

The Sin of Partiality

James 2:1-13; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 6-28-20

Racism in America

What should we think about the racial conflict in our country?

#1 Racism is a real issue.

#2 Racism is not necessarily the kind of issue some people want to make it out to be.

#3 The solution to racism is found in the Bible.

A biblical response to what is happening in our nation involves:

- *Defining Biblical Justice:* Biblical justice is loving your neighbor as yourself according to the just law of God. (Leviticus 19:9-19a)
- *Finding Hope in the God of Biblical Justice:* Our hope in all the chaos is that this is our Good, Good Father's world and He knows how to give His children what is good. (Matthew 7:1-12)
- *Defining the Problem:* One of the main problems right now in our country is partiality and it's not just the problem of one group of people, whoever you may think the guilty group is. (James 2:1-13)
- *Getting the Big Picture:* The real driver behind what is happening in our country is an Anti-Christian philosophy. (Colossians 2:1-8)
- *Moving Forward:* The Christian response must be to recognize the crucial place of the gospel along with the guidance of God's law and the support of just government. (Romans 13:1-14)

1. Partiality is a serious sin. (1)

- The word for 'partiality' or 'personal favoritism' is literally, 'to receive/lay hold of a face'; 'To lay hold of one's face' - to treat them differently (better or worse; right or wrong) based on who they are or on outward characteristics rather than inward characteristics
- God hates partiality.
- Faith in Jesus should not coexist with partiality.
- Jesus, the Lord of glory, is the only One deserving of our 'favoritism' and it is the only kind of 'favoritism' that promotes love!
- We should not have 'hold to a faith in Jesus' that allows us to be comfortable with 'holding to another's face' resulting in partiality. (e.g., like the faith in Jesus of the KKK)
- Partiality is inconsistent with salvation by grace alone (not based on who we are or what we have or what we have done)
- Partiality is the biblical term for racism (partiality based on skin color or nationality).
- Partiality is what Paul rebuked in Peter (Galatians 2:11-16)

Why does God hate partiality and why should we?

2. Partiality makes unbiblical distinctions. (2-7)

- All those who enter our lives should be treated equally according to God's Word. Visitors to our worship services should be treated equally. (2-4)

- All distinctions are not unloving; some distinctions are necessary to love!
- Partiality is based on distinctions that should not be made, resulting in illegitimate groupings. (4)
- Wrong distinctions turn us into judges who condemn those in the wrong group. (4)
- Wrong judgments are fueled by evil motives and selfish ambition. (4)
- So partiality is rooted in unbiblical distinctions and judgments that bears the fruit of selective ‘righteousness.’
- Partiality is based on differences in ‘externals’ like clothing, skin color, etc.
- Partiality keeps us from objectively evaluating what is actually happening and is not based in reality. (5-7)
- Partiality (special treatment to some) fuels partiality (harsh treatment to some).
- Just think of the problems created by Jacob’s favoritism with Joseph. (Genesis 37:1-4)

What kinds of distinctions are good and necessary for love?

What kinds of distinctions/judgments are unhelpful and a hindrance to love?

3. Partiality fosters selective love. (8-13)

- The ‘Royal Law’ is the biblical justice God calls us to. (8)
- Partiality keeps us from equally applying the law of love. (8)
- Partiality is not solved by reversing the favoritism, but by eliminating all favoritism (loving your neighbor as yourself) (8)
- God condemns partiality. (9)
- Partiality is a sin and a serious transgression of God’s law of love. To break the law of ‘loving your neighbor as yourself’ is serious no matter how you do it because you have rebelled against the Lawgiver. (9-11)
- We are to live in obedience to God’s law of love not according to distinctions between people (i.e., treat people according to God’s Word not according to their skin color or status). (12)
- God’s Word is the ‘law of liberty’ because it is the truth that frees us to trust God and love others. (see James 1:22-25; John 8:31-32)
- Partiality is a lack of mercy that condemns others based on illegitimate distinctions and fails to obey the Word of God which commands mercy! (13)
- Partiality opens us up to condemnation. (13)
- We see God’s opinion of partiality with regard to race in Miriam’s opposition to Moses’ marriage to a black woman. (Numbers 12:1-14)
- God’s mercy in Jesus triumphs over God’s just wrath against our sin for all who trust Him and evidence that trust by showing mercy to others without partiality.

Who are the people we are selectively loving or not loving right now?

Conclusion

The answer to partiality is faith in Jesus and love according to the Word.

- Partiality is overcome by trust and love. (1, 8)
- Trust: Preach the gospel for racial reconciliation.
- Love: Pursue equality under the law for all.