

FAITH VS FAVORITISM

JAMES 2:1-13

SERMON POINTS

- The problem of partiality
- Why we should not disdain the poor
- Why we should not favor the rich
- The coming judgment

MAIN IDEA: James 1:22 is the central verse of this chapter, but also serves as James' central idea in his letter. True and saving faith changes our lives and moves us to be hearers AND doers of God's Word as it relates to favoritism.

BACKGROUND:

James says, "Show no partiality as you hold faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." James only mentions Jesus two times explicitly in his letter and here he calls him "The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." Jesus is exalted and is glorious, and although he was crucified in humility, he was raised in power and will return as the victorious king at the consummation of all things to usher in his kingdom and to judge the world. He says as you hold faith in the Lord of glory you can't also simultaneously hold favoritism at the same time. That is to show too much glory to people. The word, "partiality" in the original language is an interesting construct and it literally means "receive the face"¹ or "to receive someone according to their face." We show favoritism and partiality when we judge people either positively or negatively on the basis of their physical appearance.

QUESTIONS:

Q: We all struggle with the sin of partiality and favoritism. In what ways are you tempted to show favoritism to certain people and to disdain others?

Q: This obviously applies to physical appearance, but what are other ways we show favoritism?

Q: Why doesn't it make sense for us to "hold faith" in Jesus, on the one hand, have favoritism on the other hand?

¹ Douglas Moo, p. 102

Q: According to James why is it so wrong to disdain the poor, and why is it foolish to favor the rich?

Matthew 19:23–24

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. [24] Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Q: James says that we should speak and act as those who will be judged be judged under the law of liberty (Royal law). What is the royal law (see 2:8)? If there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1), what do you think this judgment of our speaking and acting will look like?