

## Favoritism? James 2:1-13 “Faith Works”

Today we are going to talk about Favorites.

A) We all have Favorites right – Favorite food.

B) Growing up Birthdays – mom – ask What do you want for you birthday

C) **Favorite Desserts:** Me – which restaurant - Chili’s BJ’s amazing – **Skillet Chocolate Chip Cookie**

1) **Black Angus – Sky High Mud Pie**

D) Cheese Cake Factory – **CHEESECAKE**

E) Milk Shake **Peppertree Pie** – Chocolate Chip with little Peanut Butter

1) Always a line but worth the wait – Show up today 50 people from Calvary Vista

F) Dilly Bars from Costco – Hey Pastor Rob

**Favorite food – Favorite Desserts – Favorite Colors – Favorite teams**

A) Charger fans – 5 10am games – get a DVR – learn how to work it - Come to first service –

B) Favorite Music – Favorite time of the year – WE ALL HAVE FAVORITES

**C) But Favorites can cause Problems:**

Favorite student – teachers pet

1) Animosity in the class room.

**Favorite Child:** Parents with more than one kid – **Convince them they are all loved the same.**

A) **If you play Favorites with your kids – problems** – animosity and Jealousy can develop – even hatred.

B) **Example in the Bible – Jacob** – Joseph was his Favorite – Special coat

1) Brothers got Jealous – started to hate Joseph and sold him into Slavery

C) And told their dad he had been killed!

The World play Favorites – Job interview – often it is who you know, or what nationality – or what Gender

A) People have the tendency to Judge you on your appearance, **what you look like – or the kind of car you drive – home you live in.**

B) The Danger is this can also happen in the Church!

In his autobiography, Gandhi wrote that during his student days he read the Gospels seriously and considered converting to Christianity.

He believed that **in the teachings of Jesus** he could find the solution to the caste system that was dividing the people of India.

**So one Sunday he decided to attend services at a nearby Christian church and talk to the minister about becoming a Christian.**

When he entered the sanctuary, however, the usher refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go worship with his own people.

Gandhi left the church and never returned. Here is what he said: **“If Christians have caste differences also I might as well remain a Hindu.”**

**C) That tragic story illustrates the sin that James writes against in our text.**

1) His focus is on the sin of showing favoritism

**The Principle V.1**

**V.1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.**

A) Notice first of all the description that James gives here of his older half-brother - **Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory**

B) There are only two references to Jesus Christ by name in this entire epistle – **see also 1:1**

C) That is **an amazing description** when you consider the fact that James didn’t even become a believer until after the Resurrection !

D) But after the Resurrection James becomes a pillar and leader in the Church

Here he gives this wonderful Description of Christ – Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory

A)The description serves as a fitting contrast to the topic James is discussing in this section

B) The **Lord of Glory** describes all that is honorable all that is right all that is majestic / special about God

C)Now **Jesus the Lord of Glory and partiality or prejudice, discrimination – don't go together!**

D)Can't hold on to Christ w/ one hand and partiality with another

**Football linemen and Ballet Pic**– Doesn't fit – no one is paying for that!

A)**Sardines and Hot fudge Sundays** – No pics because no one would do that!

B)**Eggs on Pizza Pic** – JUST WRONG – ITALIANS INVENTED PIZZA

C)**Jesus the Lord of Glory and Partiality and Prejudice really have no place together!**

Break down this section in this way: 4 main points

V. 2-4 The Problem is illustrated

V. 5-7 See people the way that God does.

V. 8-11 See the Problem the way that God does

V. 12-13 See the Possibilities the way that God does

**#1 The Problem is illustrated V.2-4**

2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

The scene is of a congregation gathering for worship when two different men walk into the service.

A)**Rich guy and a Poor guy** – RG – Fine Clothes { Armani Robes – looking sharp

B) **PG = Filthy clothes** { old dirty unattractive – smelly because they are the only clothes he has

C)RG = Gold rings – Bling bling on !

D)RG gets to sit – shown a Seat / PG gets to stand - shown the floor

E)RG is given Preferential treatment –

1)**PG is treated like he doesn't even exist.**

Notice in v.4 James says by doing that they show themselves to be Judges with evil motives

A)Part of the problem with this type of behavior is we basically separate people **into two groups:**

**The cans and the cannots**

B)Here is what I mean – in that situation those Church leaders look at the rich guy **As a CAN**

C)He **CAN** bring influence – He **CAN** Give – He **CAN** bring other leaders and his other rich friends

1)So we are interested in him –

D) He is a CAN - A mover and a Shaker –

1)THAT IS EVIL –

What is equally EVIL is to look at another individual – label him a **CANNOT**

A)No resources / no influence / no perceived leadership skills – **SO - they get labeled a cannot**

B)They get ignored because they cannot bring anything to the table –

1)Such discrimination is Evil -

C)**Does this happen today?**

**A PASTOR I know told the story of a couple he knew that went to his church**

A)But then the mans job took him to another city.

