

Sermon Title: “Having a ‘Do Something’ Faith”

Sermon by Rev. Tom Harrington
Week of April 10, 2011

Sermon Based Small Group Discussion Guide

Icebreaker

Big Idea: The right kind of faith compels us to do something.

Sermon Text:

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. – James 2:14-26 (New International Version, 2011)

Learning more about the lesson

James was probably the oldest of Christ’s several brothers and sisters since he heads the list in Matthew 13:55. At first he did not believe in Jesus and even challenged him and misunderstood his mission (see John 7:2-5). Later James became a committed disciple, and very prominent in the early church. He was one of the select individuals to whom Christ appeared after his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7), and Paul called him a ‘pillar’ of the church (Galatians 2:9).

1. What kind of faith is James criticizing? How might one identify persons with this kind of faith?
2. Hypocrisy – the false claim to live a life aligned with one’s admirable principles or beliefs – is a problem as old as the church. What do you think might be some reasons for that?
3. Why is Abraham such a good example of faith in action? (See Genesis 22.)
4. Why is Rahab a good example of faith in action? (See Joshua 2:1-21. Note especially her actions in v. 6.)

5. What man or woman, living or dead, inspires you by their example of putting faith into action?

6. Is there something concrete for which you would like to be remembered or a passion with which people would identify you?

Taking it Home

In your life, how are you or could you live out each of these ways of putting faith into action:

Showing compassionate generosity:

Demonstrating sacrificial obedience:

Taking an uncalculated risk:

Prayer Requests and Praises: