

**JAMES 2:1-13**

No Parity  
Week 10

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/make-them-visible-homeless-video\\_n\\_5200574](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/make-them-visible-homeless-video_n_5200574)

**People Disguised As Homeless Ignored By Loved Ones On Street In Stunning Social Experiment**  
The gist of the experiment is that people walked by their own relatives or loved ones who were dressed as homeless people. Not a single participant recognized a mother, brother, or wife. It showed how invisible the homeless are on the street. We don't take a second look at them.

**1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?**

**5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose 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. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?**

**8 If, however, you are fulfilling 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 and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

In James 2 a judgement was made based on an external standard. James 2 speaks to this situation in the church of god. We tend to judge based on eternal terms, often worldly terms. This is part of the "world system" that I mentioned last week.

James 1:27 – keep yourself unstained by the world includes "don't make judgments based on worldly values."

God speaks to this in the OT – **1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**

That could be very comforting or very scary, right. No matter how we look on the outside, God knows our hearts.

**2:1-13 THE PROBLEM IS MORE SERIOUS THAN WE THINK:**

There is more at stake than poor judgement. We learn how to view and treat one another.

Why is this here?

**God's treatment of us is to be the exclusive standard of how we treat one another. Jeff Purswell**

We are to be pointers to the character of God. **The church is not just a meeting or a meeting place. We are a SIGNPOST to the kingdom of God. (Purswell)**

This text shows what a reflection of the grace of God should look like in community.

James identifies the problem of favoritism to explore a bigger issue.  
Respect of persons = an acceptor of the face "before the face of"

Partiality based on an external factor is utterly contradictory to the gospel of Faith in Jesus alone.  
Favoritism contradicts true faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.  
When we know Christ, then we know the TRUE GLORY, so the imitation glory of the world does not turn our heads or hearts.  
\*\* Jesus alone is glorious, and He alone deserves special treatment and favoritism.

We abandon the gospel when we make distinctions based on class and wealth; in doing so we plant our feet in the ways of the world.

### **God is no respecter of persons**

God IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS in terms of salvation or of executing justice.

**Deut 10 17**For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe

**Exodus 23:2**You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert *justice*; 3 nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute.

**Rom 2: 11**For there is no partiality with God.

**Col 3: 25**For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Jas 2:1

**God is no respecter of persons. If He were, who would be saved??**

Jesus is the GLORY OF God. We can't stand in front of the glory and then turn and look down on someone else.

Compared to Jesus, the rings of the gold fingered mean nothing. If you've seen and know the real glory, you won't be impressed with the glory of this world. You'll be happy to identify with those who have no glory in this world - the poor, from the wrong side of the cultural tracks, the wrong degree. In respecting the person and showing favoritism one is trying to appropriate or take for oneself the "glory" of the other.

Favoring the rich, trying to bask in his glory is a way of saying, "the glory I have in Christ isn't enough, I need more, something that shows before men here and now."

That is evil thinking- 2:4; You become a judge with evil motives

v.2 ff James gives an illustration of favoritism.

Rank and Money- well connected and loaded with "bling" - sit up front

Poor in shabby clothing - sit at my feet

They are assessed and treated according to appearance.

You have made distinctions and have done what God DOESN'T do.

Evil motives (reasoning) - Why are they evil?

“thoughts” = dialogisomai – dialogue – inner dialogue.

IT IS NOT an impulsive act, but one that is thought out.

Such motives objectify people for our own benefit- to gain the favor of those who can benefit us. **The rich man is being used because he is rich, and it shows dishonor (v. 6) to the poor man who is an image bearer of God.**

Consider ALL the potential categories for application:

“Would you look at that guy, that gal”

Money

Looks

Car / Truck

Clothes

Age

Job

Skin color

Waist size

Hair style

Tattoo, multiple tattoos, or no tattoo

Ethnicity

Accent or grammar skills

Education

Family pedigree

Neighborhood

Friend group

Personality type

Mental capacity

Social affability

Our minds process all that we take in from such externals and we quickly render a verdict: can this person benefit me or will this person be a drain on me?

This is a very convicting passage. It should cause us to ask, “Who do I choose to talk to after church or at work or at some event?” How long before I look at my watch and say, “Sorry, time to go.”?

This text DOES NOT say that we will be or must be equally close to everyone in the room. But it does tell us that we should NOT show favoritism with evil motives. The text pushes us to answer the question, “On what basis do you evaluate people and choose who you will interact with?”