B)This couple was wealthy – and both very good looking.

C))They landed in this other city and decided to try out the big mega church in town. –

1)Church was Huge and had a big TV ministry.

**They were walking into the building – warmly greeted and ushered right up to the front row.**

A) Happened every week – front row – Then they found out why. –

B) **Because of the TV ministry** – the Ushers were trained to seat only good looking people in the front couple of rows

C) So when the camera man panned to the crowd – see only good looking people in the audience.

D) That is what James means **by evil thoughts** – or **Evil motives** – not right –

1) Preferential treatment to the CANS – those who CAN advance our cause.

E) Others get labeled as the CANNOTS = EVIL

#### **Jesus Knew all about Discrimination:**

A) He was the kid who was accused of being illegitimate

B) He was considered to be from the wrong side of the tracks – Nazareth

1) Anything good come from that place? **James also**

C) Jesus was thought to be uneducated – because he didn't study in "their schools"

#### **He knew all about Discrimination - but he didn't discriminate at all**

A) He reached out to Jews and Gentiles alike  
Rich and poor

B) Men and Women – Young and old

C) The religious and the rebellious – heart for all of them.

#### **Jesus was not a respecter of persons.**

A) Even His enemies admitted, "You aren't swayed by men, because You pay no attention to who they are" (Matt. 22:16, NIV).

B) He was not impressed with riches or social status.

C) The poor widow who gave her mite was greater in His eyes **than the rich Pharisee who boastfully gave his large donation.**

D) What Jesus is interested **in IS THE HEART!**

**That leads us to consider #2 We need To See people the way that God does. V 5-7**

**5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?**

**Now the first thing we need to make clear here is that in v.5-6a James is not saying that all poor people are saved**

**A) Nor is he saying that all rich people are lost !**

B) What he is saying is things are not always what they appear to be.

C) When describing the poor he is describing those **that they are rich in faith**

**D) WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE Poor who are ACTUALLY Rich**

**1) RICH IN FAITH**

**It is true that those who are often disadvantaged in the eyes of the world – can have a tremendous spiritual advantage**

A) AND Sometimes those who have great physical advantages {**RICH**} can be spiritually disadvantaged

B) Example: Which person is going to be more inclined to pray fervently for a miracle when there is a health issue in their family

C) The poor person who doesn't have medical insurance, who can't afford to go to the doctor?

1) Or the Rich guy who has insurance or even could just write a Check to cover any medical expenses?

**D) Those who have less – often are those – who have more in the way of faith**

1) James refers to them **V.5 as the Heirs of the Kingdom** – they just seem to know – all that Jesus has for them

**They can be some of the most exciting Christians to be around – because their God is so big – CHILD LIKE FAITH – Pray for anything.**

A) They truly believe that God can do anything –

B) There is nothing that is outside the realm of their prayer LIFE

1) Nothing is **too small** to pray for – nothing is **too big** to pray for -

C) They experience miracles often – big & small –

**GEORGE MUELLER STORY** – Thank you for the food we are about to receive!

D) Who does that? Who prays that way? – Someone who has had to learn to depend on God for everything!

**So James is wanting them to remember that the Poor person is often rich in Faith**

A) And the Rich person they are catering to and trying to impress – **CAN BE A ROYAL PAIN!**

B) **ALL** this effort and energy trying to impress them and win them -

1) that can back fire on you too because they are the ones who have the means to drag you into court

C) They are the ones who blaspheme the name...God!

D) Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom –

1) Often times they are the ones who think – they have it so together – **they don't need God**

**They are the ones who are used to having people treat them like their special – it is hard for them to realize – THEY ARE SINNERS**

A) James' point – treat them the same!

B) Not saved – Rich or Poor – Sinners in need of a Savior – two people destined for Hell

C) But two people that Jesus loves and died for!

**Listen It is possible to be poor in this world and rich in the next,**

A) But it is also possible **to be rich in this world** and poor in the next because you can't take it with you!

B) But it is possible to be rich in this world and rich in the next.

1) **All depends if Know Jesus – how you use what's given to you.**

**So We need to see people the way that God does**

**Remember what God spoke to Samuel – Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks at the heart! 1 Samuel 16:7**

Now the 3<sup>rd</sup> thing: **See the Problem the way that God does: V.8-11**

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

**In V.6 We see the first Problem that God has with this – When we show favoritism or partiality or prejudice – it dishonors a person – brother**

A) Dishonor a person who has been made in the image of God.

