

Justification by Works

by J. Vernon McGee

Dr. J. Vernon McGee explores the vital connection between faith and works, emphasizing that genuine faith is evidenced by good deeds.

Duration: 44:45

Scripture: John 13:35, Romans 12:15, Romans 13:8, Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Galatians 6:10, Philippians 4:4, Colossians 3:9, James 2:15

Topics: "Faith And Works", "Justification By Faith"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. J. Vernon McGee explores the topic of faith and works in the book of James. He begins by highlighting James' unique method of presenting an illustration before explaining the truth. McGee then discusses an illustration given by James, where he emphasizes the importance of providing for the physical needs of others rather than just offering empty words. He connects this illustration to Paul's teachings in Romans, showing that both James and Paul emphasize the importance of genuine faith being accompanied by good works. McGee concludes by emphasizing that true faith is verified by the presence of good works, such as regular church attendance, financial giving, and caring for the poor and needy.

Transcript

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word. What more can we say than through Him? What will justify you before God? Regular church attendance? Financial giving to Christian organizations? How about feeding the poor or clothing the naked? Will these be enough to obtain salvation? How will you know when you have enough of these good works to justify yourself? Today on our Sunday Sermon broadcast, our Bible teacher Dr. J. Vernon McGee will deal with these questions as he discusses the issue of faith and works in the book of James. He'll identify the spiritual fingerprints that verify a true and genuine faith.

He titled his sermon, Justification by Works. Dr. McGee first gave this sermon during his 21-year pastorate at the historic Church of the Open Door in downtown Los Angeles. Now let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the wonderful gift of faith that you give and which brings us to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May the truth of your Word speak to our hearts today. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. I want to turn this morning to the second chapter of the epistle of James and read beginning at verse 24, 25, and 26. And I'm using the Amplified New Testament today.

I intended to make my own translation here and I found out they did a better job than I did. So I'm going to use theirs today. Will you notice? You see that a man is justified, that is pronounced righteous before God, through what he does and not alone through faith, through works of obedience as well as by what he believes.

So also with Rahab the harlot. Was she not shown to be justified by good deeds when she took in the spies and got them away by a different route? For as the human body apart from the spirit is lifeless, so faith apart from its works of obedience is also dead. This is the section that led Martin Luther to comment on the entire epistle and these are his exact words.

A right strawy one. I heard a theological professor at one of the seminaries in Southern California say that Martin Luther said it was an epistle of straw. He didn't say that.

That would mean that he intended it should not be in the canon of scripture, but Martin Luther didn't say that. He said a right strawy one. And I wish even theological professors would learn there's a difference between a noun and an adjective.

And when he said it's a right strawy epistle, he meant by that, that he felt like it was weakened because of the emphasis that had been put upon justification by works. Now because of that, the assumption and supposition is that James is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of Paul. That Paul says one thing and that James in turn says the very opposite.

And I'd like to give the scriptures that are used generally in this particular connection. For instance, in Romans 3, 28, we read that Paul says, therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law, or the works of the law. Now that seems, does it not, to contradict what James is saying here in verse 26, for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

And then again, Paul over in Galatians, the third chapter, and in the sixth verse, he says this, even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now if you turn to what James has to say in verse 21, was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? It would seem that you have a contradiction there. And then if Paul wrote Hebrews, which some of us believe he did, in the eleventh chapter, verse 31, he says, by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed, not when she received the spies and thieves.

And it was by faith. And yet James says, likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way. It would seem that Paul puts the emphasis upon faith and James puts an emphasis upon works and that they contradict each other.

And immediately the skeptic comes to the front and says, is not this a contradiction in the Bible? And of course the answer is, of course, there is not a contradiction in the Bible. The contradiction is in the thinking of man and not in the written word of God. We contend this morning that actually both Paul and James are discussing the same subject.

And I want to repeat something that I may not have emphasized before, that faith is the theme of the epistle of James. That is the theme of this epistle. James nowhere says, as Paul says, faith without works, you see, is the means of salvation.

James does not say works without faith is the way you get saved. Nowhere does he say that. He doesn't even indicate that works per se can save anyone.

He's not saying that at all. Now this morning, in order to get a hold of this subject, we've divided it like this. We have, first of all, the interpretation of faith.

Second, we have the identification of faith. And third, the illustration of faith. Now we need a definition this morning of faith that's in the context of Scripture.

