

April 7, 2024 PM – Pastor Kevin Olivier

James 2:8-13 – “Judgment and Mercy”

A. Preaching all judgment can make a congregation want to give up. Preaching all about God’s mercy and love without with the Scriptural mandates for obedience is not the answer either.

B. It is vital that we continue to find reconciliation between the writings of Paul and James.

1. In Galatia, Christians were troubled by Judaizers. Paul in **Gal 3:24-25** wrote, **“the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”**
2. James wrote about the necessary evidence of true works as a litmus test of the genuine nature of one’s faith.

In Scripture, God reveals to you both His judgment and His mercy.	I. GOD’S JUDGMENT FOR SIN II. MERCY’S TRIUMPH IN CHRIST
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I. **GOD’S JUDGMENT FOR SIN** → **vv8-9**

A. James says Christians saved by the blood of Jesus are still called to be about the business of **“fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture.”**

1. You may ask, “Didn’t Jesus fulfill the law for us?”
 - a. Jesus told John the Baptist that it was necessary for Him to **“fulfill all righteousness” (Mat 3:15).**
 - b. For those with saving faith in Jesus, our justification is that God, through the perfect life and shed blood of Jesus, pardons all our sins. In Christ, God **“accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”**¹
 - c. Jesus perfectly obeyed and did away with the ceremonial law. He also perfectly kept the moral law in thought, word, and deed.
 - 1) Our failure to keep it is covered by the blood of Christ.
 - 2) His obedience is imputed, accounted, considered as ours by faith.
2. Since all this is true, why does James say Christians are to fulfill **“the royal law according to the Scripture?”**
 - a. The moral law, which abides forever, will always be the guide for how we ought to live.
 - b. Jesus said, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15).**
 - 1) None of will ever do this perfectly; however, this is to be our Christian endeavor.
 - 2) We are not saved by our efforts to keep the moral law, yet such endeavors are the fruit or evidence of a true and lively faith rather than a dead faith.

B. I am repeating **vv8-9** from last week’s sermon to prove the point that this is just one area of our life that can expose us as transgressors or sinners in God’s sight.

1. It isn’t only outward, physical, or visible sins that condemn us. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus mentioned many other sins are those of one’s mind and heart.
 - a. To hate one’s brother is to murder him in your heart.
 - b. To look upon another to desire after him or her is to commit adultery in your heart.
 - c. Keep the words of Jesus in mind as you read **Ja 2:11**. → Look there.
2. This proves that each of us sin daily in thought, word, and deed.

C. For the person who thinks they will be able to stand before God’s throne of judgment based upon their own ability to keep God’s law, **v10** is a very important wake up call!

¹ See **WSC 33** and **2 Cor 5:21**.

II. MERCY'S TRIUMPH IN CHRIST →v12

A. Again you might ask, “Are not Christians judged based upon whether or not we believe in Christ?”

1. In **Jn 3:18**, Jesus said, **“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

a. This passage says that you will not be condemned if you believe in the name— that includes the person— of Jesus.

b. In **Jn 3:18**, **“judged”** is used in the sense of a person being “condemned.”

2. In **Ja 2:12**, the word **“judged”** is used may be used in the sense of giving an accounting for one’s life on the day of judgment. → **Mat 12:33-37**

B. James next said a fruit of a true Christian is to be merciful. →v13

1. This teaching of James came up twice in the Sermon on the Mount given by our Lord Jesus.

a. **Mat. 5:7** **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”**

b. **Mat 6:12** **“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”**

2. We ought to show mercy to others because God has shown us great mercy in forgiving our sins. Jesus taught this in his parable of the unforgiving servant. → **Mat. 18:21-35**

C. Imagine trying to describe or summarize what the gospel of Jesus Christ accomplished for sinners in four words. James did that very thing at the end of v13: **“mercy triumphs over judgment.”**

1. The Greek for **“triumphs”** more literally means “boasts or brags against.”

2. Dr Simon Kistemaker wrote how this was evident in God’s dealing with Rahab.²

Review, further application, and conclusion:

² Kistemaker, Simon J. *New Testament Commentary: James*, p.86