

1 **FAITH AND FAVORITISM**

James 2:1-13

2 **A prayer for wisdom (1:5-7)**3 **A new theme**

- Chapter 1 – The mature Christian patient in testing.
- Chapter 2 – The mature Christian practices the truth.
 - Immature people talk about their beliefs, but the mature person lives his faith.
 - Hearing God's Word (James 1:22–25) and talking about God's Word can never substitute for doing God's WORD.

4 **The pastor tests his flock**

- James as a pastor gives his flock a simple test.
- He sent two visitors to a church service, a rich man and a poor man; and he watched to see how they were treated.
 - The way we behave toward people indicates what we really believe about God!
 - We cannot—and dare not—separate human relationships from divine fellowship.

5 **1 John 4:20**

If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

6 **The Golden Rule**

In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12).

7 **James 2:1**

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

8 **James 2:2-3**

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, 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..."

9 **James 2:4**

...Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

10 **James 2:5**

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?

11 **James 2:6-7**

But you have dishonored the poor! Are not the rich exploiting you and they themselves dragging you into the courts? Do they themselves not blaspheme the good name of the one to whom you belong?

12 **James 2:8-9**

If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the scripture, "you shall love your neighbor as

yourself," you are doing well, but if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

13 **James 2:10**

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

14 **James 2:11**

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.

15 **James 2:12-13**

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty, for judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

16

17 **Matthew 7:1-6**

Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. For by what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and by what measure you measure out, it will be measured out to you. And why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the beam of wood in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Allow me to remove the speck from your eye,' and behold, the beam of wood is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the beam of wood from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye! Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls in front of pigs, lest they trample them with their feet, and turn around and tear you to pieces.

18 **Matthew 7:12-20**

Therefore, in all things, whatever you want that people should do to you, thus also you do to them. For this is the law and the prophets. "Enter through the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it, because narrow is the gate and constricted is the road that leads to life, and there are few who find it! "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits: they do not gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree is not able to produce bad fruit, nor a bad tree to produce good fruit. Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. As a result, you will recognize them by their fruits.

19

Prohibition against judging (7:1-2)

20 **Matthew 7**

21 **THE DEITY OF CHRIST**

AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE WAY WE SEE OTHERS

22 **Partiality and striving for self-advancement**

- *My brothers, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with partiality.* (James 2:1, LEB)
- People are predisposed to wanting to treat others based on outward appearance.
- James warns his flock that they should not strive to be in positions of authority (James 3:1) but seek instead to be humble and to let the Spirit control their speech.

23 **Jesus did not show favoritism**

- *And they sent their disciples to him with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and you do not care what anyone thinks, because you do not regard the opinion of people. (Matthew 22:16, LEB)*
- Our Lord did not look at the outward appearance; He looked at the heart.
 - Not impressed with riches or social status. The poor widow who gave her mite was greater in His eyes than the rich Pharisee who boastfully gave his large donation.

24 **Jesus sees human potential**

- In Simon, He saw a rock.
- In Matthew, the publican, He saw a faithful disciple who would one day write one of the four Gospels.
- In the adulterous woman at the well, Jesus saw an instrument for reaping a great harvest.

25 **Jesus sees a person's potential future**

- We are prone to judge people by their past, not their future.
- When Saul of Tarsus was converted, the church in Jerusalem was afraid to receive him!
- It took Barnabas, who believed in Saul's conversion, to break down the walls (Acts 9:26–28).
- We are also prone to judge by outward appearance rather than by the inner attitude of the heart.

26 **THE GRACE OF CHRIST**

AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE WAY WE TREAT OTHERS

27 **Isaiah 53:1-3**

Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? For he went up like a shoot before him, and like a root from dry ground. He had no form and no majesty that we should see him, and no appearance that we should take pleasure in him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering, and acquainted with sickness, and like one from whom others hide their faces, he was despised, and we did not hold him in high regard. (Isaiah 53:1–3, LEB)

28 **Jesus – Don't judge a book by its cover!**

- Jesus was despised and rejected by men.
 - Unlike the foxes, he had no home.
 - Grew up in relative poverty in Nazareth
 - Not physically attractive.
- Jesus is the very glory of God!
 - *And the Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14, LEB)*
 -