Perhaps not in definitive terms, but one that we can see precisely that Paul and James are in perfect agreement in what they're saying and that they're discussing the same subject but from a different viewpoint. Someone has pointed out, and I think this is unusually good, Paul and James do not stand face-to-face fighting against each other, but back-to-back fighting the opposite foe. Both of them, my friend, are defending the citadel of faith.

And therefore this morning, let's understand the terminology that these men use. Now when Paul speaks of faith, he's talking about saving faith. He's talking about that which is genuine and real, that which transforms a man's life, that which brings about a revolution as it did in his life when he could write as an old man and say, what things were gained to me, I count them but loss for Christ.

He changed his entire bookkeeping system and he went off of the side of trying to build up works for salvation, no longer trusted them, and put his faith in Jesus Christ as that which alone could save him. But it led him to work as he had never worked before. Had he not come to Christ, he probably would never have left the borders of Palestine.

But when he came to Christ, this man went as a missionary throughout the Roman Empire, and it's my conviction that he ended up by going to Spain, and there are those that even believe he went to Great Britain. May I say to you, this man, when he came to Christ, it had a transforming effect on him. So when he speaks of faith, he's talking about saving faith.

Now James, when he talks about faith, he's talking here about professing faith. I wonder if you will let me turn to the Amplified and read verse 14 here in the second chapter. Now listen to this very carefully, for this does bring out the meaning of James.

What is the use, my brethren, for anyone to profess to have faith if he has no good works to show for it? Can such faith save his soul? Now you can see he's talking about professing faith, not real faith. He's talking about that which is phony and counterfeit. I believe today that the gravest danger that we who preach the gospel have is right here.

There is a danger that we are willing to accept a brazen and flippant yes when people are asked to accept Christ. Yes, I'll accept him. That won't save you.

May I say that to you today? We are in danger of actually taking an impertinent and an impudent and insolent nod of the head at saving faith. The story is told that Satan called a meeting of all of his demons, and he said the purpose of this meeting is to try and wreck God's work down there in the world. How can we wreck God's work down there in the world? Well, one demon got up and he said, I think that we ought to persuade man that there is no God.

If we can do that, then we'll wreck his work. Satan said, look here, all of us believe there's a God. It would be pretty hard for us to put that over.

After all, man does have a certain degree of intelligence. I don't think we can quite put that one over. Then another demon got up and he said, I'll tell you what we ought to do.

We ought to try to persuade man that Jesus Christ never really existed. He never really lived. That he's merely a fiction.

And the facts that they tell concerning him didn't happen at all. And Satan said, well, that's very good. And there's coming along later on a fellow by the name of Bultmann that's going to demythologize the Old Testament and the New Testament and he'll do a pretty good job, but even he won't succeed.

And he's a pretty clever fellow. He's one of the most brilliant theologians of the day in Europe. But I don't think that's the thing because after all, when you even attempted to expunge from scripture all that you like to think of as myth, you still have a person by the name of Jesus Christ on your hands.

And what are you going to do with him? We better not use that tact at all. Then some other demon got up and he said, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's suggest to man that death ends it all.

There's nothing beyond death. And for them not to worry about anything after death. I think if we can get that over.

Satan says if we could get it over, it'd be clever. But the problem there is they'd think God was a fool to create man and not have a future. Some of them would be mighty apt to think that through and come to the conclusion that man has been created for eternity.

Then the wisest demon of all, who had not said anything, he stood up, he said, I tell you what I think we ought to do. We ought to tell everybody to believe there is a God. We ought to tell them to believe there is a Jesus Christ.

We ought to tell them that they are to believe in him and tell them that he can save them. But we ought to always add that if they will just profess faith in him and go on living in sin, that that's all that's necessary. And all the demons jumped up and shouted for joy and they beat a feline to the earth.

And that's the way today Christian faith is being destroyed. By those who profess faith in Christ. And it's not really saving faith at all.

And did you know that Paul said the same thing? Fact of the matter is, let me turn here to 1 Thessalonians, not 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, if you don't mind. 1 Corinthians, the 15th chapter, verse 2. Now will you listen to this scripture. Now the word for vain here is not the usual word used in the New Testament.

It actually means this, if you listen very carefully. Unless ye have just made a profession of faith. Paul says you are saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you just made a profession of faith in Christ.

It was not real. Don't you see that Paul and James are saying the same thing here in this connection? Now these two men are in perfect harmony when they are discussing faith. Now there is another item we need to note.

When Paul speaks of works, he is speaking of the works of the law. I'd have you note that. I turn to the third chapter of Romans.

