

Teaching Notes

Last week Manny shared with us how to renew our mind.
The importance of listening to the truth of God's word not the lies
of the world.

*I loved how it dovetailed with what we talked about with pure and
undefiled religion and being unspotted from the world.*

To be pure and undefiled and have our minds renewed...

...we can see the vision for God's mission...

...and take part in it effectively.

We won't get in the way as much or just sit on the shelf.

- Pure is clean and useful.
- Undefiled is operating at full capacity.
- Renewed is new and ready.

Then James looked at the practical example of favoritism.

**When we favor someone that can do something for us we are
showing partiality and making a judgment on value.**

AND...God values everyone.

He loves and serves even those who do not love and serve Him.

Title of the message: Judgment and Mercy like God

**Today James will go into a pretty controversial subject
regarding the rich and poor, mercy and judgment.**

There may have been an issue with some of the wealthier people in the community...

But James is definitely using a generalization to make his point...
...It is a little hyperbole...exaggerating to make a point.

To interpret Scripture with Scripture...

...There are many significant rich people in Scripture.

So James is not describing all rich people.

Jesus said, it is hard for a rich person to enter heaven.

He has to humble himself and ask for forgiveness.

He must submit to someone greater than himself.

He must acknowledge his need.

These are hard things for some people with great riches.

Just like the rich young ruler who left Jesus with great sorrow because he had great possessions.

Our possessions can easily possess us.

Our position of power can easily corrupt us.

We must as Micah says, walk humbly, as we say lead humbly.

2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

So the rich guy gets the good seat and the poor guy gets the bad seat and James says, **this isn't like God, it isn't godly.**

Paul tells us "...I For 1:27 God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty"

God's character judges that the lowly should be lifted up.

1. God lifts up the lowly.

He gives grace to the humble.
He brings the lonely into families.
He gives the poor riches that last.
He makes them heirs of a kingdom that matters.

None of it is based on outward looks, abilities, or resources.
It is based on love. "which He promised to those who love Him"

When God is involved and God is at work, life improves.

The true Gospel makes a difference in life for orphans and widows, the sick and hurting.

People following God improve life for people because God loves people and desires to improve people's lives.

We are not just talking about materialistic improvement...

We are talking about things that last...hope, peace, joy, love.

...This is what God brings and what people that love God bring.

Then James talks about...

...the rich oppressing and blaspheming.

One way to see it is...

...These rich are local guys with a specific issue...

...or it could be generally rich people with power.

**When God has power, He lifts people up.
But when men have power, they usually lift themselves up.**

Those with power often become those that abuse power.

The rich are being given favorable treatment...

...but they are treating the believers unfavorably.

It is like the girl at the lunch table that wants to fit in with the popular, rich kids and she turns her back on her true friends.

...But later through time or trial, she realizes the popular, rich kids don't care about her at all- They just care about themselves.

It is an interesting dynamic that people often favor the rich or powerful even if the rich don't favor them.

Someone could be rich in social standing and treat you like garbage but because of their social standing, you favor them.

Someone could be rich in intelligence and treat you like a jerk, but because of their intelligence you favor them.

James is basically asking them in their situation why do you favor these rich, arrogant bullies?

These people don't care for you, they use you.

They like the special treatment and the VIP status...

...But...that could change on a dime.

- If they feel like it, they will oppress you.
- If it suits them, they will sue you.
- If they are offended, they will blaspheme your God and Father.

Now the truth is...

...**People don't usually love or favor the rich people...**
...**they are often just looking out for themselves as well.**

8-Bit Christmas...

All of these kids begged and bartered to come into this rich kid's house, but the rich kid didn't care about them and they didn't care about him, but everyone constantly kissed up to play his video games.

This sort of partiality misses the mark of God's divine design.

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

The royal law is the the law of love established by Jesus.

And when we act with partiality we don't act with love.

God judges impartiality is the way.

2. God is impartial.

Usually we show partiality because of what people can do for us.

Showing partiality is often just self advancement...

...We are using people rather than loving people.

...And that is sin...it is missing the mark on the life of God.

There are some people you connect with better.

There are some people you are going to be closer friends with.

