

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 10:31-42

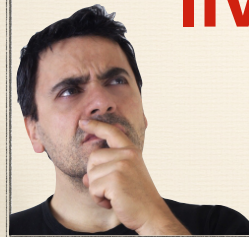
Lesson #37

Known by Works

04/17/2016

Three witnesses to Jesus
as the Christ

The way we
live our
lives.



The testimony of
our personal
experience.

The preaching
of the Gospel.

1

Context

"²² At that time the **Feast of the Dedication** took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the **portico of Solomon**. ²⁴ The Jews therefore gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep."

- The Jewish leaders were especially sensitive to any form of blasphemy at this time.

2

- The Feast of Dedication (hanukkah) - celebrating the purification and rededication of the temple by Judas the Maccabee in 165 B.C. (shortly after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes).



3

Context

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Our actions speak louder than words. **Belief is more about inner enlightenment than outer evidence.**

4

"³¹ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." ³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Has it not been written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? ³⁵ If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? ³⁷ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

5

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Has it not been written in your Law, **I said, you are gods**”? ³⁵ If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?”

Psalm 82:6

“You are gods,
and all of you are sons of the Most High.”
(speaking of the ruling judges of Israel who were
supposed to represent God but did not judge fairly)

- The word translated god (Elohim) is sometimes used for “human rulers” (Ex.21:6, 22:8,9,28) or even “evil angels” in Rabbinic literature.

6

Paraphrase

When the Jews tried again to stone him, Jesus inquired about what was wrong with what he had done. The Jews said that it was his claims to be God that were blasphemous not his works. Jesus responded, “You accuse me of blasphemy for saying that “I am the Son of God” but your sacred Scripture describes those to whom the word of God came as gods even though they were unjust and you do not accuse them. I come as the only begotten Son of God and Messiah with signs to prove it. Draw your conclusions about my identity from my deeds even if you don’t believe my words.

7

Observations

1. Why is this passage in John?

If the deity of Jesus is fundamental to the Christian faith and John’s Gospel makes the clearest case for his divinity, why does John include this passage?

Why does the deity of Jesus seem so obscure?

Could it be that the way we argue for Jesus’ deity needs to be reconsidered?

2. How do we defend the divine nature of Jesus?

Proof texts from the Bible may mean little to those who do not believe.

Note the attention given to Jesus’ deeds.

8

Acts 2

“²² Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, **a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst**, just as you yourselves know — ²³ this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

9

Lessons

1. Look at this passage as a window into our interaction with our culture.

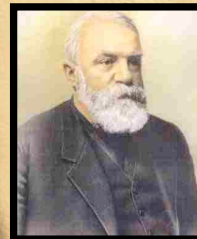
Before we blame others for not having ears to hear the Gospel, let’s be sure we have not nullified it with our behavior.

2. If our witness consists only of words (testimonials and Bible verses), we are very limited in the effect of our outreach.

3. Consider James 2.

Just as our faith is hard for others to see without our deeds, so Jesus’ divine nature may be hard to see apart from his signs.

10



Dwight L. Moody

“A holy life will make the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns, they just shine.”

11

Jesus' ministry was a
SHOW and TELL
operation.

We are called to
follow his example.

12

Principle #1 from James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to
our ministry.

"¹⁴ **What use is it**, my brethren, **if a man says** he has faith, but he has no **works**? Can that faith **save** him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."

13

Principle #1 from James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to
our ministry.

"What use is it"

James is looking at faith in a temporal practical sense.

"if a man says he has faith"

James is looking at the claim to faith (talking the talk).

"but he has no works?"

Think of James' use of "works" as "deeds" which is the more common meaning.

14

"Can *that* faith save him?" **James is clearly indicating that we are saved by works (deeds).**

The question is "saved from what?"

"¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, **what use is that?** ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."

The context of the word "saved" in James is not "eternal life" but "usefulness in this life."

James 5:15

"The prayer offered in faith will **save** the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up."

15

"Can *that* faith save him?" **James is clearly stating that we are saved by works (deeds).**

The question is "saved from what?"

"¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, **what use is that?** ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."

Paul also uses the word "saved" in a temporal sense.

1 Timothy 3:15

"But women shall be **preserved (saved)** through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

16

Principle #2 from James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to
our witness.

"¹⁸ But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; **show me** your faith without the works, and **I will show you** my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works **is useless?**"

17

Principle #2 from James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to
our witness.

“show me . . . and I will show you”

James is looking at faith as it is seen by man
(by action) not God (who looks at the heart).

“is useless?”

James is looking at faith in a practical sense
and evaluating its usefulness in this life.

18

Matthew 5:16

“Let your light shine **before men**
in such a way that they may **see**
your good works, and glorify
your Father who is in heaven.”

It is possible to have real light
but not to have it seen by men
so as to glorify God.

Such light is useless.

19

Principle #3 from James 2

Faith without action is dead with respect to
our identity.

“²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ **and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,”** and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ **You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.** ²⁵ And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ **For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”** ²⁰

“²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he **offered up Isaac** his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*And Abraham believed God, and **it was reckoned** to him as righteousness,*” and he was called the friend of God.”

Abraham's faith is
perfected and fulfilled in
Gen.22

A public display

James' point

Abraham is declared
to be justified by faith in
Gen.15

A private declaration

Paul's point

²¹

“²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he **offered up Isaac** his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*And Abraham believed God, and **it was reckoned** to him as righteousness,*” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that **a man is justified by works**, and not by faith alone.”

• Is James looking at justification before man?

Romans 4:2-3

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; **but not before God.**”

22

An apparent conflict

Romans 4:5

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justified the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness.”

Paul
(Faith =
justification >
works)



James 2:24

“You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.”

James
(Faith +
works =
justification)

23

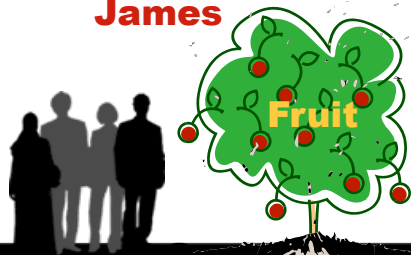
That which is of
use in saving us
in this life.

That which
justifies before
man.

That which
saves us in the
life to come.

That which
justifies before
God.

James



Fruit



Paul

Faith

24

Ephesians 4:15

“but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,”

L istening to concerns
O verlooking weaknesses
V aluing strengths
E mpathizing with pain

Four daily disciplines

1. Learn something new
2. Be thankful for something
3. Encourage someone
4. Respond to an event graciously

25

Being a Christian doesn't
change what you deal with,
**so much as how you deal
with it.**

Competence
is revealed in what we do and

Character
is revealed in what we do next.

26

How
do you
respond
to life?

Love is a response to:

patient
kind
not jealous
does not brag
is not arrogant
does not act unbecomingly
does not seek its own
is not provoked
does not take into account a wrong suffered
does not rejoice in unrighteousness
rejoices with the truth
bears all things
believes all things
hopes all things
endures all things



1 Cor. 13:4-7

trials
insults
success of others
success of self
power and authority
freedom
competition
challenging confrontation
injustice
failure of others
gossip and slander
loss
doubts
discouragement
delayed expectations

27

Disciples of Jesus know
how and when to pray

and how and when to
**be the answer
to someone
else's prayer.**

28

1 Peter 3

“14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. “*And do not fear their intimidations, and do not be troubled,*” 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense **to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you**, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the things in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

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