Listen to this. For the law is the knowledge of sin. And then notice verse 28.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds or the works of the law. So that when Paul is discussing works, he is talking about the works of the law. That is his theme.

The fact of the matter is, let's turn to another place. Over in the third chapter of the epistle to the Galatians. In verse 11 he says, But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident, for the just shall live by faith.

So that when Paul is talking about works, he is talking about the law. And the Mosaic law in particular. Although Paul says no law can save a man.

And did you know that James will agree with him in that? James says the same thing. In fact, before we get to this section where we are in the second chapter. Back in verse 10, James makes it clear that the works of the law can save you.

He says, For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And believe me, there is no one that can come clean now. So he makes it very clear that you are never saved by keeping the law.

Now in this section, where James is discussing works. Will you listen to me now very carefully. He is not discussing the works of the law.

He is discussing the works of faith, if you please. The works that faith produces. That which follows faith in Christ.

And he says if there are no works to follow faith in Christ. Then it was merely a profession of faith. Now the question of course is, will Paul agree with that? And I can assure you this morning that Paul will agree with this.

Will you listen to Paul now in the 5th chapter of Galatians verse 6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision. But faith which worketh by love. Paul says the same thing.

Paul says the saving faith that I'm talking about will work. And if it won't work, it's not saving faith. Now saving faith is a lie.

Professing faith is dead. For as the body without the spirit is dead. That's a terrific example he gives.

So faith without works is dead. And I say this this morning and I say it kindly. Our church today are filled with church members.

Who are spiritual zombies. Dead bodies. They're walking around.

They go through the manipulation of a Christian. They make genuflections. They nod their head.

They put up their hands. They do certain things. But they're nothing in the world but a zombie.

Because my beloved, saving faith produces works. And professing faith is as dead as a corpse is. This is strong.

Should we stop right here and not go on? Because he hadn't even started yet. Will you listen very carefully. A girl asked a teacher, her Sunday school teacher.

She says, and believe me this is startling. How can I be a Christian and still have my way? And there are a lot of saying that today. And there are a great many that are having their way.

And professing to be Christians. I'm here on the authority as we shall see this morning. Of the Lord Jesus himself.

Of Paul the Apostle. And of James and John of saying, you're a phony. They said it, I didn't.

I don't dare say it. They told me not to judge. I'm merely repeating that.

We'll see that. Now will you notice this. For this is very important.

Over in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Here is what Paul says. And this is something that we ought to mark down.

For they that are after the flesh. Do mind the things of the flesh. That is they obey the things of the flesh.

But they that are after the spirit. They obey the things of the spirit. My friend if you are saved you don't do as you please.

You do as Christ pleases. A Christian doesn't do as he pleases. He pleases Christ.

Or he's not a Christian. Let's put it like that. Because the word of God puts it that way.

During the depression. A business tycoon in the city of Pittsburgh. Went to his pastor.

And just to have a talk. And he said to him in the course of the conversation. He says pastor.

I love my savior. I love my family. I love my church.

I love my business. And I love them in the order in which I've named them. But he said I want to be honest with you.

There are times when I feel like walking out on all of them. The pastor followed it through. He said why don't you walk out.

He says because I'm a Christian. And a Christian does not walk out. That's right.

Both Paul and James say that the works of the law. Will never lead to salvation. But they both say that.

Saving faith leads to good works. On most mission fields. I'm told.

That believers are tested. Before they are received into the church. I guess that's true in your place isn't it Paul.

That's true I know it used to be in China. To keep from getting the rice Christian. I think it's true on all mission fields.

We do not do it at home at all today. All you have to do is nod your head today. You do not have to produce fruit here.

To demonstrate you're a real child of God. May I say to you my beloved. That's the interpretation that both James and Paul give to faith.

Now let's look at the second. Identification of faith. Now it's my contention today.

That saving faith can be recognized. And identified by certain spiritual fingerprints. There is a verification of genuine faith.

Now James follows an unusual method. He gives you an illustration. Before he gives you the truth.

We generally try to present something. And then illustrate it. But not James.

And he throws me a curve. If you really want me to use the Americana of the street today. Because he gives us an illustration right here.

And I want you to notice this illustration. It's here in verse 15. Listen to this.

If a brother or sister is poorly clad and lacks food for each day. And one of you says to him. Goodbye.

Keep yourself warm and well fed. Without giving him the necessities for the body. What good does that do? That's pretty strong.

Don't you think? Now Paul says the same thing. You will find that he and Romans. And I'm trying to keep Paul and James together this morning.

You notice. And so far they are sticking together. And I think you'll find they'll stay together right here.

