

James: A Letter from Jesus' Brother **How Works Justify — James 2:20-26**

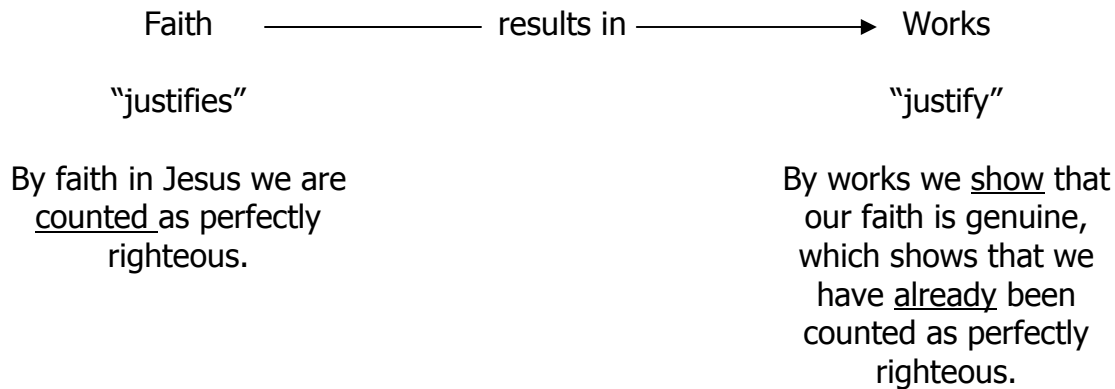
Introduction

Romans 3:28 — For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

James 2:24 — You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Martin Luther: James' epistle is really an epistle of straw compared to them [Romans and other New Testament books], for it lacks this evangelical character.

The word "justify" has two very different meanings in the New Testament.



Like Abraham, we are counted as perfectly righteous by faith alone (v.23)

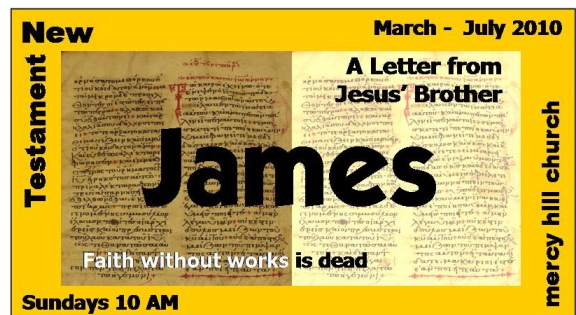
Like Abraham and Rahab, our works show that our faith is genuine, which shows that we have already been counted as perfectly righteous (vv.21,25)

Take-aways

Understand that Paul and James use "justify" with different meanings.

When you feel that you are too sinful to be accepted by God, immediately turn to trust Jesus. It's by faith alone that we are counted as perfectly righteous.

When you find that you are without works, immediately turn to trust Jesus; he will change your heart and obedience will start to flow.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

Have you ever thought that Paul and James contradict each other? Did Sunday's teaching help you understand this? Why or why not?

Can you see how counting someone as perfectly righteous is different from showing that someone has been counted as perfectly righteous — and that the former is by faith and the latter by works? What troubles you about this?

Do you sometimes try to make up for your sin by being obedient? What's wrong with that?

Do you sometimes think you can't come back to God until you be good for a while? What's wrong with that?

Do you sometimes think lack of works isn't really a problem? What's wrong with that?

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

New **March - July 2010**

Testament **mercy hill church**

**A Letter from
Jesus' Brother
James**

Faith without works is dead

Sundays 10 AM