

Innkeeper's Son; Show and Tell

Part 1

December 1, 2024

DAY 1: Christmas night

1. This Sunday we will watch a video called “the innkeeper’s son.” The video is what is called “historical fiction.” We don’t know if the innkeeper even had a son. We aren’t sure the innkeeper helped Joseph and Mary in their dilemma to find a place to spend the night, but it is the most likely scenario. The video is a fictional “recollection” of a son who watched his innkeeper father help this poor couple in time of need. It illustrates our theme for this week, having a **faith** that is **exhibited in real life actions**.

2. What we celebrate as Christmas was the night the Hero named Jesus showed up as God in the flesh. It was the first time anybody on earth witnessed His majesty in this way

Luke 2:1-7 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

*And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and **laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.***

3. These were the first moments anybody on earth witnessed His majesty as His unique arrival to place. As with much of the Christmas story, the details conveyed in the Bible are limited.

4. Whether the innkeeper led them to the manger, or someone else, God has a way of putting people in our paths at just the right time to help in just the right way as they speak words of kindness and encouragement while demonstrating acts born out of faith.

5. When our faith is both demonstrated and proclaimed, something powerful takes place. Such combinations of words and deeds can be keys to unlock the doors to the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven.

6. It is possible that TODAY, God wants to use you in a way that helps or encourages someone else. Are you open to that? Will you look for that opportunity? Will you step out in faith?

DAY 2: Faith with action

1. Several decades after Jesus was born in the manger, one of His little brothers named James would go on to write a letter to encourage Christians about *demonstrating* their faith in ways that were pleasing to God.

*James 2:14 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.*

2. What James wrote in this part of his letter speaks to the kinds of actions that the innkeeper’s son was describing in the video of his father on the night Jesus was born. His father did what he could to be helpful to Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in ways that made a lasting impact on this 14-year-old boy.

3. We never know how small acts of kindness that stem from our faith can impact others and bless God in the process.

4. A very good friend of mine, Kent Denlinger was a Christian as a young teenager. He played football, baseball, and basketball. One day two of his teammates who were not Christians asked him why he didn’t do some of the things others did. Kent remembers freezing, not knowing what to say. He barely remembers what he said, but it was something along the lines of “I’m not supposed to do some things, and I don’t want to do them.”

5. He went back for his fortieth high school reunion recently. One of those guys came up to him and told him that his life was changed because of what Kent said and how he lived. The fellow had found Jesus Christ, and the sanctification process had brought a profound and wondrous change in who he was!

6. Kent was dumbfounded that God could use him, as a young teenager, at a loss for words, and mumbling something as simple as what he said.

7. Perhaps you wonder how God could use you. The bar is really low. You just need to be available!

DAY 3: Real faith is exhibited in works

1. James became a pastor after the resurrection of Jesus. He dearly loved these people he had the privilege to pastor and lead. In time they would be scattered all over the middle east due to the rising persecution of Christians in that day. James wrote to them to encourage and instruct them in their faith concerning how to live out their faith in difficult days.

2. James is deeply troubled by an attitude towards faith that sees faith mainly as a verbal profession—such as the confession that God is one.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe that, and shudder.

3. James is referring to an important scripture called the Shema. (Pronounced: She-Maugh) All faithful Jews believed the creed known as the Shema.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

4. While believing this theological truth is important, is it theological truth enough to save us? It begs the question, “Just what is salvation faith?” Is it theological truth only? What is “faith”?

5. Faith is more than a theological truth. Real faith displays itself in action. Faith is “show and tell” entity.

6. My granddaughter loves “show and tell” at school. She brings something from home that is important to her and tells her classmates why it is special to her.

James 2:14 “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?”

7. Saving faith eventually shows itself to be real by the effects of that faith. As James says, you will see genuine faith exhibited in works.

James 2:26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

8. The kind of faith that is a professional only faith is dead. It is dead, useless, not real faith.

James 2:14 “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?”

9. Can a faith that only tells but does not show anything justify a person before God?

10. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: Faith displayed in actions

James 2:18. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

*James 2:22 You see that faith was active **along with** his works, and **faith was completed by his works**.*

1. James alludes to the famous story of the faith of Abraham, a patriarch, or Father of the Faith.

James 2:21-23 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

2. James illustrates this same point from the story of Rahab who, like Abraham, shows up in Jesus’ family tree from Matthew 1. Rahab had been a prostitute. When she came to faith her life changed! She allowed the Israelite spies not to be captured, and that led to the capture of Jericho. That victory was the beginning of taking the Promised Land.

James 2:24 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.

3. The main point is expressed three times in verses 17, 20, and 26. It is NOT that works must be ADDED to faith, but that genuine faith **includes** works. That is the very nature of faith.

What you do reveals who you are.

4. If you say you “believe” this truth about God but live a life not taught in the Bible, you need to evaluate the authenticity of your faith.

5. Jesus gave this very warning.

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

*John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**” ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

6. Belief is authenticated by a life of faith. It is about showing and telling your faith. Being obedient to the word of God is being a part of true faith.

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: By grace alone, faith alone

1. Some people have a hard time with this part of James' writing that we have been looking at regarding one's faith because it can sound directly contradictory to what the Apostle Paul writes about concerning how salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

2. Paul is right and yet, not in contradiction to what James is saying. As one biblical scholar notes, "James was combating a superficial faith that had no wholesome effect in the life of the professed believer. Paul, on the other hand, was combating legalism – the belief that one may earn saving merit before God by his good deeds."

3. James and Paul are saying the same thing about faith that saves, just from different sides of the same coin. James is talking about active faith; Paul is talking about passive faith. Paul is opposing works-righteousness and earning your salvation through legalism. James is opposing easy believe-ism and "praying a prayer but not living a life."

True faith always gives practical evidence.

4. Paul tells us that good works should be normative for the genuine believer!

Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

5. May we share our stories of how Jesus saved us as we live lives that demonstrate our faith in kindness and generosity this Christmas and into the new year. May we all be intentional about living lives that show and tell our faith.

Time for personal reflection:

1. If you could bring something to a session of "show & tell" what would you bring to show and why would you want to tell about it?

2. Are you a follower of Jesus who is truly saved? Why or why not?

3. What is Jesus inviting you to do today to authenticate your faith in a world that is both listening to and watching your life?

4. The words and actions of the innkeeper obviously influenced his son from the video. Who influenced your life towards faith in Jesus by what they have shown and told you?