Listen to Paul. Romans 13.8. Oh no man anything but to love one another. For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

And then over in Galatians. The sixth chapter. The tenth verse.

Listen to him here. As we have therefore opportunity. Let us do good unto all men.

Especially unto them who are of the household of faith. And then you will find out. That the Lord Jesus.

Followed through the same type of thing. He said by this. Shall all men know.

That ye are my disciples. If you have love. One toward another.

And John when he wrote his epistle. He said the same thing. In 1 John 3.17 and 18.

But whoso hath this world's good. Seeth his brother have need. And shutteth up his bowels of compassion.

From him. How dwelleth the love of God in him. My little children.

Let us not love in word only. Neither in tongue. But in deed.

And in truth. Now that does not mean. As I understand it.

That every bum that asks you for 25 cents. To buy a cup of coffee. When he actually intends to go and buy wine.

And I give you a warning. Have you noticed that. The bums will hang around a church.

Like the church of the open door. And they will not hang around these swanky clubs. Or hotels.

You know why. They know where to get a soft touch. And I think that maybe some of us are unwise.

I made the mistake the other day. Of giving a meal to a man. Said he was hungry.

And I think it almost choked him to eat it. Because I think he was so full. He really wanted money.

And we found out afterward. That he was nothing in the world but a deadbeat. May I say to you that.

I don't think that he means that. Years ago in the Midwest. That a man that didn't look very well.

He just didn't look very well. He knocked on the door of a farmer's house. Late in the evening.

Wanted to know if he would put him up for the night. The farmer hesitated. And this fellow says.

Well you know. That you ought to entertain strangers. You are a Christian I understand.

Because some of them have entertained angels unaware. And the farmer looked at him for a moment. And he said.

You know. I don't believe that any angel. Would have the smell of liquor on his breath.

I am not sure. We are called upon. But I do know this.

My beloved. That saving faith. Manifests itself in a real way.

That is the reason we are given the story of Zacchaeus. As it is given to us. Zacchaeus when our Lord went into his home.

I hear no confession of faith on the part of Zacchaeus. I have no written word of that interview at all. I have to guess at it.

But the minute that that man Zacchaeus came out. I can't believe it. I think he is one of the biggest rascals in the Bible.

He is the biggest rascal in the New Testament. That fellow said. The half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I have taken anything by false accusation from any man. And he had. He was a thief.

He was a publican. And a publican. The scripture always puts even before sinners.

Because they are the biggest sinners. And he said. If I have taken anything by false accusation.

I will restore it fourfold. And that is what the law required of me. May I say to you this morning my beloved.

I know something happened to Zacchaeus. I know it was saving faith by his works. May I be rather personal.

As pastor I hear different things. And recently I learned of two incidents. Of two of our members.

And I hear others. But these two especially. And it warmed my heart when I heard it.

One man and no one knows who he is. And I can say this. He is rendering financial help to another man.

A believer. And I think this applies to believers. Who has been in desperate need.

He has really helped him over. And he would not let a soul know this morning. And if I called his name.

I don't think he would speak to me again. I won't call his name. I also heard of a lady.

And she is a lady of means. That supports a missionary on the field. One year at home.

And she does it on her own. Nobody knows about it. May I say to you today my beloved.

That faith. Saving faith. James says.

It is going to work. It has to work. If it is saving faith.

Now I am not through. Will you notice verses 17 and 18. So also faith if it does not have works.

By itself is destitute of power. It is dead. But someone will say to you then.

You say you have faith. And I have good works. Now you show me your faith.

Apart from any good works. If you can. And I by my good works.

Will show you my faith. That is tremendous. He draws this conclusion.

Now from the illustration. James is talking about the fruit of faith. And Paul is talking about the root of faith.

Which saves. But Paul also talks about the fruit of faith. And he uses a little different language.

He says in Galatians 5.22. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering. And even the Lord Jesus spoke of the fact. I am the vine, you are the branches.

And every branch in me that bringeth not forth. The Father removes it. But every branch that remains.

He prunes it. Why? That it might bring forth fruit. And his ultimate goal is.

That you might bring forth much fruit. And that fruit happens to be. The fruit of the Holy Spirit.

In hearts and lives today. That's the thing that is needed my beloved. And that's the thing that Paul talked about.

Oh again and again. I do not want to be wearisome. But will you listen to Paul.

Lie not one to another. Colossians 3.9. Romans 14.19. Let us follow after things which make for peace. And things whereby we may edify one another.

