

Faith That moves us to Honor All

James 2:1, 8-9 (ESV) 1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. *Partiality means to show favor to another. It carries the idea of honoring or valuing one person over another. And the Lord God - has a passionate disdain for favoritism toward people because ...*

When we show favoritism, we distort the beauty and power of Jesus.

We will also see in this passage, why God is so passionate that we honor or value all the equally – no matter who they are or what they have done. The same truth – just said in a positive way is this:

When we honor (value) all, we give many a beautiful and powerful taste of Jesus.

Pic of BR and Zia - Bob Roberts is a church planter in Ft. Worth. 1st guy who ever spoke to me about church planting, his church happened to be across the street from my neighborhood. Recently, Bob met a Pakistani Imam in Texas named Zia and decides to actually befriend him and not just avoid him, judge him, or even save him. How do you make friends in Texas? You go hunting together. Here's Bob's invitation to the Imam: "Zia, I'm from East Texas; if you show up hunting in your Pakistani garb, and I give you a 12-gauge, and we go running through those woods yelling Allahu akbar, we're gonna die. I'll take you, but I want you in jeans, a T-shirt, and talking with a Texas accent" (p. 25 Bold as Love). They became friends. A couple of years later Bob is in Nepal and one of things he is going to do is visit a friend's church that is the largest Christian church in Nepal. He was also going to Pakistan with Zia. He asked if he could go to the service – Bob said sure. He told his friends and soon they filled up a bus of Imams who wanted to go because they had never been to a Christian church. Half way thru on the floor in the back, tears fill two men's eyes. Bob leans over to hear – I feel God in this place. Bob asked why – hearing about Jesus. Has anyone every told you about Jesus? No. He did. Bob, has since received 8 invitations to come talk about who Jesus is in 8 different mosques. 7 in Pakistan and 1 in the states. It all began bc Bob showed honor to a man many dishonor and show no value to. Here the main truth or idea from this passage again.

When we honor (value) all, we give many a beautiful and powerful taste of Jesus.

As God unfolds this truth, He is going to answer 4 questions:

01. How do we show favoritism?
02. Why does God despise favoritism?
03. Why does God love impartiality – *or showing honor to all?*
04. How do we live showing honor to all – favoritism to none?

01. How do we show favoritism?

James 2:1, 8-9 (ESV) 1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ***brothers – means brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. He is speaking here to the body – not just one.*

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

When we honor or value one person over another, we show favoritism which is a sin against God.

God is declaring **1) this a rebellion against God** – sin against His will and **2) this is corporate sin**, it may be birthed in individual hearts but it takes the body, a group of believers to live out partiality. *One person can live out favoritism – but on person cannot make this a way of life for a gathering of believers. It takes a community.*

James 2:2-4 (ESV) 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

How do we show favoritism?

- We show greater honor or value to those who please our eye. *We favor beauty.*
- We show greater honor or value to those who will benefit us. *We favor power/influence.*
- We dishonor or devalue those who do not please our eye. *We don't give favor to the displeasing.*
- We dishonor or devalue those who do not benefit us. *We don't give favor to the weak.*

These are huge distinctions that separate – but they do more according to vs 4 – these distinctions are

based on evil and have destructive consequences.

02. Why does God despise favoritism?

God despises favoritism because it distorts Jesus

James 2:10-12 (ESV) 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

How does showing favoritism distort Jesus? Vs. 10 – When we “become accountable” for all the law it means this - when we rebel against one law we become guilty of rebellion against Holy God.” What does this mean? **1) It speaks to our complete sinfulness.** One sin action or attitude makes us guilty before God. *(You don't have to break every treason law in the US to be guilty of treason – just takes one.)* This rebellion makes us condemned before God and in need of a Savior to free us from the guilt of our rebellion. **2) It speaks to the destructiveness of our rebellion in that it distorts the very nature of God.** One of the main things the Law of God does is give us a clear picture of the person of God. When we rebel against the law, we distort the person of God. Being guilty of all the law means – our distortion of the character and nature of Jesus is immense & more destructive than we realize.

God despises favoritism because it distorts Jesus - and the work of the cross.

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

Distorting the cross – vs 12 – law of liberty. The cross gives us freedom and acceptance. When we show favoritism we distort the cross and where and how we find favoritism before God. **Let's see how:**

- Favoritism says this about Jesus to the “favorited”:
Jesus only loves those who have it together.
- Favoritism says this about the work of the cross to the “favorited”:
The gospel = God gives His favor and acceptance to those who act beautiful and powerful.
- Favoritism says this to the one who is “favorited”:
God and we see you as better than others and approve of you based on your beauty/power.
Implication - “You need to keep up your beauty / power because only in this do you find your favor before God and us.” We may not realize this but we put people like this under a huge weight that says – you must always have it together. Ever lived under that weight? It will eventually crush the life out of you.
- Favoritism says this about Jesus to the “unfavorited”:
Jesus is not for the messy and broken.
- Favoritism says this about the work of the cross to the “unfavorited”:
The gospel = you must change and get your act together to be acceptable to God.
- Favoritism says this to the one who is “unfavorited”:
We and God do not approve of you based on your lack of beauty / power.
Implication, “You need to change who you are - your outward appearance and or influence - to find favor before God and us.”
Bag lady we picked up on youth ski trip. Putrid, ugly, annoying, - she pestered our group for money. We gave her a ride as we left the Hardy's. She then began to take off all her outer garments and her hats and wig and make-up till the kids realized it was Belinda – their YM. Everyone sat in shock – I am a Christian and your minister but I started to hate the church and God because of the way I was treated in there and I realized in the midst - Im guilty too.

