

"True Faith and Partiality"**Part 1****James 2:1-13**

Introduction: Today we come to another section of the book of James and in this section James is going to deal with the sin of "Favoritism". As we work our way through this section we will see that there was a problem with favoritism within this group of believers.

Partiality is something which we all must guard against because we can all fall into the sin. There is not one person here who does not categorize people. When we see people we will place them into certain categories **and we do it subconsciously** based upon several things:

1. Their dress
2. Their profession
3. Their wealth
4. Their hair cut
5. Their body shape
6. Their skin color

These are just a few but these are outward appearances which cause us to place people in certain categories. That is the human nature in us that places people into different categories. That cannot be helped. **But what can be helped is the way we treat people.** What can be helped is that we do not show favoritism and that we treat everyone the same regardless of their outward appearance or regardless of the amount of money they have. To show favoritism toward someone because they are wealthy or dressed better than someone else or because of their skin color is sin.

Notice James 2:9

Why do people show favoritism? I think there are 3 main reasons:

1. **Desire for personal gain.**

Jude 1:16

¹⁶ *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, **having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.***

People will show favoritism toward others whom they feel can somehow be a benefit to them.

2. Pride

People will show favoritism toward people who are wealthy or famous just so that we can boast of the friendship they have with them.

Illustration: I know this is true because I did it. Years ago I worked in the Washington DC area for 5 years and one of the guys I became good friends with down there was a man who was a lineman for the Washington Redskins. I loved it when he would come up here to visit and someone I knew would drop by. I could introduce him as my "friend" who played for the Redskins and also played in the Super Bowl. I treated him special because he was my "claim to fame".

3. Intimidation

Deuteronomy 1:17

¹⁷ Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

That kind of "favoritism" is expected in the world but the sad thing is it also exists within many churches today. In other words it exists within the body of Christ. This is the very thing which James is going to address in this section.

I. The Command

Notice James 2:1

Here in this opening statement James states a direct command when he tells his readers they were not to have respect of persons if they were saved people.

The entire idea behind this verse is that true faith in Christ and partiality are completely incompatible. As believers we should be able to see beyond the outward appearance and be able to see the value of the individual soul.

I want to focus upon the fact that faith in Christ and partiality are incompatible. Let me explain why that is.

1. When we are saved we are to be representatives of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

We have a ministry of reconciliation which means we are to be Christ to the world around us.

Now, for us to be partial would be the opposite of how Jesus lived when He walked the face of this earth. Let me show you what the enemies of Jesus said about Him while He was here.

Matthew 22:15-16

¹⁵ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

¹⁶ And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

This is a great statement made by the Pharisees for it really helps us to see that Jesus showed absolutely no partiality at all. Let me tell you what this means. He saw the value of every individual soul. He was not impressed by social status, money, popularity, heritage or race. He had come to seek and to save the lost and there was no partiality.

Now remember Jesus was God and therefore He was the Manifestation of the impartiality of God.

Let me show you some verses which will help us to see this.

Deuteronomy 10:17

¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

2 Chronicles 19:7

⁷ Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

Acts 10:34

³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Romans 2:11

¹¹ For there is no respect of persons with God.

Ephesians 6:9

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

1 Peter 1:17

¹⁷ And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

From these verses we can clearly see that God is no respecter of persons.

This is why James is commanding his readers to be sure to show no partiality. His readers were children of God and therefore they were to represent God and to show favoritism or partiality was contrary to the character of God.

I will bring this into our lives in a moment but I want to show you some other verses that speak against partiality.

Leviticus 19:15

¹⁵ Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Deuteronomy 1:17

¹⁷ Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

Deuteronomy 16:19

¹⁹ Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

1 Timothy 5:21

²¹ I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Application:

Now let me apply this command to our lives. We who are saved are children of God and therefore we should do nothing with partiality. Let me give you some examples:

1. When people come into this church we are to love them without partiality.
2. When we exercise the heart of a servant we are to do it without partiality.
3. When we practice church discipline we are to do it without partiality.

Now with many people there is the temptation to show favoritism to those who are influential, those who are wealthy, or those who are popular. There is the temptation within many churches to favor the wealthy over the poor.

But I want you to understand something: when we are saved and we are controlled by the Holy Spirit and we are manifesting the life of Jesus Christ we are going to have a deep concern for all people but especially the poor.

Let me show you some verses that will support this very Truth.

Acts 2:44-45

⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

⁴⁵ *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

Here were believers in the early church and when people had needs these people sold their possessions and gave to those who had needs or we could say they gave to the poor.

Let me show you what happened to Zacchaeus after he was saved.

Luke 19:5-9

⁵ *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*

⁶ *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

⁷ *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*

⁸ *And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

⁹ *And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

Here we see that when Zacchaeus got saved he went from being a greedy tax collector to having a deep concern and burden for the poor.

Let me show you the concern of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.

Proverbs 31:20

²⁰ *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*

Here is the point I want you to see: partiality and salvation do not mix. They are like oil and water. When a person has true saving faith they will have a concern for everyone but especially the poor and for those who are the outcasts of society.

Conclusion:

Partiality within the church is very ugly.

Illustration:

I knew of a church years ago that was occupied by many wealthy people. One Sunday a poor man entered dressed in rags and he was asked to sit in the back away from all the others who were dressed in fine clothing. As far as I know he never returned.

Let me leave you with a deep thought.

Matthew 25:37-40

³⁷ *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

³⁸ *When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

³⁹ *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

⁴⁰ *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*