**Jesus saves despite and apart from our external factors. He came to seek and save the lost from every nation, tongue, and tribe. If we want to follow Him, then we can't show favoritism based on what the eye sees.**

Jeff Purswell notes that James uses questions to expose why favoritism is so wrong: **Three reasons**

**It dishonors God's ways v. 5** our attitude is contrasted to God's attitude.

V. 5 Jesus was not a stranger to the poor and outcasts. They flocked to Him, while the elite leaders scoffed at Him. James' point is obvious and simple: if the Lord regards people as fundamentally the same and is indifferent to worldly and temporary distinctions between them, his people ought to as well.

God chooses those whom we would dishonor. He chooses the poor in the eyes of the world, i.e. those who lack what the world values as important. James is not teaching that all poor people are automatically saved. Nor does he praise the condition of being poor.

“The poor” biblically refers to more than financial issues; it also refers to the poor in spirit, i.e. those who know their need for God. They are blessed, says Jesus.

Rf: James 1:4-8?? Covered several weeks ago.

What the world values is exalted, but God changes the price tags. He delights to shower his grace upon the discarded, upon those dishonored by the world. James calls us to see others with God’s eyes.

**Favoritism reveals worldly values v 6** – the worldly rich oppress and blaspheme – the rich of the world by class, the elite.

His point is NOT that money is all bad.

He points out that those from whom we seek favor are the ones who often will oppress us. If you put anyone on a pedestal of glory you are giving him or her or her power over you.

**Christ is THE GLORY. He alone is worthy. When we keep Him in His rightful place, then we won’t seek glory from or over others.**

Showing favor shows our values.

They were showing favor to those who had something to give them.

**SIDE NOTE:** The church is made up of those across the economic spectrum. The audience, as refugees, had likely experienced this sort of treatment. The fact that James wrote this to them shows that they were also susceptible to the sin of favoritism.

v. 7 the rich, i.e. the world’s elite powerbrokers, blaspheme and scoff at your faith and values. They want your attention and adulation, but they’ll mock you for your outdated beliefs as you cling to your religion. They’ll expect and demand your devotion while they do what they can to undercut the free expression of your faith and values.

**SOUND FAMILIAR??** There is nothing new under the sun.

**\*\*** While the rich may struggle with oppressing the poor, this is not necessarily a statement about ALL who are rich. It is not a fixed law that the rich blaspheme and oppress.

**Favoritism reveals a heart that is aligned against God (at least for the moment)**

It denies our allegiance to Christ – James speaks of genuine obedience of faith in chap 1, now we see how genuine faith is visible in our lives. Judging on external factors shows that we are aligned with the world, not with Christ.

v. 8 is the standard – God’s Word

Royal Law = Kingdom law. Who is the king? Jesus

The royal law is the perfect law of ch 1 – It is the love command

**The Royal law is SOMEONE we meet before it is something we obey.**

Favoritism is in direct opposition to the ROYAL LAW that is given by God.

**v. 9 it is SIN. There’s a great big I IN THE middle of sin, and the I in the middle is me.** This sort of partiality is self-centered.

We may say, “it’s just one sin”. NO, v. 10ff – If you break one, you break them all.

God’s law is not a collection of stones; it is like a plate of glass – one coherent expression of God and His perfection.

MOTYER – a sheet of glass

V. 11 “HE WHO SAID” – the law reflects God, not a set of rules.  
Favoritism is a violation of love – the royal law, thus it is a denial of Christ.

Grace filled call to obedience v. 12 We obey in liberty, knowing that sin has been defeated and broken by Christ. Now we delight to serve him. God is at work both to will and work for His good pleasure. Obedience is liberating.

v. 13 “shown no mercy” – those who live for self, gain, and glory outside of Christ won’t embrace mercy.

This contains a Promise and a Warning

There is a just judgement coming, and all who cry out for justice will see what it looks like. Be careful what you hope for.

**Mercy triumphs over judgement** – That defines the cross. A place of just judgement and mercy at the same time.

If you don’t know Christ, then you NEED mercy. You don’t want to face the justice of God without having Christ as your representative.

For believers, mercy is meant to flow from our lives into our relationships.  
We know we fail, so we need a SAVIOR.

**COME TO THE TABLE-** This is where Justice and Mercy meet

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