And then he says in Romans 12.15. Rejoice with them that rejoice. And weep with them that weep. In Philippians 4.4. Rejoice in the Lord always again.

I say rejoice. And then in 1 Corinthians 15.58. Wherefore my beloved brethren. Be ye steadfast.

Unmovable always. Abounding in the work of the Lord. Forasmuch as ye know that your labor.

Is not in vain in the Lord. You know there is today. A grave danger of professing faith.

And have no works. Saving faith produces works. A personal worker went one time.

To a very rich man. And he professed conversion. Then the man went back to see him.

And he says have you united with the church. Oh he said no the dying thief. Never united with the church.

And he went to heaven. And he says then have you ever. Sat at the Lord's table.

He says oh no the dying thief. Never did sit at the Lord's table. And he was accepted.

He said to him have you been baptized. He said no. The dying thief was never baptized.

And he made it. He says have you ever given to missions. He said no the dying thief.

Never gave to mission. And this friend got just a little weary. He said well he says.

The only difference I can see between you and the dying thief. Is he was a dying thief. And you're a living thief.

So easy is it not to sing. Were the whole realm of nature mine. That were a present far too small.

To sing that and then when the offering plate is passed. To put 25 cents in permission. It's easy to sing.

Oh for a thousand tongues to sing. My great Redeemer's praise. And then use the very one we have to cut down people.

Instead of attempting to lead them to the Lord. Henry Drummond. Who was a wonderful professor.

Christian. A Scottish Christian professor. In Glasgow.

One day. He tells this story that one day. There were groups standing on the street.

He says this is the way the infidel club. Was started in Glasgow. He said a very prominent man walked by.

And one member of this group says. He says do you know there goes the founder of the infidel club in Glasgow. And the others were amazed.

They said what do you mean. That fellow is not the founder of the infidel club. He happens to be the elder of a certain church.

This man says elder no elder. He's the founder of the Glasgow infidel club. Then he went on to explain.

He says that man by his life in Glasgow. Has turned more young men away from Jesus Christ. And all the preachers together have ever led to Christ.

There are two kinds of witnesses. You can be a witness for Christ. Or you can be a witness against Christ.

Calvin said. Faith alone saves. But the faith that saves.

Is not alone. Saving faith produces a life. And all of the scripture says.

If it doesn't produce a life. It was not saving faith to begin with. It was merely professing faith.

Now I come finally to the illustration of faith. And actually James gives two. We'll only look at one.

He gives Abraham. And I probably should say that. We'll not have this book this morning.

But I have a little book on. Was Abraham justified by works? He was. Somebody says but he was justified by faith.

He was. We'll have that book tonight. But not this morning.

I won't deal with Abraham at all. But I want to deal with the second one. Because I consider the master.

The master stroke of James. Was in his choice of the second. Listen to him.

Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works. When she had received the messengers. Sent them out another way.

Rahab. Justified by works. And of all the people for him to pick.

To begin with she was a Gentile. She was an abominable Canaanite. And then she was a woman.

That's right. They didn't count. In the genealogies even.

But she even got in the genealogy of Christ. What a woman. She was a harlot.

Three strikes against her. And she's mentioned three times in the New Testament. In the genealogy of Christ.

She got in the genealogy of Christ. Paul in Hebrews 11 31 says. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not.

With them they believed not. When she received the spies and people. And James says.

Wasn't she justified by works. And my first reaction is. Why don't you boys get together.

And decide whether she was justified by faith or by work. My friend. They both are accurate.

And both are true. Let's look at the story of Rahab briefly this morning. And see.

Will you follow me very carefully. We read in Joshua the second chapter. Verse 9. She said unto the man.

I know that the Lord hath given you the land. And that your terror is fallen upon us. And that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

All of them believed you see. But nobody went over to Israel's side but Rahab. Now listen to her.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you. When you came out of Egypt. And what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites.

That were on the other side Jordan. Sihon and Og. Whom ye utterly destroyed.

And as soon as we had heard these things. Our hearts did melt. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man.

Because of you. For the Lord your God. He's God in heaven above.

And in the earth beneath. Now that's the fate of Rahab. In the city.

And will you notice this. And how God graciously dealt with those people in the land. You remember he told the children of Israel.

I have to keep you in the wilderness for several reasons. One of the reasons is. I'm going to give those people 40 years.

To decide whether they'll turn to me or not. And isn't that long enough. How much longer do you want to ask God for them to wait.

For 40 years. You see they crossed the Red Sea. And 40 years later.

