

COMMUNITY GROUPS

living out the gospel with
one another in our homes

Sermon Notes – Jerry Shiver
15 Jan 2023

Love Liberty Disco

This week Pastor Will continued our study of the Book of James in chapter 2 covering the complex and sometimes confusing relationship between faith, works, and salvation.

Main Point: As Christians we must have love for others but only because we already have liberty through faith in Jesus Christ, even when we don't understand how it works – like disco.

3 Key Points:

Love – James 2:1-7

Liberty – James 2:8-13

Faith, works and Disco James 2:14-26

Questions:

In verses 1-7 James tells us to show no partiality (favoritism) between the rich and the poor within the body of Christ. Will broadens this to say show love and hospitality to all people regardless of class, race, gender, etc.

1. While, on the whole, FRBC does a great job of welcoming visitors how might we/you do even better? How might we extend this beyond our Gatherings? Approaching others that are different from us can be daunting. How can we overcome these fears? (Heb 2:18)

In verses 8-13 James reminds us that if we show any partiality (not loving others perfectly) we have broken God's law and are all sinners and guilty lawbreakers. Will prefaced verses 12-13 by saying that before God there are two categories of people: the holy and the unholy. As believers, we know that we (along with everyone else) fall into the second category, but that only by our faith in Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins, burial, and resurrection are we saved, becoming new creations covered by his righteousness before God.

2. Read Rom 3:23-24, Eph 2:2-3, Matt 18:32-35. Why would James tell us in verse 12 to speak and act as those who are going to be judge? What warning does James have for us in verse 13? How can James claim mercy triumphs over judgement? Would Paul agree (Rom 5:8)?

In verses 14-26 James tackles the relationship between faith and works. Will stated that he had difficulty in reconciling the two and that Martin Luther also had difficulty understanding the dynamic between faith and works. Martin Luther said that the two were at odds: Rom 3:28 says faith justifies and James 2:24 says works justifies, not faith alone. Will calls this confusing dynamic “Disco” since he personally doesn’t understand or “get” disco. (I guess you just had to be there. 😊)

3. Read the following accounts and then discuss if it is possible to have true saving faith without works? How do these verses line up with Rom 3:28 (note Paul says “apart from the law”)?

Gen 22:2-13

Josh 2:4-11

Luke 23:39-43

4. Read verse 22. Will provided two definitions of justification to help with this passage. One from Paul that “you are saved (justified) when you profess faith in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation” (Rom 3:28). James is describing a progressive justification (sanctification) where our works give proof of our faith, that we believe in Jesus for our salvation. How do you understand verse 22?

5. Read verses 14, 17 and 26 then Eph 2:8-10. Will provided the following from a documentary called American Gospel. Many religions, denominations and Christians believe that Faith + Works = Salvation. This is not supported in scripture. Eph 2:8-10 (⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.) According to Scripture, Eph 2, and James Faith = Salvation + Works. (¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.) How do you think a discussion between Paul and James might go on this subject?