

"True Faith and Partiality"

Part 3

James 2:1-13

Introduction: Today we come back to our study of the book of James and as we do we are stepping into chapter 2:1-13 and in these verses James is addressing the subject of "Favoritism" in the life of the believer.

This entire chapter is focused upon compassion and love for those who are poor. In 1-13 he is addressing how True Faith sees the value in every soul regardless of the wealth they possess. In 14-28 James will show us how True Faith will be willing to give of this world's wealth to help those who are in need.

Now I want to do a review of James 2:1-4 and bring us all up to date as to what we have looked at so far in this chapter.

I. The Command

Notice James 2:1

The idea within this verse is that True Faith and partiality are not compatible. The basis for James command is based on the impartiality of our Lord.

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.*

We who are saved are here on this earth to manifest Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him. Therefore if we show favoritism we are distorting the view of those who need to see Him.

Let me show you a picture in Luke.

Luke 19:1-3

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

² And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

Here are 3 verses from the story of Zacchaeus and we see that he desired to see Jesus but he could not because the crowd blocked his view.

Joshua 3:1-4

And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

² *And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;*

³ *And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.*

⁴ *Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.*

When Israel crossed over the Jordan River God gave the command to stay back from the ark 2000 cubits. This was about 1000 yards and it was for the reason that of permitting everyone to see the ark. If they were gathered too close then only those who were the closest would be able to see the ark which was to lead the way.

This is the very truth that James wants his readers to understand. We are to live in a way that we do not block the view of others and if we show favoritism then we are blocking the view.

II. The Conduct

Notice James 2:2-3

Here was a hypothetical situation which James presents. It is of 2 men who enter into their assembly and one man is adorned in gold and the other man is dressed in rags which are filthy. If they were to give the rich man the best seat in the assembly and tell the poor man to stand over there or sit under their footstool then they were showing partiality and favoritism.

It is interesting that footstools were used for several things but one point is that were always connected with the king's throne. It was a place where the king could prop his feet.

That picture would fit perfectly in this hypothetical situation. To give the poor man their footstool would be esteeming themselves better than the poor man.

III. The Consequences

To show favoritism as described in verses 2 and 3 is a very serious matter and as we move through the next verses we will see just how serious it is.

Notice James 2:4

Here we see that it makes us judges with evil thoughts. This question is meant to penetrate the heart of the believer who would do this. The question demands a positive answer. The idea is that we know better. It is a violation of our conscience. The New Nature within us tells us it is wrong to judge someone by the amount of goods they have in this world. The Spirit within us convicts when such an action is carried out.

Now we come to where we stopped last week.

Notice James 2:5

The first word of this verse is written to grasp the attention of the reader. Here within this verse we get another view as to why Favoritism is incompatible with True Faith.

James tells us that God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom.

I want to take some time to comment on the word "chosen". Many have misunderstood the meaning behind that which James is teaching here. It cannot mean that God chose the poor for salvation and not the rich because that would make God a respecter of persons. So let me help you with the meaning of this word. Let me show you a verse which Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 1:26

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

Salvation is available to every person. But it is only revealed to those who respond correctly to the Truth which they have been exposed to.

Acts 8:26-31

²⁶ *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

²⁷ *And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,*

²⁸ *Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

²⁹ *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

³⁰ *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

³¹ *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

Here was a man who DESIRED to know the Truth and because of that God sent Philip to him and he was saved.

The point that I want you to grasp is that God works with those who do not suppress the Truth which they are exposed to.

Now there are more "poor" people who are saved than there are "rich" people. The reason can be seen in another passage.

Matthew 19:23-24

²³ *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

²⁴ *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

I would like to share Matthew Henry's thoughts on the camel and the needle. The eye of the needle is very small and hard to hit; this is a picture of the strait gate or the narrow gate. The camel is picture of the rich man heavy laden with many burdens connected to his wealth.

The point I want you to understand is that salvation is available to everyone but the rich have a difficult time seeing their need of a Savior because of all they have and also because of the cares which are attached to their wealth.

Matthew 13:18-22

¹⁸ *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

¹⁹ *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

²⁰ *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

²¹ *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

²² *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

Jesus tells us that it is the DECEITFULNESS of riches that often keep the rich man from coming through the narrow gate. James tells us it is the poor man who has grasped on to the Truth of the Gospel. God has chosen the poor because of their response to the Truth of His Word and their desire to know Him.

Application:

I want to make an application here that God has laid on my heart this week. We as parents always desire the very **best** for our children and our grandchildren but the **best** is not a life of wealth and riches of this world. The **best** is a life that trusts in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. Be very careful about driving your children into the mindset that wealth will bring happiness. It will not! That can be very dangerous because riches of this world can be a curse.

Proverbs 11:28

²⁸ *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.*

Proverbs 23:5

⁵ *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.*

Ecclesiastes 5:10

¹⁰ *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*

Notice James 2:5b

Here James tells us it is the poor who are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.

I want you to see a picture of what James is talking about.

Notice Mark 5:21-34

²¹ *And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.*

²² *And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,*

²³ *And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.*

²⁴ *And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.*

²⁵ *And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,*

Jesus is on His way to heal the daughter of a very prominent man. Then we are introduced to a lady who has had an issue of blood for 12 years.

Now let me explain some things here. This would have been an outcast of her society. The issue of blood would have meant several things:

1. If she had a husband she could have no relations with him.
2. She could have no children.
3. Anything she touched would have been unclean. That meant no washing dishes, no house cleaning, no helping others in any way.
4. She could not enter the Temple.

This woman was NOTHING compared to the ruler of the synagogue.

Notice the next verse.

²⁶ And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

She had spent everything and the situation only became worse. She was at the bottom of the barrel. She was out of money and there was only one other option.

²⁷ When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

²⁸ For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

²⁹ And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

³⁰ And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

³¹ And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

³² And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

³³ But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

³⁴ And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

That is rich faith!

Conclusion:

In the last will and testament of Martin Luther occurs the following remarkable passage: — "Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou hast been pleased to make me a poor and needy man upon earth. I have neither house, nor land, nor money to leave behind me. Thou hast given me wife and children, whom I now restore to Thee. Lord, nourish, teach, and preserve them, as Thou hast me."