

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

Fuel Your Faith 11

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What is so serious about the matter of favoritism? What is the royal law? Do I live with the consciousness that one day I will be judged by it? And, what does all of this have to do with mercy?

Today on Fuel Your Faith, we'll examine a passage from the book of James that will challenge us on many levels. We should be characterized as a people of mercy who reflect the character of our God to all people: believers/nonbelievers; rich/poor; high class/low class; educated/uneducated.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. This passage, [James 1.22](#), is a dominant theme in the book of James. If we are going to profess faith in Christ then we must demonstrate that in godly words and deeds. Here are just a few verses leading up to the ones we want to focus today in [James 2.12-13](#).

- [James 1.25](#): we must not be forgetful hearers, but doers that work. These will be blessed in what they do.
- [James 1.26](#): the one who does not control his tongue has a useless religion.
- [James 1.27](#): pure and undefiled religion is to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.
- [James 2.1-8](#): the one who shows favoritism is not fulfilling the royal law that says, "love your neighbor as yourself."
- [James 2.9](#): in fact, the one who shows favoritism is guilty of sin.

The royal law mentioned in [James 2.8](#) is the sum and substance of the Word of God which is summarized by Jesus in [Matthew 22.37-39](#) where Jesus speaks of the two greatest commandments: loving God with your whole being and loving your neighbor as yourself. It was Paul who said, *the one who loves another has fulfilled the law*, [Romans 13.8-9](#). The greater devotion a person has for God, the more conscious he or she will be to not break any of God's commands. The greater love a person has for his or her neighbor, the more dedicated they will be to never harming them. Loving others in this way reflects God's nature and character.

So now the admonition in [James 2.12](#): *speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom*. Here again is the overriding principle seen in this part of James' epistle: Don't just profess Christian beliefs ... live and act as a true believer, saved by grace, who will stand before God and be judged by the law of freedom. "Speak" and "Act" are present imperatives. We must "keep on speaking," and "keep on acting" in the reality of the coming judgment. One day we will give an account for our deeds.

Now, 2.13. "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has not shown mercy." Being merciful, is not merely a feeling of concern, but involves actively reaching out to show love to others. The one who has shown no mercy is a person characterized by partiality, hardness,

selfishness, and a lack of concern for others. They are far from loving others as they love themselves, reflecting nothing in God's love and care for those in need. Favoritism is evidence of an unmerciful spirit. Those who are merciful will not ignore those who are poor or look different from us. Partiality is inconsistent with loving your neighbor as yourself. The warning here is those who show no mercy will receive no mercy.

But our thoughts will not end today on a negative as James wraps up 2.13 by saying: "mercy triumphs over judgment." If we allow God to transform our hearts and demonstrate our love for others through being merciful to those in need, we can actually look forward to judgment! Remember it was Jesus who said, *blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*, [Matthew 5.7](#). A heart full of mercy through faith in the mercy of God, triumphs over judgment.

It is so easy to fool ourselves and each other by all sorts of religious words, rhetoric, rules, and procedures. We can think we've arrived by simply learning a few bible verses and dressing up for church. We can share with others about the church and our salvation, but all of that does not always indicate our faith is real. James' teaching here reminds us that genuine faith is not only indicated by what we don't do, but more about how we treat other people.

So today, will I choose to be merciful? Will I show mercy to the clerk at the store who might be having a bad day? Will I show mercy to my son or daughter as they are learning about life? Will I show mercy to those I disagree with on social media? And finally, will I show mercy to the poor, downtrodden, and outcast?

Remember, *mercy triumphs over judgment*.

Thank you for listening to Fuel Your Faith. Join us again tomorrow as we talk more about how true love always shows mercy.