

## James 2:8-13 The Royal Law 10.9.2019

### **Announcements: Festival of Tables (Waiters), Missions Interest Meeting, Trunk or Treat, Toy Store**

Turn in your Bibles to the book of James, Chapter 2 and we will be studying verses 8 to 13 tonight. Tonight, we are staying on the topic of showing partiality or another word we may use for that is favoritism. A couple of weeks ago as Matthew taught on verses 1 to 7, we saw examples of showing partiality and a question of why you would even show partiality. Remember the example in those verses? Beyond the verses, Matthew acted it out as he walked over here, and it was if a rich man walked to into a gathering, wearing his fine rings and his fine clothes. The not so well-dressed person, the poor man, was already sitting here and Matthew got that man up and told him to go somewhere else so the rich man could have his seat.

James says, "Why would you do that?" Look what we learned a couple of weeks ago from verse 5.

#### **James 2:5**

***<sup>5</sup>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?***

As we say many times Scripture interprets Scripture, but we also see that there are issues that are being covered in one area or for that matter in one period of time that continuously has to be brought to the people's attention. Turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 1, verses 27-29 and I'll show you that the Apostle Paul was addressing the same issue at the church in Corinth to remember something about their salvation. There were divisions being created in the Church because of several issues but partiality was one of them also.

#### **1 Corinthians 1:27-29**

***<sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.***

Now on the surface it looks like we are beating up on rich, smart and strong people and only the poor, unintelligent and weak can be saved. Not at all! What I would say is that no one is unintelligent because we are all creations of God. I would use that old saying most of us have probably used. They just aren't using the good sense God gave them and people make bad decisions in their life based off our sinful nature.

What is being said here is that we are not to focus on our worldly measures of success, but we are to totally focus on Jesus Christ and the power of the Word of God that transforms our life.

So, what is the big deal about showing partiality? We all do it to some extent! Well, I am so glad you asked! I will answer that tonight through God's Word. Because this is serious.

Let's look at our verses in James Chapter 2:8-13.

#### **James Chapter 2:8-13**

***<sup>8</sup>If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***

Now, why is showing partiality wrong? Well, verse 9 tells us! It is Sin! Simple, straight forward and to the point. But, it is much deeper than that as we pull the layers back. Showing partiality goes against the very nature, the very characteristics and the very calling God puts on our life. To the point of God's character.

Grab your Bibles and we are going to look at a couple verses real quick to see that God is impartial in his character. Turn to Deuteronomy 10:17, Here is God showing the nation of Israel what his requirements are and what he is expecting of them and why in relation to his character.

***Deuteronomy 10:17***

***<sup>17</sup>For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.***

Turn to Acts Chapter 10:34. Now this is where Peter has gone to the home of a Cornelius, a Gentile, to share the Gospel and what happened. Cornelius and his household got saved and God was showing Peter this.

***Acts 10:34***

***<sup>34</sup>So Peter opened his mouth and said; "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality!"***

Showing partiality or favoritism not only violates God's character but it also violates at the core of what the Christian faith is all about. Look at verse 8. This is where we see that this goes way beyond just the act of showing partiality. This is where we see it is much deeper.

***James 2:8***

***<sup>8</sup>If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.***

What is at the essence of this of not showing partiality, what is at the core is "Love"! Scripture tells us in ***1 John 4:8, "Anyone who does not love does not love God, because God is love."***

What we see in verse 8 that there is a "Royal Law", a "Divine Law", showing us that it is binding and it is something that should be expressed within the deepest recesses of our heart if we are truly a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is that law? You shall love your neighbor as yourself!

Where did that come from? Well, grab your Bibles again and turn to Leviticus Chapter 19 and verse 18. As you are turning this where God is giving the Levitical law to Moses, this Chapter is all about relationships, God is telling the nation of Israel that he is holy and because of his holiness that our relationships should express that.

***Leviticus 19:18***

***<sup>18</sup>You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.***

You can turn back to James. This love that is being talked about here is not some ooey, gooey emotional type of building up someone's self-esteem. This love we are to show is based off of where our love should be primarily focused. In Deuteronomy Chapter 6 as the commandments are being delivered to the people there is one at the top. Jews call it the "Shema" and it goes like this.

***Deuteronomy 6:4-5***

***<sup>4</sup>Hear of Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.***

Jesus tied those two commandments together, but also put them in priority. In Matthew 22, Jesus is being challenged by the Pharisees again. They send a lawyer to test Jesus and what question did the lawyer ask Jesus.

