

Together we love others.

James 2:8–13 (ESV) *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. 11 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. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

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

- The Royal Law was not just the law God gave, but the law God kept.

Vs 9 *But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors*

- God's extension of salvation to the gentiles is a prime example of His character and how He shows no partiality.

Vs 10 *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*

Vs 11 *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*

- Every sin is a felony against God, that without Jesus, makes you an eternal criminal.

Vs 12 *So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.*

Romans 6:6 (ESV) *We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.*

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Believers Will Be Judged. “*We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God . . . Each of us shall give account of himself to God*” (**Rom. 14:10, 12**). “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in*

the body whether good or bad" (**2 Cor. 5:10**). In addition, the picture of the final judgment in Matthew 25:31–46 includes Christ separating the sheep from the goats, and rewarding those who receive his blessing.

This judgment of believers will be a judgment to evaluate and bestow various degrees of reward, but the fact that they will face such a judgment should never cause believers to fear that they will be eternally condemned. Jesus says, "*He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life*" (**John 5:24**). Here "judgment" must be understood in the sense of eternal condemnation and death, since it is contrasted with passing from death into life. At the day of final judgment more than at any other time, it is of utmost importance that "*there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1). Thus the day of judgment can be portrayed as one in which believers are rewarded and unbelievers are punished:

For some, this is the closest to hell you will ever be; for others this is the closest to heaven you will ever be.

Scripture also teaches that there will be degrees of reward for believers. Paul encourages the Corinthians to be careful how they build the church on the foundation that has already been laid—Jesus Christ himself.

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (**1 Cor. 3:12–15**)

But we must guard against misunderstanding here: Even though there will be degrees of reward in heaven, the joy of each person will be full and complete for eternity

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

Luke 10:25–37 (ESV) 25 *And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."*

29 *But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

Who is my neighbor?

The question is not "who is my neighbor?" but "how can I be a loving neighbor?"

30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.

The Good Samaritan is an image of Jesus - He is the hero of this story. He came to be our neighbor. He came to us!

Two blind men sitting beside a road cried out to Jesus, "Lord have mercy on us," and the crowd tried to stop them - they cried even more, "Lord have mercy on us." Jesus said, "What do you want and they said, "Lord let our eyes be opened."

Matthew 20:34 *Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.*

When a woman lost her only son and they were carrying him to be buried...

Luke 7:13 *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."*

When Jesus fed the thousands...

Matthew 15:32 *And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat;*

Matthew 14:14 *When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.*

...then, Jesus had compassion on you.

You are the one in the ditch half-dead.

In actuality, we are the robbed, the beaten down, wasting away on the side of the road beaten and taken advantage of by a cruel, fallen world, but the Good One, had compassion on us and cleaned us up.

He stopped and allowed the full effect of another human's pain and suffering move him to compassion. Some of you are running at such a fast pace that you have no time for compassion. It's just another very difficult thing to add to an already overwhelming schedule. But you feel guilty. You need to play your part - you need to be justified like the lawyer. "Just tell me who my neighbor is so that I don't go above and beyond loving too many people." In other words, "I don't want to waste my time on people who do not qualify. Tell me exactly who this is so I can discover what the minimum would be to love my neighbor."

Most likely it goes deeper than that though. Horrible and hard things happened to you but no one showed you compassion. You were left having to fend for yourself, protect yourself, find your own way out of the ditch. Your mom or dad wounded you. Mabey even left you - rejected you. You felt half-dead in your soul. You lost a parent too soon - a family member used and abused you - you were bullied, picked on, made to feel less than a human - maybe you were treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity. You were wounded deeply and you've kept your pain to yourself - half-dead. Perhaps you made inner vows that you will never let yourself be treated that way again and you become angry, bitter, and downright mean. Or you've isolated yourself, you keep people at arm's length because of your fear of deeper pain.

The truth is, that deep within you, you desire to have a loving person have compassion on you but you believe that is a fairy tale, unreal - now even a crazy thing that happens to others but never you. The problem is that the very compassion you don't realize you want and need is left out of your own life. You never had it; now you can't give it. But look at the better Samaritan. We see him being a neighbor to His people. He left the riches of glory to be our neighbor. He was a half-breed of sorts. Fully God yet now also added to Him was full humanity.

34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'

36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

What the law and religion could not do, Jesus did - go do likewise.

In this story, we need to see ourselves in the ditch before we see ourselves as the Samaritan. Until we see ourselves helpless in the ditch, we won't truly have compassion on others - instead we will be like the lawyer wanting to get by with little as possible to justify himself.

Vs 13 - mercy triumphs over judgment

If we have not received compassion and mercy by the better neighbor, we will not give compassion and mercy. You cannot give what you do not have. If we haven't received his mercy, the only thing we have is what we experienced by pulling ourselves out of the ditch and if others can't do what you have done, then you judge them. If we look at others and say, "pull yourself out of the ditch like I did; You have an "equal opportunity," That's judgment without mercy and all you're saying is "you don't need God - there is a way to self-justify. James is saying - your judgement without mercy is robbing God of His glorious grace and power that translates to mercy for lost and half-dead people in the ditch. Mercy is better than judgment. Jesus, the better neighbor, has shown you mercy. Now, maybe for the first time ever...go show

mercy. Receive compassion from the Good neighbor to heal your wounds and go do likewise - let mercy triumph over judgment.