

February 1, 2015

Fingerprints

James 2:18b – *Show me your faith apart from works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

I love receiving letters and postcards that are handwritten. Now, some of you will think that is a very sweet sentiment, but I don't like them for the time that somebody put into personally writing them. That's fine and all, but I love getting them because more often than not, there is an ink smudged fingerprint somewhere on the page. I am very honored that someone took the time to write me a letter, but I really enjoy seeing the sender's humanity behind the letter. And, nothing says humanity like a smudged fingerprint right in the middle of a now barely legible word. That's fun to me.

At once the smudge lets me know several different things. First, the sender is indeed human and makes mistakes. I don't trust many letters that arrive in pristine condition. Second, the fingerprint lets me know that the person proofread his or her work. Even if there are errors in grammar or spelling, it's nice to know that the writer took a moment to read what she or he wrote. Third, whether they know it or not, in putting their fingerprint on the letter or card, they are taking ownership in it. To me that fingerprint says, "This is my work to and for you, and I really meant these words."

As James points out in his letter, it is the same with faith, because that is God's fingerprint on us, on our story. You see, faith is God's gift to us yes, but it is through that faith that God writes his

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story to the rest of the world. It is evidence that he put time and effort into us and our lives. Our faith is evidence that he cares for his people, and that he wants others to know he loves them.

James says, "Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works." Our faith marks us with God's fingerprints so that we can be workers in his kingdom and world. It does not sit idly by while others are in need. Whether they have physical need or spiritual need, our faith makes us God's finger smudged letter to others to meet that need.

It doesn't matter that we're full of errors and imperfections (which is no comment on the author here). Those sins and failings are "smudged" away by Jesus' blood soaked fingers; they are covered by his blood. All that matters is that God has chosen to use us as his letter to the world to bring his love story to others, so that he might smudge them with his fingerprint, so that Jesus might put his red finger print on their hearts and cover over their shortcomings.

So you see, our faith is God's "smudge," marking you as the letter that he put time and effort into for the world. It shows that you have been perfectly proofed, and that though you might make mistakes from time to time, our loving creator never does. Your faith is his assurance to you that you are his workmanship, crafted to put his smudge mark on the rest of the world.

Pastor 