**Matthew 22:36**

***36 Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?***

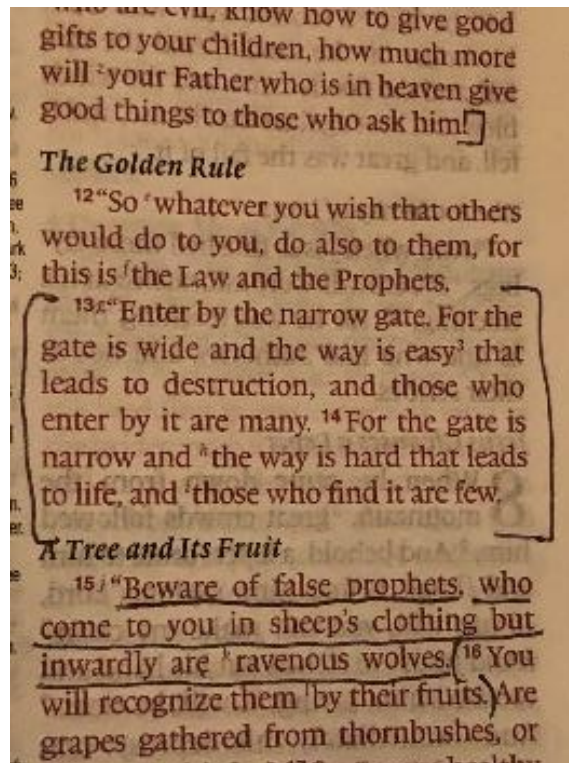
How did Jesus answer him?

**Matthew 22:37-40**

***37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."***

Where did Jesus quote those from? Deuteronomy 6 and Leviticus 19. But it shows us that if we will, Love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, then we will love people! That is our priority as follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means we are being obedient to the Lord and that should be a desire of our heart anyway. Love!

Now, I want to make a point here. How many of you have heard the term "The Golden Rule" spoken of? Where do we find that description? I took a picture of that verse in my Bible. May I first say the term "Golden Rule" is not in Scripture. This heading was put there by man to show the importance of what is being described here.



It is from Matthew Chapter 7 verse 12. The words are in red, so who is speaking here? Where is Jesus? What is he doing Bible scholars? This is the towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount. What does that verse say?

**Matthew 7:12**

***12 So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.***

Where have we just heard that same terminology, “The Law and the Prophets?” From Jesus telling us what the two greatest commandments are from Matthew 22. So, once again, what we see in Matthew 7:12 is that great commandment of loving God and loving people that ties our relationships together. This shows us the great sin of partiality because we are to show love and if we are showing partiality, we are not showing love. If we are showing partiality, then someone is being cast to the side.

Question! Does Jesus condone sin? Does Jesus look over sin? No!

I present that because through some of my witnessing opportunities the person has told me well, “I live by the Golden Rule!” What are they saying? They use this to condone their own sin because they don’t want to point out their own sin and they don’t want to point out the sin in other’s lives and therefore do not see their need to be saved and the need to repent of their sins. They consider love is to accept everything as truth and as long as your kind and accepting all is alright.

What is at the forefront of the Royal Law? Loving God with all your heart, mind and soul! Jesus said in Luke 19 verse 10. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save which is lost! (**Matthew 28**) I have said before and I will say it again. The greatest love we can show anybody is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ someone so that they may have the opportunity to be saved. You know, from Sunday? The Gospel Truth!

Now look at verse 8 again.

**James 2:8**

***<sup>8</sup>If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.***

At the end of the verse we see that there are some people doing what is commanded. James says, you are doing well. So, I would call that a commendation. Way to go! Remember, this is a circular letter and it is going to many Churches in the areas around Jerusalem, up to Antioch, into Asia Minor and even on to the island of Cyprus because this where the people are being dispersed because of the persecution.

Evidently, the sin of showing partiality was a huge deal in these Churches. Because after the commendation we now see this scathing rebuke for this sin. Look at verse 9.

**James 2:9**

***<sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.***

Come on James! Lighten up a bit! Everyone shows some partiality! But we see the severity here of showing partiality. Now, we see two words. Sin and Transgressor. Of course, we know we are all sinners? Right? For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God! Transgressor takes this to another level! This makes us a lawbreaker, we are guilty and by showing partiality we are violating God’s law at the core.

We have seen early in this Chapter that if we put the rich man above the poor man. That goes beyond just the monetary. Because it speaks to the poor man wearing shabby clothing. We can show partiality in looking at someone in how they dress. Whether we think they are good looking or not! Because we are more concerned about appearance than we are about what is in a person’s heart.

In showing partiality it can create an animosity and almost a detesting of the person you are thinking less of. I have even seen it come up this way within an organization and even churches. Let’s use a business for example. There are two departments.

