A STUDY OF JAMES (10)

Without Partiality

James 2:1-13

The Book of James – 1:1-27

- Continuing our study of James, we have addressed trials, temptations, our need to think before we speak, to look into God's word and keep it, and what pure and undefiled religion involves.
- Today, we want to address how our "pure and undefiled" religion must be offered "without partiality".

Introduction – **2:1-13**

- James is obviously addressing a concern among those in his audience - partiality.
- If it is a Jewish audience (scattered because of persecutions, and possibly an early letter), they would have been familiar with being partial – e.g., Jews vs. Gentiles (vs. Samaritans).
- James addresses this, but he directs it toward economical partiality.
- This lesson is very needed today as we are living in a society that shows partiality in many different ways.

What is partiality – (**2:1-5**)

- The Greek word in **Vs. 1** is προσωπολημψία (prosōpolēmpsia).
- It is a compound word meaning: “face” and “to receive” (or admire).
- To consider someone/something based upon appearance.
- While there are times we do show partiality (e.g., a spouse, brethren – **Romans 12:10, Gal. 6:10**), often it means to show favoritism without all the facts, based on appearance ALONE.

Do not show partiality – (**2:1-5**)

- *Do not hold the faith of our Lord… with partiality.*
- James speaks of "the Lord of glory".
- His point is we must not discriminate when it comes to sharing our faith with others.
- This is the premise of **Matthew 7:1-5**
- God is no respecter of persons – **Acts 10:34-35, Romans 2:11, Galatians 2:6, 1 Peter 1:17, cf. Deuteronomy 10:17-18**
- The "faith" is available to all – **Galatians 3:26-28, Titus 2:11, etc.**

Do not show partiality – (**2:1-7**)

- *For if there should come into your assembly….*
- James illustrates this by contrasting 2 men coming into the assembly. One finely dressed and the other, a poor man in filthy clothes.
- NOTE: The word for assembly is συναγωγή, synagōgē.
- HOW do we respond? Apparently some were showing partiality based upon economical status (and supposed success).
- This is elevating materialism over spirituality.

Do not show partiality – (**2:1-5**)

- *4 – Have you not shown partiality and become judges with evil thoughts?*
- Understand that God views such as EVIL! (Which relates this to everything associated with evil)

Do not show partiality – (**2:1-5**)

- *5 – Listen…Has God not chosen the poor…?*
- While God shows no partiality, the "poor" (e.g., marginalized) are more likely to turn to Him.
- Those driven by worldliness think less of God – **James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-16, Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, cf. Matt. 19:22**
- The "poor" have less to lose. God cares for them TOO! **Job 36:11, Matthew 11:5, Luke 6:20, 1 Corinthians 1:26**

Misplaced judgments – (2:6-7)

- *6 – But you have dishonored the poor man.*
- Why was it evil? They insulted (disrespected, shamed) the poor man without cause.
- Such conduct reveals character of one (or an assembly) that needs to change.
- **Proverbs 17:5,** *He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished*.
- **Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:22** – the Lord's Supper

Misplaced judgments – (2:6-7)

- *6 – Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?*
- NOTE: There is not virtue in wealth OR poverty! Money is morally neutral. The rich can be saved – **Matthew 19:23-26, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, etc.**
- It is HOW you act and WHAT you do with wealth that gives it identity before God.
- Many wicked causes are funded by wealthy individuals who reject God.
  They use their resources against God – to silence His followers and exploit the gullible – **cf. 2 Peter 2:3, Romans 16:18.**
- But God takes note – **James 5:1-6**

Misplaced judgments – (2:6-7)

- *7 – Do they not blaspheme that noble name…?*
- **1 Corinthians 1:18, 23** – the message of the cross is foolishness to them.
- The worldly despise the godly because they expose their darkness – **John 3:19-21.**
  Often, when one cannot answer a charge, they attack the character of the source.
- They did it to Jesus – **Matthew 12:24**
  They did it to Paul & Barnabas – **Acts 13:45**
- Why is today any different?

Misplaced judgments – (**2:6-7**)

- *7 – Do they not blaspheme that noble name…?*
- Are you honoring the one more likely to reject your faith and you?
- Why?
  - Fear – "What will they do to me?"
  - Awe – the world respects/honors them
  - Materialism – "Will they give me something?"
  - Selfishness – not wanting to be inconvenienced

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- *8 – If you really fulfill the royal law… you do well.*
- What is the "royal law"? Love your neighbor as yourself.
- "Royal" implies related to a king. Something to be respected and obeyed.
- Why is the command loyal?
  - It comes from our sovereign God
  - It was the foundation of our King – **cf. Matthew 22:16, Mark 12:37**
  - It is the foundation of "all the law and prophets" – **Matthew 22:37-40.**

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- *8 – If you really fulfill the royal law… you do well.*
- *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*.
- Based on **Leviticus 19:18**
- Found 7x in the NT – **Matthew 19:19, 22:39, Mark 12:37, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8**
- IF we love our neighbors, we will NOT show partiality AGAINST them!

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- *9 – But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted* **(guilty)** *by the law as a transgressor.*

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- **10-11** – *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all…*
- To break ANY command of God makes you a law breaker!
- While man categorizes sin, to God SIN IS SIN!

  E.g., Adam and Eve ate a piece of fruit! It was not the fruit, but the rebellion and rejecting God's will. Murder, adultery & partiality – they are ALL equally sin! Sin MUST be dealt with!

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- **10-11** – *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all…*
- The problem is your heart!
  NOTE: Faithfulness is tested when you are called to do something you do not WANT to do.
- Our society has a problem with this – when leaders pick and choose which laws to enforce or ignore, they are grooming people toward lawlessness.
- Also a concern in churches!

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- **12** – *So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.*
- The law of liberty – see **James 1:25**
- We will stand before God and answer one day for the decisions we have made!
  2 Corinthians 5:10-11,
  Revelation 20:11-15

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- **13** – *For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.*
- How we judge, forgive and show mercy has a bearing on our salvation! **Matthew 7:1-5, 6:14-15, 5:7, etc.**

Fulfilling the royal law– (**2:8-13**)

- **13** – *Mercy triumphs over judgment*
- This passage is NOT saying obedience is not important! **Matthew 23:23**
- This is a call of the heart.
- It is with mercy that we do NOT show partiality.

Concluding thoughts – James 2:1-13

- One of the points we frequently make is how we need each other!
- We are living in dark times. We CANNOT afford to dismiss ANYONE just because they have physical differences.
- In God's eyes, all men are created in His image – **Genesis 1:26-27, Acts 17:26**
- This should lead us to merciful impartiality.

Is God pleased with how I look at others?

Let us pray!