

We are starting a new school year and to get everyone in the mood I would like to give a quiz. The quiz will be on today's second reading I will give you three statements. One statement is not like the others and you tell me which does not belong.

Again thinking of the second reading today which of these statements is different?

Preach the Gospel and if necessary use words

Believe what you read, Teach what you believe, and Practice what you teach.

**You are saved by faith alone.**

Which one of these statements is different from the other two?

In his letter James asks us "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" He goes on to say "Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works. "Demonstrate your faith to me with out works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works

Let me tell you a few true stories.

There was a young boy with his family who was at a car show in Chicago. There were many people there and the parents of this boy noticed he was not with them. They frantically looked around and saw him next to a man in a wheel chair who was trying to reach a pamphlet from a rack that was just a bit out of his reach.

As they walk over by him they could hear him ask the man, would you like one of those, the man said yes, and the boy reach one and gave it to him. The man then tried to reach for another and the boy ask if he would like one more and he reach and gave the man one more pamphlet. The man thanked him and told him that God must have sent him to help him, and then he went on his way.

After the parents scolded the child for leaving them they asked him "why did you do that?" He told them, "there are so many people here and no one would help him, so I did."

(Sung) Shine! Make'em wonder what you got. Make'em wish that they were not, On the outside looking bored. Shine! Let it shine before all men Let'em see good works and then Let'em glorify the Lord.

There was a young man, maybe a junior or senior in high school, who was driving down a country road. He seen a young women on the side of the road and as he past by noticed she had a flat tire. It also looked like she had a young child in the car. He turned around stopped and asked if she needed help. She told him she had a flat but didn't know how to change it. He asked if she had a spare tire and she replied she was not sure. He had her open the trunk, found a spare tire and a jack and proceeded to change her tire.

When he was done the woman wanted to pay him but said she had no money on her, she wanted to give him a doll that she had made for her child in the car, and maybe the boy had a sister who would like it. The boy shook his head no, he could take her doll. She told him you must be my angel! He told her maybe someday when I have a wife and children and they need help someone will stop to help them.

Later when the boy got home his parents ask him why he was late. He told them what he had done, and they ask him why did you do that? He explained that there was a house nearby and some people just standing there watching her but didn't seem to want to help her, so he did.

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A nurse fresh out of college was working on the surgical floor of St Vincent's Hospital. As she was finishing her rounds before going home for the day she stopped in one patient's room. She asked her if there was anything she needed before she left. The patient told her she

was going to have surgery early the next morning and was very frightened. She asked the young nurse if she would say a prayer for her. The nurse said she would. That night before going to bed the nurse said a prayer for the patient in the hospital that she would not be afraid.

The next day when the nurse got to work she didn't get to see the patient as she was already in surgery. Later that day the nurse went back in her room to see how she was doing. The lady said that before she fell asleep last night a calm came over her and she was no longer afraid. The nurse told her that she had prayed for her before going to bed. The patient questioned her as to why she did that, and the nurse told her because you asked me to. Tears came to the patient's eyes as she told the nurse, I don't think anyone has ever prayed for me before.

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St. James cautions that: "Faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). Being a Christian requires far more than showing up at church and reciting the Creed each week. Many Christians today want only an inspiring service on Sundays. Christians are tending to flock to churches which seem to have three things in common: fantastic music, uplifting preaching and no call to service to others. In the gospel, Jesus teaches his followers that part of that work involves taking up the cross—dying to ourselves for the sake of others.

A deep faith in Christ brings deep love. Deep love brings about service and sacrifice. Faith without works might be a type of faith. James regards the two as inseparable.

This weekend may be a good time for us to prayerfully take the pulse of our own faith. How strong is it? What are we doing to keep it alive?

Or put more simply: what are we doing, and who do people say you are?