They work close together, but you have two people responsible for both of those departments. Maybe one leader may even think that the departments should be together and that leader seeks power, control. So, he or she begins to belittle the leader and the other people of the department. See, this now permeates throughout his or her department and now you've got one department looking down their noses at the other department. It creates an animosity, a prejudice towards those other people. **I saw it at Lowe's and I have seen it in Churches.**

Why is this so serious? It's like if I take this baseball and there is a big glass door in front of me and I take this ball and take this back and throw it as hard as I can and SHATTER that glass! Showing partiality shatters the very core of the Royal Law that begins with Loving God with all our heart, mind and soul! Because what is at the core? Love! In that love we are bringing people to Jesus!

**Look at verse 10 and 11 follow how James brings this together.**

***James 2:10-11***

***<sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup> 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 many sins does it take to be called a sinner? One! How many sins does it take to be considered a transgressor? One! How many sins does it take for you to condemn yourself to hell? One! This totally destroys the works-based false religions of your good outweighing your bad. It's like stacking up a bunch of quarters. You put one down in this stack if you did something good and you put one down in this stack if you did something bad. But, how do you know what is good and what is bad? What is sin and what is not sin?

But that is not how it works! Repent! Repent! Repent!

Again, you may say that is harsh. Here's the thing! As a sinner, in our lost state we don't just commit one sin, we commit many sins and if we do not repent of our sin and come to Jesus by Faith in his life, death, burial and resurrection we will continue to harden our hearts.

James uses two sins in verse 11. Adultery and Murder. What we see here would be classified as two of the most heinous sins. Now, sin is sin. We just learned that. Here is what I see.

1. In the Old Testament what was the punishment for committing adultery and murder? Death! Leviticus 20 and Leviticus 24. Now as for adultery that was under the Levitical law for the Jewish nation and within the New Covenant that is no longer a punishment we follow for the sin of adultery.

Remember who this letter is primarily going to! Jews who have repented of their sins and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, they would understand this comparison very well. This shows them again the severity of the sin of partiality. But, I will throw out another idea! Actually a couple of ideas.

2. **Life** - When God created Adam, "What did he breathe into Adam?" Genesis 2 verse 7. He breathed in the breath of life and he became a living creature. Life is precious to God because he created us in his image with a soul and he desires that intimate relationship with him that was severed by sin in the Garden. That is why abortion is such an atrocity. It destroys what God created.
3. **Marriage** - How does God describe the relationship between his son Jesus Christ and the Church? A Marriage.

Look at these verses:



**Revelation 19:7-8**

***<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.***

**Ephesians 5:25-27**

***<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.***

Adultery, well any sexual act outside the bonds of marriage between a man and woman is an affront to the very design and law of God. Also, to the fact of describing our relationship with his Son Jesus Christ who gave up his very life on the Cross. Murder – the taking of innocent life. These two revealing to us how serious showing partiality is.

James ends up in verses 12 and 13 with a challenge and another warning. Look at those verses.

**James 2:12-13**

***<sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***

What's the challenge? Speak, act in a way that you realize that sin will be judged! You understand for the true follower of Christ there is still a judgment. You will not be judged for your sin if you have truly repented and accepted Jesus as Lord. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago how every careless word out of our mouth will be judged.

**Colossians 3:17** says, ***“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”***

How is it all going to be judged? Verse 12 says under the “Law of Liberty!” What is the Law of Liberty? Right here (holding up the bible). It's God's Word. Why would God's law be related to liberty? Because the Law shows us our sin! The Law condemns us! The Law shows us we are guilty! But, obedience to God's Word brings liberty! Obedience to God's Word brings salvation!

You understand there is no Grace in the Law. Grace can not be bestowed upon you except through repentance. Grace is not a condoning of sin, but Grace is a covering of our sin through repentance and Grace is related to the power given to us to deny ungodliness in our lives and live holy before a holy God.

And there are consequences to sin and now we see the warning in verse 13.

**James 2:13**

***<sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.***

God's judgment is final over sin. His judgment will be based off of his character of being just and holy and the fact he has given us the opportunity of salvation in Jesus Christ. Judgment without mercy is eternal in Hell. In our lost stated we are apt not to show mercy. We are more apt to show partiality. Why is this so serious? Because showing partiality creates an animosity, a prejudice, a hatred towards people, it creates a division and remember what it does.

*It shatters the core of the Royal Law in loving with the truth of the Gospel.*

The Gospel transforms a heart to be more like God. The Gospel transforms one to love when you don't feel like loving! The Gospel transforms to show mercy when you don't feel like showing mercy. Mercy, Love triumphs! Even if the other person does not receive it.