B) The 2<sup>nd</sup> problem is we dishonor God by breaking his royal law - "You shall love your neighbor as yourself,"

C) Recall in **Matthew 22:36** Jesus was asked the question

**36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"**

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

C) This was sometimes referred to as the great commandment – here – **the Royal law**

1) **Royal because it is given by the King of kings** – and it is the King of all the laws

D) **Royal law because it rules all the other laws** –

1) **Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor** – fulfills all the other laws

E) **The Royal law of liberty because** – loving like Jesus sets us free to be who and what God has called us to be

F) **Hatred and bitterness makes a person a slave, but love sets us free from selfishness and allows us to REFLECT OUR KING!**

Luke 10 We read of another time when a Lawyer asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life – Jesus responded by asking him – what are the commandments

A) The Lawyer quoted these two – **Love God with .... And Love your neighbor as yourself**

B) Jesus replied you have answered well do this & live –

1) But then the Lawyer asked – **well who is my neighbor?**

C) Which led Jesus to tell the story of the good Samaritan – **two religious guys too busy - samaritan**

After hearing the story we realize that the Lawyer was **asking the wrong question**

A) The Question is not **who is my neighbor, but who can I be a neighbor to?**

B) The Answer is anyone who has a need. Anyone that God puts in my path

C) Point is from God's point of view when we show partiality we are not being a neighbor at all

D) Partiality, Favoritism – Not just an issue of poor etiquette or bad manners – It is a Sin!

1) Dishonors people – made in the image of God

2) Dishonors God – who cares for all People

What is really wild is the sins that James compares favoritism to – **Adultery and Murder.**

A) Now does he compare it to these two for shock value – show that God considers this a big deal ?

B) Possible – but I believe the reason the Holy Spirit inspires James to compare it to these two sins is deeper.

C): **Adultery is the ultimate betrayal** – ultimate break of trust

1) When we show partiality against someone that God loves –

D) Someone Christ died for – God chose – we are betraying God

1) In the same way that a person who says I love you and then commits adultery – betrays that love

E) So Adultery is the ultimate betrayal

**Murder: Is the ultimate disregard for others!**

A) What we are doing when we show partiality is we are taking **a life that God deems as valuable and saying it isn't valuable at all.**

B) This person matters – but this person doesn't

C) I wonder how many others like Ghandi have had their **potential faith murdered – by discrimination**

1) Who will never come to Church – because they or someone they know were slighted

Now The Problem that James deals with is **Rich and Poor**

A) But what are some of the other ways we can be guilty of showing partiality?

B) This is going to hurt a little bit - **DOCTOR – NEEDLE – this is going to hurt**

1) **Fair Warning – Love you guys**

C) Not guilty of the rich poor thing

**But other ways – Partiality?**

A) Because they are unattractive/

B) They are old – we are young – vice versa

1) Not cool

C) Over weight

1) Race

**D) Divorced**

1) Single

Whenever we do that in any form – it **Breaks God's heart – It can destroy a life – and it is sin**

A) **NO PLACE IN GOD'S HOUSE**

B) That is how we need to see the Problem the way that God does.



## C) **LOVED BY GOD – JESUS DIED FOR**

#4 We need to See the possibilities the way that God does! RD V.12-13

12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Now remember that one of the major themes in the book of James is that **true faith shows itself in actions**

A) Illustrating that again here – **Those who have been touched by the Love of God will be those who love –**

B) **Those who know they have been shown mercy will be those who show mercy!**

1) It is the natural response of those who understand how deeply they have been forgiven.

Remember when Jesus told the story about the man who owed the king a great debt – **to illustrate we'll call it a debt of 200K**

A) **Begs and pleaded** – the King showed him mercy and forgave his debt

B) But then that same man goes out and finds another man who owed him **a lesser debt – let's call it \$2,000**

1) The man who was just forgiven his huge debt demands that this guy pay him

C) The man pleads for mercy/ asks for more time

1) No way – he has him thrown in prison

**D) When the king hears about it he is furious –**

1) This man was ungrateful about the mercy the king had shown him

**That is the point – if we don't realize the mercy we have been shown – IF not grateful for it**

A) We are going to be less likely to show mercy to others!

B) We are going to be more demanding/ less gracious.

C) I think one of the biggest potential problems in the Church today is: **We who have been saved for a while can forget what it is like to be lost**

Point is When you truly realize that you have been shown such incredible mercy and grace by God

A) **THERE IS NO ROOM FOR PARTIALITY**

B) **The Possibilities are: We are all recipients of God's mercy –**

C) **Regardless of Status/ race/ age/ gender – whatever**

1) The mercy of God is available to all

D) He who has been forgiven much – loves much

**Listen - here today and don't know Christ:**

A) Great news for you – God doesn't show partiality

**B) God doesn't pick his team the way – the world does –**

1) Best athletes first – waiting and waiting

C) **GOD DOESN'T DO THAT!**

“Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. <sup>27</sup> Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. <sup>28</sup> God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. <sup>29</sup> As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

**If you turn to Him – He will not give you the cold shoulder – not play hard to get**

A) He is not be standoffish or aloof

B) He will not be reserved – No He is ready to lavish upon you grace and mercy and love

1) Forgiveness

2) Freedom from Guilt

C) **He wants to bless you – Beyond belief – Just turn to Him today!**

1) Admit you are a sinner – you need mercy – He will meet you today