



In James' community, people who had all their beliefs right, who said all the right words, who claimed to be followers of Jesus, but their actions didn't show it. Have you ever found yourself listening to someone who says they believe in something, but their actions show something completely different?

If someone says to you, "I believe my health is very important. Personal health is a high priority in my life. I believe that health is one of the most important things we ought to have." You say, "Do you eat lots of fruits and vegetables?" No. "Do you exercise? No. Do you get your proper rest? No. Do you take vitamins? No. Do you ever go for a check up?" No. Then why do you say that your health is important to you? "Because I like watching cooking shows and sports on TV." Saying that you care about your health without taking any action towards health doesn't make any sense.

In today's lesson the people James were talking to were not making sense when they said that their faith was important to them.

Basically they were saying in today's world, "I have great faith in God." And when asked, "oh, do you read and study scripture?" "No". "Do you care for those who are sick or poor?" "No. Do you worship and give generously to others?" No. Well then help me understand how your faith is important to you? "Well, I love Christmas and I watch the 10 commandments, with Charlton Heston, every year at Easter time. Faith is more than just something you observe. Faith is action! You can point it out and see it in people's lives.

James is challenging his faith community to align their actions with what they claim to believe. But is that our issue at Prince of Peace? We are a community that believes in the power of service. We have a congregation who loves to

serve. There are volunteers with Mission Outpost, FMSC, lay ministry, musicians, vocalists, LYN, family ministry, ushers, diaper ministry ... and even more!

The real question for us is WHY. Why do we serve? Are we doing good for goodness' sake? This is one of my friends favorite quotes. Are we serving so that others will look at us and say, "Wow, aren't you amazing...look at all the good you are doing." First of all, that isn't a bad thing. But when we do good for goodness sake, it is not serving our of our love of God.

Are we doing good to earn God's love? Sometimes we get caught in the theology that the more I serve the more I give, the more that God will love me. I know that I have caught myself thinking, "God must really be impressed with all I am doing for others." Unfortunately, well actually fortunately God isn't impressed by all we do. God loves us just the same when we do nothing at all.

Are we doing good to make sure we get into heaven? There is a fear out there that we need to do good in order to assure our place with God in heaven. Hear the good news, there is nothing we can do to earn our place with God, here or in the future, it has already been established. We are God's and we are God's forever and ever.

So why then do we serve? Why do we put our faith into action? We serve because we're followers of Jesus. It is that plain and simple. We serve because we trust in our Lord and Savior. It is how our faith is lived out. It is because of who we follow. Jesus. We can trust in Jesus. He has given us everything we need to go out and serve the world. He has given us unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness, and a hope. A hope that provides for us what we need today and a hope for a never ending future.

Jesus let us know that we have a God who loves us, who pursues us, who will never abandon us. We know that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was never without God and neither are we. God is with us each moment of our lives. Because of all of that we can not help but live out our faith. We are the hands and feet of Jesus who have been sent out in a broken world to bring hope, healing and life to those who are hurting, those who are poor, those who are lonely, those who are without hope.

I want to leave you with 2 questions to ponder this week. And then talk to someone you trust about your answers to those 2 questions.

- 1) How do I live out my faith in service?
- 2) Why do I live my faith in service?