

James

Part 3

James 2:1-13

Vs. 1-4

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. **2** Suppose a man comes into your meeting (synagogue) wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. **3** If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” **4** have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Vs. 1

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

- Isn’t it good to know, that God does not judge us by how much we have in our bank accounts or 401k’s. He doesn’t judge us by where we live and what we drive. These things mean nothing to him...
- James, the half brother of Jesus writes in one of the first books written in the NT “our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory”. At this point there aren’t many Gentile believers and the rest of the NT hasn’t been written. Yet James establishes this consistent truth early in the life of the Church.

“We do well to remember that James wrote to a very partial age, filled with prejudice and hatred based on class, ethnicity, nationality, and religious background. In the ancient world people were routinely and permanently categorized because they were Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, Greek or barbarian, or whatever.” Guzik

- A significant aspect to the work of Jesus is the creation of one new man in Christ.

Ephesians 2

12 remember that at that time you (Gentiles) were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15** ... His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, **16** and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross...

Galatians 3:28

28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Story: The Church on Mt. Carmel

On April 9, 1906 at 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles. God moved in an unusual way and used a man by the name of William J. Seymour. Seymour was black man, blind in his left eye from smallpox. He was a preacher who was hungry for God and earnestly sought the promise in Scripture of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Key Features of the Azusa Street Revival:

- Spiritual Experience: Baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues (glossolalia), divine healing.
- Worship Style: Continuous, spontaneous, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, services had no set program, filled with the power of God and prayer.

- Racial & Gender Inclusivity: It Broke social norms by uniting Black, White, Asian, and Mexican worshippers, with women holding prominent roles.
- God broke the social norms and discriminations, not with laws on hate crimes, Cancel Culture or DEI initiatives. God broke those barriers with the experience of the Holy Spirit and the Love of God birthed in the hearts of men. Our flesh only creates resentment but In Christ we are one...

Vs. 5-7

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

- In **Vs. 5** James tells us “Has not God **chosen** those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him.”
- James words align well with Jesus’ words in:

Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- This reminds me of **1 Samuel 16:7** where the Lord says to Samuel; ““Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord sees the heart.”
- Here James remind us, what impresses people doesn’t impress God. Therefore don’t show partiality to the rich and disregard the poor.

- **“Has not God chosen those who are poor”** This tells me God sees something inside of the poor.
- Poor people in the time of Jesus and in other Third world countries today are perhaps, different from what we see in America. Their are parts of the world that don’t have Government assistance, food stamps and food banks to run to; if the food runs out they could actually starve to death. They are facing a different kind of need and trust God for even the smallest things.
- Have you ever been there? I think many of us have experienced that place. That place of total dependence on God is a humble place.

Matthew 19:14

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Why was Jesus so impressed with the Little Children?

Why were they drawn to him? Was it because he had candy in his pocket? Was it because he offered them toys? The text doesn’t tell me that Jesus gave them anything other than his hand to pray for them.

- These Children weren’t there for a hand out. They were there for Him...

Vs. 13 “Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them.”

Vs. 15 “When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.”

- Therefore, the Kingdom of God belongs to those who just want Him.

Vs. 8-13

8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. **9** But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. **11** For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, **13** because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Here James teaches the Doctrine of Mercy beginning with the Royal Law “Love your neighbor as yourself” and finishing with “judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over Judgment.
- This relates another principle of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:2

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

- James dealing with favoritism, I have to believe was a social norm and contentious issue among the Jews. This could have become deeply rooted in the early church, because it was deeply rooted in the Jewish Culture.
- The problem wasn’t that people were being kind to the rich. The problem was they were being rude to the poor.
- May our reputation of the church be that we are both kind to the rich and to the poor.

- Do you remember the old Sunday school Song:

*Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children of the world*

- Jewish culture had no problem separating this person from that.

Story: Trip to the Western (Wailing) Wall. Women separated from Men. Women had to dress certain way on Temple Mount, etc.

- Now James is teaching as far as the church is concerned, we are not like the rest of the world, we are not a Country Club or exclusive group. We are the Family of God and we love everyone the same

Closing:

Story: A Young man was looking for a Church, and was feeling the desire to give his heart to God. He had never been to church and he was covered in tattoos and his hair was dyed different colors. Because he looked so different people often greeted him at the door thinking he was lost looking for something else. When asked can I help you, are you looking for something he would say, Yes I'm looking for Wal-Mart and they would point him in the right direction, then he would leave.

One Sunday he tried a different church and there were two Grandma's who greeted him. When they saw him they said look your hair is on fire and they all laughed. They took him in and helped him find a seat. After the service they had a meal at the church and the two ladies came to him and said, now that we've fed your soul we want to feed your stomach too and took him to the lunch.

The next week he came back to that church but this time he covered his tattoos and he cut his hair and made it all the same color. When the two Grandma's saw him walking up they said, what happened to your hair? He said, I thought I would change it to look better for church. The two ladies said, well we liked it the way it was.

Isaiah 55

1 “Come, all you who are thirsty,
 come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
 come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
 without money and without cost.

2

Why spend money on what is not bread,
 and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,
 and you will delight in the richest of fare.

- **Lord teach us to Love**

- **Communion**