

"True Faith and Partiality"

Part 5

James 2:1-13

Introduction: Today we come back to our study of James and as we do we have come back to the section in which James deals with the subject of "partiality". So far we have looked at:

I. The Command (2:1)

Notice James 2:1

II. The Conduct (2:2-3)

Notice James 2:2-3

III. The Consequences (2:4-13)

Notice James 2:4

To treat people as described in verses 2-3 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 verse that was for the purpose of clearing their vision. Worldly wealth was keeping them from seeing things in the proper perspective. They were not seeing things through the eyes of Jesus Christ. Therefore this verse was written to clear their vision. God had chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith. This does not mean that there were not any wealthy people who were saved because there were. But the point which James is making is that salvation was made available to both the rich and the POOR.

James 2:6-7

Here is a contrast. God had chosen the poor but these believers had despised the poor. He then reminds them of how the rich had treated them and this is most likely a reference to the religious leaders who had brought the persecution upon them for their faith in Christ.

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.*

Now when I read this it makes me ask the question, "Should we focus only on the poor?"

It was brought to my attention recently by some people that there is often the temptation to despise the RICH because of the way they conduct business or the way in which they treat others. So the question then arises, "Am I justified if I despise the RICH?"

The answer to that is, "NO!"

Notice James 2:8

James here refers to the ROYAL LAW because it is a law that came from the King. This is Kingdom theology. This is something that is contrary to what the world teaches. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Last week I gave you another verse that helps us to grasp onto the thought of this verse.

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 means that we are to do to others what we would want them to do for us even if we know they would never do one good thing for us. That is how we are to treat those whom God brings in contact with us.

This is to be the standard by which we relate to all people around us.

Let me just add something here that needs to be said. This does not mean that we do not confront people about their sin. We are to confront them and warn them of the consequences of sin.

Leviticus 19:17

¹⁷ Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

Now James will present the seriousness of favoritism.

Notice James 2:9a

Here is another contrast. If we love our neighbor as ourselves we do well. But if we show favoritism then we are guilty of committing sin. This shows the seriousness of favoritism.

It is so serious that it is one of the sins that caused Jesus to suffer on the cross. It is sin and all sin carries with it consequences.

Now it does not cause us to lose our salvation but it does hinder our fellowship with the Lord.

Psalms 66:18

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

If we hold partiality in our heart toward certain people it hinders our prayer life.

But there is something else here which James is saying. There would be those who may say, "I am fulfilling the Royal law by loving the rich".

Notice James 2:9

James tells his readers they were convinced of the law as transgressors. Here is what James has in mind when he writes this.

Leviticus 19:18, 33, 34

¹⁸ *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**: I am the LORD.*

³³ *And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.*

³⁴ *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and **thou shalt love him as thyself**; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

Notice James 2:10-11

Let me tell you what it is that James is speaking out against, that is SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE. There would have been those who would have kept parts of the law and ignored the parts which they were living in disobedience to. James makes it very clear that SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE is sin.

Application:

This is something we must guard against in our lives. Selective obedience is not acceptable. We cannot pick and chose what we are going to obey. We are called to walk in obedience to all of God's Word. We cannot look at our lives and determine we are fine because we obey more than we disobey. One step into disobedience makes us guilty.

- Allow me to step away from the setting here for a moment. I worked with a man at the Somerset Prison years ago who told me he was going to heaven when he died because he was practicing the Ten Commandments. I ask him if he had kept them perfectly and he said he had not but he was doing his best.

Just in case there is someone here who thinks you can get to heaven by keeping the Law you need to know that you are wrong. The Law was never given to save us but it was given to show us how sinful we really are.

Romans 3:20

²⁰ *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: **for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***

Romans 7:7

⁷ *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

The Law was given to show us how far we are from God's standards. But the Law was also given so that we would see our need for Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:23-24

²³ *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

²⁴ *Wherefore **the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,** that we might be justified by faith.*

The Law was given to show us our need of a Savior. It was not given as a way into heaven.

IV. The Conclusion

Now James is going to pull his thoughts together into 2 verses.

Notice James 2:12

There is great insight in this verse.

There is coming a day when we who are believers will stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ *For **we must all appear** before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

We will not be judged for our sin as believers for all of our sin was judged on the cross 2000 years ago. But we will be judged for how we used what God has entrusted to us when we were saved.

But in this verse James tells us with what we will be judged. It will be the Law of Liberty. So that raises a question, "What is the Law of Liberty?"

It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why is it called the Law of Liberty? Because it is the Gospel that gave us freedom from sin. We were enslaved to sin before we were saved and it was by the power of the Gospel that we were set free from the power of sin. **Now listen to this: it was not that we deserved the Gospel because we didn't. We deserved the fires of hell because we were sinners and enemies of God.**

Romans 5:8-10

⁸ *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

⁹ *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

¹⁰ *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

We are saved by GRACE.

Ephesians 2:8

⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

Grace is unmerited favor. We were spiritually bankrupt completely unable to save ourselves and God stepped in and provided a way of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ as He sacrificed Him on the cross 2000 years ago.

Now listen to this: We will be judged in the light of the very grace, love and compassion in which was shown us. In other words we will be judged on how we treated those who we came in contact with in this life and we are

expected to show them the very same love, compassion and grace which God has shown to us.

We are going to be judged on how we have treated those who God brought across our path and because we were shown grace, compassion, patience and love we are expected to show the very same thing to those we meet in this life. This is what it means to be judged with the perfect Law of Liberty.

Notice James 2:13

Here is a sobering thought. The person who shows no mercy will see little mercy when they stand before the Lord.

Matthew 7:1-2

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Notice Matthew 18:23-35