Rahab says we have heard. I've been hearing it ever since I was born. Then I heard about when you got on the other side Jordan.

That was just a few months ago. And I believed you. And I know God's with you.

And I believe it. That's a marvelous faith isn't it. And Paul says by faith.

The hall at Rahab perished not. That's her faith. But do you think her faith.

Can just stay there. Suppose that when the Israelites take Jericho. They find her in there.

With a machine gun mowing them down. Mowing down not the Canaanites. But Israelites.

I think they would have come to the conclusion. That somehow or another. She really didn't believe.

She made a profession. No the thing that happened was this. That when the Israelites.

Took the city of Jericho. She had jeopardized her life. She had turned her back on the old life.

For she married an Israelite. That's the way she got in the genealogy of Christ. And she actually turned against her own people.

I tell you when she came out for God. Every Canaanite in the city of Jericho. Turned against her.

And this woman could say. I think as no other person except Paul. What was gained to me.

Became loss. My faith in God. And she did not say.

I'll stand on the sidelines when you enter. I'll tell you how to use the proper strategy. And I'll criticize Joshua.

If he doesn't do it the right way. No she believed God. And then when she believed God.

She got involved. She demonstrated by her works. That she had a living faith in God.

Now shall we look at something and be through. She was justified before God by faith. God knew her heart.

God knew this woman. That's the reason that he called her. He knew her.

For 40 years God had been watching that woman. In sin by the way. But God had watched her.

Here's a woman who wanted to believe God. The mayor of Jericho could have believed God. If he had wanted to.

But he didn't. And he was destroyed. This woman was saved.

And if God had saved her. He would have saved anybody. In the city of Jericho.

But she believed. But she didn't stop there. She didn't stand up in a testimony meeting.

And say Jesus saves and keeps him satisfied. My beloved. That woman went all out.

If there had been any Canaanites living. After the destruction of Jericho. And there weren't.

If there had been any living. And there's one thing for sure. The other inhabitants of the land knew one thing.

Here is a woman who is genuine. People know whether you are genuine or not. Have you proved it? Several years ago.

And I'm through now. Several years ago I bought a bare root plum tree. From a man who had been a neighbor of mine.

When I was pastor in Pasadena. He ran a nursery. A very wonderful man.

And when I moved over to my place where I live now. My ranch. I said you know I want to put out some trees.

I got some avocado trees. But I want to put out a plum tree. I like plums.

He said you know. We have here one of the finest Santa Rosa plums. Oh I said I'd like to have that.

He took me back a bare root. You know balled up little fella. Looked like a broom handle sticking out of there.

And I said to him. Are you sure that's a plum? And he said yeah. I said are you sure it's a lie? Looks dead to me.

He said yeah. He says look here. And there was on there a little piece of wood.

And it said on it. Santa Rosa plum. Well I believe what I read.

I took his word for it. And by faith I bought the thing. And I came over and I put it in the ground.

And I want to tell you for several weeks there. It was very discouraging. Nothing happened.

And one day I went out. I tell you it was like Columbus discovering America. There was a little bitty leaf on there.

And I wish you could have seen that little fella after that. When it did begin to grab hold. Oh did it grab.

My by the end of the year you couldn't reach around the leaves in the land. But there's no fruit on there. I went over to get another tree from this fella.

And I said are you sure that's a plum tree? Oh he said absolutely. Well I said there's no plums on it. He said you have to wait.

You may get a few next year. And I didn't get any next year. And I frankly considered very seriously removing that little fella.

Because he wasn't producing. Then on the third year I wish you could have seen them. Oh they were the loveliest.

Not many that year but lovely. It was a plum tree. And I'm here to testify to you this morning.

That's a plum tree. I know it two ways. By faith.

And I know it by its fruit. It's a plum tree. May I very kindly this morning say to you and to me.

The Lord Jesus says. Paul says. James says.

And John says. If you really are saved. It's going to show.

Believing leads to behaving. And if you don't behave. You're not saved.

Listen. It was not James. It was Paul who wrote.

In 2nd Corinthians 13 5. Listen to him. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your own self.

Dr. McGee ended with Paul's exhortation. Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

What about you? Have you examined your own life lately? Are you producing the fruit of your faith. And evidence that you have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take the time today to look into your heart.

And see if you have a pure faith. Or a professing faith. If you find that you're lacking.

We trust that you'll make a decision for Christ today. To find a true and valuable faith in Him. For more information on God's plan of salvation.

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That God will fill you with His grace, mercy and peace. Every moment of every day. Jesus paid it all.

All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

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