

"I Don't Want This"

Randy Pacarro

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. James 2:17

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. Titus 3:8

-The problem with favoritism, partiality, prejudice and discrimination is that we are living inconsistently with God's nature and our faith. Cognitive dissonance – our beliefs and actions don't match.

My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? James 2:1-4

-Favoritism or showing partiality is a sin.

Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. James 2:8-9

-Only God is all-knowing, ever-present, and fully capable of rendering just judgment.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. Prov. 15:3

-So why judge others? Don't! Extend mercy and grace.

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. Matthew 7:1-3

But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. James 2:13b

So how can we live in alignment with God and get rid of our judgment and favoritism?

Recognize: We all have shown favoritism or prejudice towards others. Our motivation was wrong.

Repent: We place our thoughts and beliefs under God's will. 2 Corinthians 10:3.

Release: We release any judgment and unforgiveness needed for that person or situation.

Receive: We receive God's grace, love, and mercy through Jesus Christ. We receive the Holy Spirit's power to live according to God's calling.

Let's Talk About It

In this week's message, Pastor Randy taught us that true faith must be lived out through actions, as genuine belief is reflected in good works and a life that mirrors God's character. He also warned us against favoritism and judgment, explaining that these attitudes create an inconsistency between belief and behavior, and go against God's command to love others equally. To live in alignment with God, we must recognize our faults, repent, release judgment, and receive God's grace and power to practice mercy and love.

James 2:1-13; Titus 3:8; Matthew 7:1-3; Romans 7:14-25

Discussion questions:

1. Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
2. Can you relate to Paul's struggle of your actions not matching your beliefs, causing stress, guilt, or anxiety? Read Romans 7:14-25. Which do you find easier to adjust, your beliefs or actions, to find balance?
4. Can you recognize any biases or prejudices you still have today? (For example: about where people are from, gender, nationality, income level, or politics?)
5. When have you experienced favoritism or bias, either positive or negative? What happened, how did it make you feel, and how did you respond?
6. How hard is it for you to show mercy instead of judging someone?

Take a Step

This week, let's try to practice treating people with equal respect, especially in situations where you might normally show bias or make quick judgments. When you notice those thoughts, pause, check them against your faith, and choose a response rooted in mercy and love instead. This will feel difficult, but if you keep doing it, it'll bring your beliefs and actions into closer alignment.

Here's My Prayer

Lord, thank You for showing no favoritism and for loving all Your children equally. Help us recognize our own biases and prejudices so we can extend that same mercy to others. Shape our lives to reflect Your heart and be a clear example of who You are. In Jesus' name, Amen.