...**But...**

Everyone should be treated with **value** and God's impartial **love**.

Now James goes into a little teaching about guilt and the law.

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

When we talk about the law...

...If you don't keep it all, you haven't kept it at all.

The law is an all or none proposition.

You are perfect or you are guilty. There is no gray line there.

James is saying you may excuse yourself by thinking...

“Well, I am pretty good with most everything.”

...But God says most everything isn't good enough.

One sin makes you a sinner...

3. God judges all sin.

People often have questions about sin.

What sin is the worst? What sin is not so bad?

Is showing partiality really like murder?

Every sin is a sin & brings separation & judgment from God.

...Murder, adultery, gossip, and partiality are all sin.

But the consequences and seriousness of each sin is different.

Some sins carry more weight bcuz they carry more damage.

If you go through the whole day and drive perfectly.

...But at 11:30 pm, you go on a late night run to Del Taco...

...and you run a light and crash into someone...

...you are busted no matter how else you drove that day.

Break one element of the law, you have broken the law.

But what if that is your third moving violation?

...It is going to be worse.

What if the person is severely injured?

...That will be worse.

If you give your seat to a girl who is rich over a girl who is not rich...you are showing partiality and that is sin.

But if you give your heart to a girl who is rich over a girl who is your wife, you are in sin and it is more serious than partiality.

If you give a \$10 freebie to a rich client over a poor one because you value the rich over the poor, that is partiality and sin.

But if you give a \$10,000 freebie to a client and steal from the company that is theft and sin.

James is making the point that we are all guilty.
We are transgressors whether we break one command or 10.

So what is the worst sin?

The worst sin is the unforgivable sin.

The only unforgivable sin is to reject Christ...

...who came to forgive us of our sin.

Every other sin can be forgiven, but if you reject the One who can forgive you, there is no way you can be forgiven.

So remember what the standard is...

12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

This is a powerful exhortation!

The standard by which we are going to be judged is love.

So speak and so do everything in light of the law of liberty which is love.

People may say they love the rich, but really they love themselves

Everyone loves those who love them back, those who can give you something back, those who can repay you back.

The real measure of God's love is when nothing comes back...
...And loving the poor is a great example of that.

4. God loves with no strings.

Do we love those who can do nothing for us?

A great measure of a person's character is how they treat someone that can do nothing for them.

How do people treat you when all of a sudden your role changes?
How do people treat you when all of a sudden their role changes?

Who are those people?

Did we love the **poor**, the **lowly**, those in **need**?

Did we love the **lonely**, the **broken**, the **lost**?

The service industry is often not seen.

Jesus sees and encourages us to see everyone.

Do you remember the parable Jesus told...

...James doesn't quote Jesus but his content is spot on.

Luke 6:³²“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. ³⁶Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

James then adds this idea about mercy...

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

God is going to judge based on love, the law of liberty.
Anyone gonna need a little mercy?

God sees and God knows...

...and God shows mercy to those who show mercy.

Matthew 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

5. God loves mercy.

Judgement is good for justice...But mercy is good for life.

I love this statement...”Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

“to glory against, to exult over, to boast one's self to the injury (of a person or thing)”

God does judge, but He knows mercy is better.

God is rich in mercy and in his judgment He uses mercy.

Don't just show mercy so you can get mercy.

Don't be a mercy mercenary.

Show mercy because when you show mercy you look like your Father.

Give people a break they don't deserve.

Give people the understanding they didn't earn.

Give people an extra tip for service that wasn't stellar.

Give people a little more time than they should get

Give people forgiveness they wouldn't receive.

Discussion Questions

What is your normal reaction to people that might be considered "the lowly"? (Not sure the poor, but anyone that is weak or struggling.) If you are a Christian now, was it different before?

When God entered your life was there an "improvement"? Do you ever think about the value you add in people's lives as a believer? What does that look like?

Can you think of a time where you saw partiality? Look up Genesis 37:3-4. How do you think favoritism/partiality effected this situation?

Can you think of a situation in your life where you would have liked mercy or where you could have given mercy? Look at Luke 6:35. What do you think about this verse?

Judgment & Mercy Like God
James 2:5-13

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