

FAITH & WORKS

The second reading from the letter of James 2:14-18 focuses on the relationship between faith and works. James emphasizes that faith without works is dead. That is to say if our belief in Christ does not compel us to act—especially in service to those in need—then we must question the validity of that faith. James raises fundamental questions for us to think about: If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and we simply say, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat well," without providing for their needs, what good is that? "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?" These rhetorical questions are not merely a call to action but a deeper invitation to examine the essence of our faith.

This passage highlights the hypocrisy of a faith that is merely verbal, and challenges us to reflect on the authenticity of our faith and how it manifests in our actions. James calls us to a dynamic faith—one that is alive and responsive. He challenges us to consider how we can embody our beliefs in tangible ways. True faith is active; it moves us to respond to the needs of others. St. Paul also echoes the same sentiment in Galatians 5:6, where he states that "the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."

It is not enough to profess belief; we must live it out through love and service. It is not enough, for example, to say to a needy person, 'I will pray for you.' We must not think that we have done our bit once we refer the matter to God. In fact, when we pray for a needy person, we are in effect saying to God, 'Here I am, Lord, send me.' Our prayer should commit us to some positive action, no matter how small. To pray for people, or to wish them well, is a good thing. It gives them the comfort of knowing that they are not alone. But it is not enough. We should go the extra mile of try to help in any way we can.

So, are we willing to step out of our comfort zones to help those who are marginalized or in need? Are we prepared to let our faith be seen through our actions? How can we better align our actions with our faith? We surely need God's grace, not only to profess our faith, but also to live it. May we be inspired to cultivate a faith that is not only professed but also practiced, one that seeks to uplift and serve those around us. Amen!

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