03. Why does God love impartiality – or showing honor to all?

James 2:1, 5 (ESV) Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

Our obedience to showing honor to all reveals Jesus as ...

- God - who loves the poor – the messy: Jesus is drawn to the poor. **Truth – we are all messy.**
- God - who loves those who know they cannot secure His favor. Poor in spirit **Truth for us all.**

Our obedience to showing “no favoritism” says this about the work of the cross:

- The gospel = our favor is only found in the glory of *Jesus (beauty) and His work (power)*.

Our obedience to **showing “no favoritism” says this to both the “favorited and unfavored”**:

- We are all equally in need of Jesus and his work on the cross.

Showing honor – at times will cost you among believers. Bob said it has cost them church members and standing in the community. This issue is not just about Muslims. It can be about transgenders, homosexuals, the poor, someone of a different race or class. When we go overseas to honor people who seem dishonorable to many – we are seen as compassionate. When we honor our neighbor who seems dishonorable to many – we quickly can have our motives questioned. And if we are not anchored in something bigger and deeper than just the idea that this is good, hip, or a relevant way to appeal to those who are not like us, two things will happen when we are attacked. 1) We will lose our courage quickly or 2) We will lose our conviction and not stand for anything.

How do we stand for Christ and yet honor all – whether they believe what we do or not?

04. How do we live showing honor to all – favoritism to none?

James 2:1, 12-13 (ESV) 1 ... show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

Believe - **“we are all equally in need of the cross”**.

Faith in the person and work of Jesus is necessary if we are to create an impartial community that shows honor and value to all.

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Every day we must faith: *That the only honor we have is in the person and work of Jesus. This is living under the law of liberty. This will move us to show mercy in honoring all – whether they deserve it or not, whether they are honorable or not, whether they give honor to us or not.* What does this look like?

- We must daily faith that our favor is only found in the beauty and power of Jesus and His work.

As we do, we will be moved to show honor to all based on no work of ours because that is how God has given us honor in Christ.

We do not honor and serve just to convert; we honor and serve because we are converted.

Pastor ???, we do not serve the people of this village just so they will believe. Many will never believe – some will. We do not serve them just to get them to be believers – we serve them because we are believers.

We stumbled across a small boy who’s mom had died and dad as off at work all day. His day now was to roam the mountains side with his barely older sister with little to no food or clothes. We clothed him and fed him not because we believe it would saved this boy. Rather, we clothed and fed him because we were saved.

We want everyone to know the eternity changing and life changing love of God through Jesus Christ. But we do not honor and serve to convert; we honor and serve because we are converted. Will you love and honor – even if they person you are loving and honoring never converts or never responds with by loving and honoring you or those you care for? The good news of the cross is that you were given honor based on no work – no beauty, not power of yours. It was mercifully given by the just work of Jesus in your place. We receive the beauty of Christ and his power to work in us now. Christ in us by his mercy. His favor by his mercy – moves us to show favor to all – no matter their work, or place, or beauty, or influence. We serve and honor because we have been honored in Christ.

- We must daily faith that our favor is only found in the beauty and power of Jesus and His work.

As we do, we will give many a beautiful and powerful taste of Jesus and his work on the cross.

From a 9 Marks article Greg Vest gave, Besides the fact that Jesus loved the poor, orphan, widow, tax collector, and prostitute, he died for those who weren’t his friends. His impartiality is absolute, extreme. His death wasn’t for his friends or for those like him. Jesus laid down his life for his enemies. This is amazing.

How do we respond right now?

Corporate Confession – we show favoritism, Father forgive us for not faithing the gospel that says only God through Jesus gives favor. Forgive us for withholding honor unmercifully. You give it graciously – we want to as well.

Help me today believe – my favor is found only in Jesus and His work. *May that move me to honor, may you use it to give a beautiful and powerful taste of Jesus and his work to me, to other believers, to unbelievers, to many.*

Imam Zias – first impression of Christians was ugly and hateful. In February this year I had an opportunity to interact closely with a practicing Christian philanthropist. He was an outstanding scholarship student who maintained a great record at his university. He was also a good person in terms of ethics and he seemed quite trustworthy. Unfortunately, the image that I constructed of him in my mind was shattered when I interacted further with him. It took me five months to realize what he was truly like. This realization then consequently made me so upset for the simple reason that a Christian guy was my first close introduction to Christianity and he took just a few months and a lot of negative actions to distort the impression of practicing Christians from my mind. But then why should I label all practicing Christians the same? Shouldn't I be giving a chance to the adherents of a faith so close to mine who practice and reinforce among other things that: God is Love. Should I turn into a bigot and publish articles and books, fund blogs and create centers of hatred against all Christians? Does my not so pleasing encounter with a Christian turn me into a bigot and a Christianophobe? His view changed because Bob lives in a community of Christ followers that believe showing honor is a passion of God Almighty. Why is it? Let's see...