



James

Living Right in a Wrong World!

Living Right without Partiality!

James 2:1-13

Message #6 of 15 – S968

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Living Right without Partiality!

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Opening Comments

- Turn to **James 2**
- Today, we continue the series: **James - Living Right in a Wrong World!**
- Last week I shared a message in the Biblical Worldviews series on Tribalism and the Us versus Them consequences of a worldview that rejects God and His Word
- We were created with a soul-deep need to be in community with others – to be in a tribe where we feel like we belong
- Two weeks ago, James introduced the concept that true faith in God and His Word will show up in the things we do
- He said boldly that if your faith isn't doing something, it is a dead faith
- Today, James is going to talk to us about something that should be absent from our faith
- And interestingly, this thing is one of the signs of godless tribalism
- In essence, how we treat people who are outside our group or who are different than we are or who we deem less important says a lot about what we believe about God
- Living right in this wrong way world involves seeing and relating to people the right way – as divinely created image-bearers of Almighty God
- And to do that we need to look for things in our life that might be causing us to see people the wrong way
- Living right in this wrong way world is not the easy way but it is the best way – it is the way that leads to the fulness of God's blessings in this life
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us see others better
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Living Right without Partiality!**

- Let's jump right in
- **James 2:1**
- James ended chapter one by telling us that our religion should be pure and undefiled
- We do that by keeping our faith pure and undefiled
- Here James is saying we need to make sure partiality isn't creeping into our faith and coming out in our works

Partiality - unfair bias in favor of one thing or person compared with another; favoritism.

- One of our goals as Christians is to be more like Christ, God the Son
- Partiality is contrary to the nature of God **Romans 2:11**

For there is no partiality with God.

- God calls it unjust and unrighteous **Leviticus 19:15**

You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

- James then gives a practical example of partiality
- **James 2:2-4**
- A modern illustration might be showing partiality to the person who drives up in a brand-new Bentley versus the person who drives a 1996 Honda Civic.
- There are many things wrong with partiality.
- It is born out of 'evil thoughts' that produce wicked acts.
- It judges people on their outward appearance and not on who they are in God's kingdom.
- It implies that the rich man's soul is of more value than the poor man's soul.
- Money, power, status, or any other human form of measurement does not determine a person's worth or righteousness.
- **James 2:5**
- 'rich in faith' – because of their dependence upon God, the poor lean more heavily on their faith.
- The rich are more likely to trust in their riches.
- While the poor are poor in this world, they are rich in heaven.
- And chances are that because of their faith they will receive greater rewards in heaven than the rich will.

- So, if you are poor in this life, trust in God and rejoice for your reward will be great in heaven
 - **James 2:6-7**
 - Partiality is blasphemy because it uses human judgments to evaluate how worthy someone is of Christ's sacrifice
 - A rich person is not more worthy of Christ's sacrifice because of their riches
 - A person's gender, race, sexual identity, marital status, social status, or any other thing determines worthiness of salvation
 - And so to use any of those things to discriminate against others is blasphemy against God
 - **James 2:8**
 - 'royal law' – only occurrence of this phrase in the Bible.
 - This phrase is repeated several times in the New Testament
 - Partiality looks at the outside, but God looks at the heart **1 Samuel 16:7**
- But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**
- Only God can see what is inside the human heart.
 - Since we can't see what is in someone's heart, we are told to love them 'as yourself'.
 - And since we love ourselves only one way, we are called to love everyone equally.
 - And because James is focused on a faith that works, we don't need to feel love but are called to express love through our actions.
 - The obvious question then is, 'Who is my neighbor?'
 - Jesus replied to that very question with the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.
 - The conclusion is that we are called to love any needy human God gives us an opportunity to help.
 - And that is regardless of their outward appearance or behaviors.
 - Love is the key to living right in this wrong way world.
 - Love is God's nature **1 John 4:7-8**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- Love is God's motivation for how He relates to mankind **Romans 5:8**
But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Love is to the motivation for how He expects us to relate to other humans made in His image **John 13:34-35**

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

- Responding to the needs of others without partiality is one of the proofs that God's love is in us **1 John 3:16**

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

- If someone treats people with partiality they are breaking the royal law

- **James 2:9-11**

- Showing partiality is not loving your neighbor and therefore is sin.

