

Don't Show Favoritism

10.11.09

2:1 My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. **2** For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, **3** and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” **4** have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? **8** If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. **11** For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 1:1-13 ESV

The Command: “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.” (v.1)

Favoritism is incompatible with our Faith.

The Example (v. 2-4):

“a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing” rich man who wore rings and shining clothes.
“your assembly” likely their “church service.”
“a poor man in shabby clothing” The poor could be identified by their clothing.
“You sit here in a good place,” Giving him the place of honor.
“You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” An obvious act of dishonor.

The Reasoning (v.5-8):

1. God has chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom (v. 5).
 - a. Being poor doesn't save you. James recognizes that those who are physical poverty are often more in touch with their spiritual poverty.
2. The rich oppress you and drag you into court (v.6).
 - a. The rich often used the court systems to steal from the poor.
3. The blaspheme your God who called you by His name (v. 7).
 - a. OT : A man was set apart for God by calling His name over him.

The Reality (v.9-13):

“the royal law according to the Scripture...” The “Greatest Commandment.”
“But if you show partiality, you are committing sin...” Actual reality. Very serious.
“whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.” If we break one of God’s laws it is as if we have broken them all.
“So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.” Strong Greek.
“For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”
Proverbial statement. If you know mercy, show mercy, or no mercy at judgment. day.

If we know this is so wrong, why do we still show favoritism?

1. Remaining sin.
2. Sins behind the Sin:
 - a. Pride.
 - b. Insecurity.
 - c. Lust for power.

Putting Feet On It :

1. Be honest about what is actually happening.
 - a. *Am I showing favoritism? How am I? Why Am I?*
 - b. When we show favoritism, we are dishonoring someone created in the image of God.
2. Confess, repent, and get the healing that you need.
 - a. *What is driving this sin? Pride, Insecurity, Power, Pain, Other? Be specific*
 - b. *Where is it that you are so wounded that you need to push others down to put yourself up? Allow God to heal that hurt.*
3. Believe and apply the Gospel!
 - a. For all of your sins & for every reason you show favoritism.
 - b. God shows no favoritism.

Works Consulted: *Expositor's Commentary, MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Commentary on James Bible Exposition Commentary, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, A Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments, New Bible Commentary, The Outline Bible, Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary, Wilmington's Bible Handbook, Pictures of the New Testament*