning away from the things that we know are wrong, saying "I am sorry".
- Thanking Jesus for dying and being raised for us; putting our faith in him.
- And finally asking, 'Please come and fill me with your Spirit.'

***Not ready to pray***

You may not be sure if you want to pray a prayer like that and that's okay. If you are curious about Jesus and being part of a Christian community, then I invite you to get connected here at First United Methodist Church. We would to help you find out more.

***Ready to pray***

And, if you would like to pray, then:  
it may be the very first time in your life to pray something like this,  
it may be the first time for you in a long time, or  
it may be a prayer that you have prayed every day for a long time.

***Logistics***

You do not have to pray it out loud, but just quietly under your breath.  
You can repeat after me.  
I'm sorry, thank you, please.

***Closing - contextual to sermon***

God invites us to faith.  
God invites us to action  
God is here with us. Jesus is alive.  
You can follow him today.

Will you pray with me?

***Closing Prayer***

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

---

*And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.*

---

Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.  
Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.  
I trust you with my life.

3rd Sunday after Pentecost  
James - Faith / Actions  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/250sudA>

June 5, 2016  
James 2:14-26  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,886  
Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/25GpT92>

Help me receive your forgiveness.  
Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.  
In your holy name, Amen.