

"True Faith and Partiality"**Part 4****James 2:1-13**

Introduction: Today as we come back to our study of James we are again dealing with the subject of partiality or favoritism. There seemed to be a problem of favoritism within the group of Jewish believers which James was writing to. They seemed to favor the rich over the poor and in so doing they were distorting the view of Christ which was to be seen within their lives.

Let me quickly walk you through what we have looked at then we will get to where we are going.

I. The Command**Notice James 2:1**

The main idea that James has here is that True saving faith and favoritism do not mix. They are like oil and water. The reason is because we have the Holy Spirit within us and we are to be controlled by Him and when we are the life of Christ is manifest in our lives and Jesus was not partial in any way therefore for us as believers to show favoritism or partiality is incompatible with who we are.

Let me show you what Paul said concerning his life as a believer:

Philippians 1:20

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

Christ is to be MAGNIFIED in our lives and when we show partiality then we are distorting the world's view of Jesus Christ. Really we are misrepresenting Jesus Christ.

II. The Conduct**Notice James 2:2-3**

Here James gives a hypothetical situation in order to communicate his point. He paints a picture of 2 men who walk into the synagogue and one is adorned in gold and the other is very poor. The rich man is favored and the poor man is despised.

Then James goes on and deals with the consequences of showing favoritism like this.

III. The Consequences

Notice James 2:4

This favoritism makes us judges with evil thoughts. I believe the idea here is that the rich man is favored because there is the HOPE that if we show him special treatment then we may possibly benefit financially from him. The poor man is despised because he has nothing to offer us and really if we got to know him he may become a burden in the sense that we would be asked to help him in his time of need. This is a manifestation of the greediness of the sin nature. We want to be friends with the man who has something to offer but not to the man who may require something from us in his time of need.

This is the complete opposite of the way Jesus Christ is. He came into this world to save us who had nothing to offer to Him and on top of that we are very needy. We were spiritually bankrupt and yet God gave His Son to save us and to provide for our needs.

Romans 8:32

³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Jesus did not seek out the rich because they had something to offer to Him. He sought out the lost who had nothing to offer and everything to gain.

Notice James 2:5

Here is a reminder to those who despise the poor and favor the rich. God never pushed the poor aside. They have been chosen to be members of the family of God. It is the poor who are rich in faith. This does not mean that wealthy people are not saved but there are far more poor people who come to Christ than there are rich people.

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.*

James is not saying that God favored the poor. He is saying that God loves the poor as much as he does the rich and that salvation is free to all who will repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Now let us see the contrast.

Notice James 2:6-7

The first word of the verse introduces a contrast here. The contrast is between how these people had despised the poor and how God has loved the poor.

Now in these verses James points to how these believers had favored the poor and how the poor had treated those who were believers. This is most likely a reference to the religious leaders who were persecuting these believers. Let me show you a small glimpse.

Acts 4:1-3

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

² *Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

³ *And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.*

This is most likely what James is pointing to. But this now raises some questions. Should they not be kind to those who persecuted them? Should they have a chip on their shoulder toward the rich?

What about us? Should we not show the love of Christ to the rich?

Let me explain that James is NOT saying that we are to despise the rich unsaved people that we come in contact with. James' entire point is that we are not to favor the rich over the poor. The Jewish believers he was writing to would have been fully aware of this. There is a verse in Leviticus which these people would have been familiar with.

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.

But just in case this would have slipped their minds James goes on.

Notice James 2:8

I want to spend the rest of our time on this verse today. Here in this verse James points to the ROYAL law which is to love thy as thyself. Let me make several points here that will help us.

1. James calls this the ROYAL law.

Why does James refer to this as the ROYAL law? The reason is because it is from the King. This is Kingdom Theology. Those who James was writing to were people of the Kingdom just as we are people of the Kingdom and therefore we are to walk in kingdom Theology. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

2. This is one of the two greatest commandments.**Matthew 22:35-40**

³⁵ Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

³⁶ Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus said that on these two Commandments HANG all the law and the prophets meaning that in these two Commandments we find all the others.

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

- ✓ You shall have no other gods before Me.
- ✓ You shall not make idols.
- ✓ You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
- ✓ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

B. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- ✓ Honor your father and your mother.
- ✓ You shall not murder.
- ✓ You shall not commit adultery.
- ✓ You shall not steal.
- ✓ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- ✓ You shall not covet.

But I believe there is far more to the 2 Greatest Commandments. I believe there is something else to be seen in these two Commandments.

The first one is vertical. The second one is horizontal. The first deals with our relationship with God the second one deals with our relationship with our fellow man. If we place those 2 lines together we get the picture of the cross.

Now listen to this: on the cross Jesus was demonstrating His love for the Father by being obedient even unto death. That is loving God with all of your heart, soul and mind. That is the vertical. Then at the same time He was demonstrating His love for all of mankind by paying the penalty for our sin. That is loving your neighbor as yourself. This is the horizontal.

Now let me show you something else.

Matthew 22:40

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus said that on these 2 Commandments HANG all the law and the prophets. The meaning is as I showed you. But I believe there is a spiritual picture. I believe Jesus was pointing to His death on the cross when He said this. You see those 2 Commandments are a picture of the cross and it would be on the cross that He would HANG and let us remember that He was the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets.

Matthew 5:17

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

3. What does it mean to love our neighbor yourself?

I think that we can best answer this question by looking at something which Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:12

¹² Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

This verse really brings the ROYAL Commandment into focus for us.

Jesus is tells us here that ALL THINGS that we would want people to do to us that is what we are to do to them. In other words we are to treat people just as we would want to be treated and there are no exceptions in this verse. Let me explain.

We are to treat people as we would want them to treat us regardless of how they treat us. Did you get that? We are to treat others just as we would like them to treat us even when they do not do to us what we would want them to do.

Matthew 7:12 is not just to be practiced on those who treat us kindly. It is to be practiced on all the people that we have contact with. This is what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves.

When someone slanders us we are to treat them just like we would want them to treat us.

Now someone may object and say, "What about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?"

Matthew 5:28-46

³⁸ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

³⁹ *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

⁴⁰ *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

⁴¹ *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

⁴² *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

⁴³ *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

⁴⁴ *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

⁴⁵ *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

⁴⁶ *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

Conclusion:

We are to love our neighbor as we would want them to love us. We are to do to them as we would want them to do to us. Anything outside of that is sin.

Jesus demonstrated on the cross the love we are to have for all of mankind. He is the pattern we are to follow.