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James 2

That's My Favorite

Good morning, last week we launched into our summer book series from the book of James. Pastor Brain Flewelling got us started by highlighting a few interesting facts about James.

- Leader over the Jerusalem church
- His letter was meant to be circulated
- His writing is rich in thoughts from the sermon on the mt. and has a Proverbs like feature to it.
- He is really direct
- He's the young brother of Jesus

Today we are going to work through chapter two of James. I invite you to open up your bibles and follow along.

James chapter two really covers two main themes.

Favoritism and Faith (on back middle screen)

Favoritism - mainly classism and Faith - mainly a dead or inactive faith.

James has already done a good bit of foreshadowing in chapter one.

James 1:9-11 he takes a jab at the injustice of classism, saying basically, that even the rich are going to dry up and wither away. That certainly got their attention.

James 1:22 and 25

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

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

Favoritism (back middle screen)

The Greek is much stronger...

- My brothers, Show No
- Stop showing
- Don't have the kind of faith that shows
- Don't try to maintain that you can have faith in Jesus and at the same time exhibit prejudice, partiality or favoritism. You can't, they are incomputable.

This had to be a major issue in the churches because James just comes out of the gate swinging. He immediately gives an example of classism and tells them to stop it.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting 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?

Me and You, Us and Them, We and They

Classism, ageism, sexism, racism

James is saying don't you see how wrong it is when you use external criteria to determine an internal value

Favoritism: the practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another.

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.

Look what he does. "Hasn't God chosen the poor . . . 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?

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.

You can't just love one of your neighbors or love the people who are easy to love.

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.

This is obviously a direct reference to Matthew 7:1-2

Matthew 7:1-2

⁷ “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Lets talk about racism and the life of a follower of Jesus Christ

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have to follow him through Samaria (John 4)

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have to follow him through the book of Acts (Acts 10)

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have to follow him to the upper room (John 17:20)

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have to follow him to heaven (Rev. 7)

(Oneness Embraced by Pastor Tony Evans show graphic)

If you are racist here today you need to repent, if you show favoritism

- ^{2.} ¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?**

Faith (back middle screen)

15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Duet. 6 There is one God, 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one

Your head knowledge faith is not enough, going to church and feeling good or feeling bad is not enough - walk it out, live it out. Real belief produces action. Belief without action is false belief. It's a dead faith. It's what the demons have. They know all about him but they neither serve him nor love him.

Vs 20 is James big finish. He opens with an insult! And masterfully ties both of his two points together.

Abraham (back middle screen)

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

In Genesis 22:12 the angel of the Lord says, “For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

Rahab (back middle screen)

25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

3. ²⁶ **As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.**

So, James wraps up this chapter by giving us two extreme examples that tie both of his points together. It's as if God is saying the patriarch and the prostitute who expressed their faith in action. God says,

That's My Favorite (back middle screen)