- James doesn't pull any punches. Partiality = sin.

- If you do it, even a little bit, you are guilty and need to repent.

- Replace partiality with love.

- Implied in this is the elevation of sins like partiality to the grossness of murder and adultery.

- Some people imagine a set of scales to determine if their good deeds outweigh their bad so that they will get to heaven.

- That is not how it works.

- We are bound to God by a great chain that is the law.

- Each commandment is a link in that chain.

- If you break one of the commandments, you break the chain linking you to God and there is no way to get to heaven.

- There is nothing any human can do to repair the chain.

- Only by faith in Christ and His perfect righteousness can anyone get to heaven **John 14:6**

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

- Once someone has repented of their sins and received Christ and His sacrifice for their sins – their broken chain is replaced by Christ's

perfect, unbreakable chain of righteousness binding them to God for the rest of eternity

- All I can say to that is, ‘Hallelujah, thank you Jesus!’
- **James 2:12**
- All humanity will be judged by God. Unbelievers will be judged by the law and condemned as guilty because they rejected the only way to be acquitted for their sins – the sacrificial death of Jesus.
- Believers will not be judged for their sins because Jesus took all our sins to the cross and took our condemnation.
- All our sins are washed away by His blood.
- But all our works will be judged to determine if they were worthy of heaven.
- For example, anything we did with partiality will be burned up and receive no reward.
- Everything we do as an expression of God’s love will pass through the fire of judgment and be rewarded (1 Cor. 3:9-15).
- The ‘law of liberty’ is the freedom we have in Christ to do what is right – according to God’s revealed will in His Word
- Our attitudes, behaviors, activities, works will be judged based on what was right – good rewarded, bad burned up
- James finished this text by telling us there are no do-overs in life
- **James 2:13**
- This is a verse that we don’t want to believe is true.
- Humanly speaking, we don’t like the idea that there is a point of no return when it comes to mercy from God.
- God in His perfect righteousness must judge sin – all sin.
- Because God is love He made a way for sinners to receive mercy, but there is only one way – Jesus Christ.
- When someone receives Christ as their Savior, they receive mercy rather than the judgment they deserve.
- Once the threshold that God has established has been crossed, if someone has not accepted God’s way of escaping judgment, then judgment must come – can be no more mercy
- Don’t wait – if you haven’t received Christ – do it today!

- The book of James is very practical
- He is addressing the church and how they behave there
- There should be no partiality in how they relate to one another
- I would like to close this message talking about our church
- One of the things I love about this church is that we tend to be friendly
- You can sense a sincere joy that people have when they are here
- We are a community of people who are doing our best to love God and each other
- There is a temptation within any community of developing unhealthy tribalism – in the church we call them cliques
- Cliques are not necessarily wrong unless they include partiality
- For example, the Men’s Ministry has a tight-knit group of guys
- The ministry exists to disciple men in the areas that are unique to being a Christian man
- There is only one qualification needed to be a part of that group – you must be a man
- If they are going to hold their faith without partiality than they need to be welcoming to any man who desires to be a better Christian man
- In fact, they should be encouraging men to be a part of the group
- The same thing applies to this church
- Who should be welcome here?
- God’s house should be a place where anyone can come and experience God’s love, worship with God’s people, and hear God’s Word taught
- And that means welcoming people who are not a part of our tribe and inviting them to become a part of our community
- And that means being willing to welcome people who are doing things that God disapproves of into our community
- Trusting God will do a radical work of transformation in them because of the love of God they experience through this community of believers and through the Word of God taught faithfully **Romans 2:4**
Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?
- I am blessed to be a part of such a loving and friendly church
- Let’s keep growing in our faith and getting even better at it

- Let's strive to make sure everyone who walks through those doors knows that they are welcome, and that God loves them
- **Pray**