

James 2:1–13

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

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?

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?

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.

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.

“No Partiality”
James 2:1-13

INTRO:

Why did the Lord include this passage in the Word of God? The Scriptures say, ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching”*** (2

Timothy 3:16). Surely there was another reason God included this other than to give us a glimpse into first century church life? We are going to try and find this reason today. Remember we left hearing James write, ***“Be doers of the word and not hearers only.” (James 1:22)***. Being doers of the word as well as hearers has a profound effect on our worship and service. We will discover today that it also changes how we deal with our fellow church goers and our attitude toward the Law.

I. Living out the Word of God Changes How We Deal with People (v. 1-7)

II. Living out the Word of God also Changes Our Relationship to the Law (v.8-13)

I. Living out the Word of God Changes How We Deal with People (v. 1-7)

James 2:1 ***“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.”***

A. Remember chapter divisions in the New Testament are not inspired. When James wrote his letter there was no break between **chapter 1** and **2**. James wrote about the difference between one who hears the word and does not do it, and the one who hears the word and makes it a part of his life. The first result of this was it changed our relationship with God Himself. We worship with our hearts and it changes our lives and our goal in ministry for God. Next, it changes how we deal with others in the church.

B. Partiality is showing favoritism to one person and not another. This is motivated by personal considerations. It was a common practice in the courts of James' day. However, this practice continues today. I know of one church that had two millionaires in the congregation who tried to buy conformity to their will by their money. This is exactly what James wrote about. If we doubt it James gives us an illustration.

James 2:2-7 ***“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, 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,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 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? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?”***

C. Here James is meddling again. The New Testament church largely met in house churches. I can readily identify with this situation. Here in a home two people show up for the first time. The only distinction between the two is their outward manifestation of wealth or lack of it. In James illustration these outward appearances are enough to stir up a change in treatment. There is no indication whether either

person knows the Lord or not. The point is, this is evil. The root of this evil is a lack of trust in the Lord.

D. **Verses 6-7** are a generalization. In the day James lived this was generally true.

II. Living out the Word of God Also Changes Our Relationship to the Law (v.8-13)

James 2:8–13 *“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 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.’ So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”*

A. James gave two different labels to the Word of God in these verses. They are key to our understanding how we as believers need to view the Old Testament Law.

1. The first is the phrase, ***“the royal law.”*** For the New Testament believer we need to recognize the commands of the law, which James partially generalized as, ***“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,”*** is a command from the Lord Jesus Himself, the king of all. Remember Jesus used this summary in

Matthew 22:37–39 *“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

So, we can’t say this order is so Old Testament. It is the marching orders from our commander-in-chief.

2. James wrote in **verse 12,**

“So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.”

We do not see the law as a law of bondage we have to fulfill to be saved. Rather is a law written on our hearts we want to obey to please the God who saved us.

B. The essence of the point is that one who does not love his neighbor as himself is not obeying God. We are guilty of the whole law. We cannot ignore God’s command and count on mercy. Mercy cannot be deserved or earned. This activity can indicate a lack of salvation from sin.

C. James is not done talking to us about doing the Word of God as well as hearing it. This principle will be expanded as James begins to deal with our faith being demonstrated by our works.

What Do We Learn From This?

1. How we treat other Christians in the church matters to the Lord. We must recognize that we deal with people the way we do, not because it pleases us, but because it pleases Him.

2. Our attitude toward the Word of God is dictated by our love for the God Who gave us His word. Do we approach the Bible as the Royal Word from the King of kings and Lord of Lords? Do we see it as the means by which we please the Lord Jesus Christ who saved us?

Hymn #363 *More Love to Thee*