29 **God's glory on display**

- God's glory dwelt first in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38), and then in the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11).
- Then it was on display in Jesus Christ (John 1:14)

30 **God's glory on display (2)**

- Now God's glory dwells within each believer, individually.
 - *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19–20, LEB)*

- It also dwells in the church, collectively.
 - *In whom the whole building, joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built up together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:21–22, LEB)

31 **How Jesus was judged**

- The religious experts in Christ's day judged Him by their human standards, and they rejected Him. Yet, He was the very glory of God!
 - He came from the wrong city, Nazareth of Galilee.
 - He was not a graduate of their accepted schools.
 - He did not have the official approval of the people in power.
 - He had no wealth.
 - His followers were a nondescript mob and included publicans and sinners.
- No wonder Jesus warned the religious leaders, *"Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment"* (John 7:24).

32 **Do we judge visitors?**

- The same mistake goes on in many churches today.
- We look upon what people are outwardly rather than inwardly.
 - Their clothes and fashion sense
 - The color of their skin
 - Their mode of transportation
 - Their financial success. We cater to the rich because we hope to get something out of them, and we avoid the poor because they embarrass us. Jesus did not do this, and He cannot approve of it.

33 **Making it real**

- How do we practice the deity of Christ in our human relationships? It is really quite simple: look at everyone through the eyes of Christ.
- If the visitor is a Christian, we can accept him because Christ lives in him.
- If he is not a Christian, we can receive him because Christ died for him.
- It is Christ who is the link between us and others, and He is a link of love.
- God can use even the most unlikely person to bring glory to His name. He used Peter and Zacchaeus and John Mark, and He can use that poor man whom we might reject.

34 **James 2:5-7**

Listen, my dear brothers! Did not God choose the poor of the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor! Are not the rich exploiting you and they themselves dragging you into the courts? Do they themselves not blaspheme the good name of the one to whom you belong?

•

35 **God ignores national differences**

- *So Peter opened his mouth and said, "In truth I understand that God is not one who shows partiality, but in every nation the one who fears him and who does what is right is acceptable to him.* (Acts 10:34–35, LEB)
- No differences between Jew and Gentile for salvation (Romans 2:6-16; 10:1-13)

36 **God ignores social differences**

- Masters and slaves are alike to Him (Ephesians 6:9)
- Rich and poor alike to Him
 - Grace of God enables a rich man to become poor in Spirit to receive Christ. And it makes the poor man rich when he receives the grace of God in Christ Jesus (James 1:9-11)

37 **1 Samuel 2:7-8**

Yahweh makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust. From the ash heap he lifts up the needy, to cause them to sit with noble people and to cause them to inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth belong to Yahweh and he has set the inhabited world on them. (1 Samuel 2:7-8, LEB)

•

38 **1 Corinthians 1:26-27**

For consider your calling, brothers, that not many were wise according to human standards, not many were powerful, not many were well born. But the foolish things of the world God chose in order that he might put to shame the wise, and the weak things of the world God chose in order that he might put to shame the strong.

•

39 **A stern rebuke**

- James gave a stern rebuke in James 2:6-7. *"When you despise the poor man, you are behaving like the unsaved rich people."*
- In that day, it was easy for rich persons to exploit the poor, influence decisions at court, and make themselves richer.
- For Christians to favor someone because they are rich is to blaspheme the very name of Christ. Our Lord was poor, and He too was the victim of injustice perpetrated by the wealthy leaders of His day.

40 **Making it real**

- The doctrine of God's grace, if we really believe it, forces us to relate to people on the basis of God's plan and not on the basis of human merit or social status.
- A class system (or caste system) does not honor Christ.
- When He died, Jesus broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22).
- But in His birth and life, Jesus broke down the walls between rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It is wrong for us to build those walls again; we cannot rebuild them if we believe in the grace of God.

41 **What do we take from this passage so far?**

- We can embrace the deity of Christ by remembering that He lives within each Christian.
 - We should see the potential within each individual
 - We should not judge a person's past but rather envision who they can become in Christ.
- We embrace the grace of Christ by understanding that it is available to anyone, regardless of social standing or nationality.