



"How can the demons believe?"

This question came at our confirmation retreat after we read James 2:14-19

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead....

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.

This passage gets at the heart of what it means "to believe." And knowing what it means to "believe" is a necessity for each one of us, because the Bible tells us at the end of the most-remembered verse in the Bible: "...whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

The passage from James plainly shows us that 'just knowing God exists' isn't the kind of "believing" that God is looking for. It's not enough to know that Jesus is God's Son. It's not enough to know that Jesus really lived on this earth. It's not enough to know that Jesus died and rose. *Even the demons "believe" that.*

The "believing" that God is looking for was summed up by Jesus when He told His disciples (in John 14) "Trust in God. Trust also in me."

TRUST. That's the kind of belief that God is looking for. Trust goes beyond just knowing something is true. To trust in something or someone is to *rely on* them. You put your life in their hands in some way. For example, I might "know" that a certain bridge is the most technologically advanced design, and I might know that it has more reinforcements than any other previous bridge. But it's only when I drive over it that I put my trust in it.

So, back to the question. How can the demons believe? They "believe" in that they "know" that God exists. They know he exists, because He created them and they were residents of His heaven until they followed (put their trust in) Satan and were booted out of heaven. They know that Jesus is God's son. He existed in eternity with them. They know that Jesus lived and died and rose. They were there when it happened. They "believe" that Jesus is everything the Bible says about Him, but that "belief" will not save them, because their "belief" stops short of putting their trust in Him, relying on Him and following Him

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net