

Series – Part 8: How to Live as a Christian:

Don't Play Favorites!

James 2:1-7 ESV

4th Sunday After Pentecost / 3rd After Trinity – 2013

Sunday, June 16 at 8:00 & 10:45; Monday, June 17 at 7 PM

Introduction: Dear fellow-believers in Jesus *the Christ*:

Today we begin James chapter 2, which concerns our faith and how it is *expressed* or *lived* in our daily lives.

- Vv. 1-7 (today) show the mismatch between knowing Jesus and *playing favorites with the rich*.
- Vv. 8-13 (6/23) show the mismatch between knowing Jesus and *not loving our neighbors as ourselves*.
- Vv. 14-26 (6/30) show the mismatch between knowing Jesus and *not having any works*.

1. **Faith and Favoritism are Not Compatible:** ¹ **My brothers, show no partiality** [*personal favoritism*] **as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus** [*today's key word*] **Christ, the Lord of glory.** // As oil and water do not mix, so neither do faith and favoritism. Even though favoritism is common for the world, *showing love to everyone should be common for believers in Jesus!*

- a. **Faith is first:** When we were dead in our sins, *God gave us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior* (He is the Holy Son of God, who became our substitute by †living without sin and †receiving the punishment for all of our sins)!

- b. **Putting aside favoritism is second:** The world favors those who are powerful, wealthy, talented, tall, and well-dressed – *but God does not and neither should we!* Consider this passage in which Samuel has been sent by the LORD to anoint the next king of Israel: ^{ESV} **1 Samuel 16:6** *...he looked on Eliab [Jesse's oldest son] and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."* ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, *"Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks [lit. into] the heart."* *"A person's [true] worth comes not from possessions but from his relationship to God."* (LSB, 2136) *As we put aside favoritism, we are simply living as ones who believe in Jesus!*

2. **An Example of How We are Tempted:** ² **For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly** [*lit. synagogue*], **and a poor man in shabby** [*lit. filthy, soiled*] **clothing also comes in,** ³ **and if you pay attention to** [*lit. look on with favor*] **the one who wears** [*lit. wearing*] **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?** // This is some of the LORD's instruction on judging from today's OT reading: ^{ESV} **Leviticus 19:15** *"...You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor."*

- a. **Wrong judging:** According to our sinful nature, we are tempted to *show favoritism* for our own benefit. We reason like this: That man – who appears to have earthly riches, *based on how he is dressed or what he drives or where he lives* – could possibly benefit me, so I will choose to favor him over those who appear to be poor. *Such judging is not compatible with those who know Jesus as their Savior!*
- b. **Right judging:** *First*, God speaks through His Word to call us to repent; then, *second*, we are ready to apply God’s Word to others. Jesus said: ^{ESV} **Matthew 7:5** “...first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” Right judging is on the basis of God’s Holy Word, not on the thoughts of our sinful hearts.
3. **Seeing and Doing from God’s Perspective:**
- a. ⁵ **Listen, my beloved brothers** [*which highlights the importance of what follows*], **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.** // God chose him, but we tend to dishonor him – *not good!* Think about the poor and rich regarding the kingdom: Jesus said: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:25 NAS) Regarding a rich young man, the Bible says that: “...he went away sad, because he had great

wealth.” (Matt. 19:22 NIV) In both cases, *their riches prevented them from entering the kingdom!* But the poor are more inclined toward God; however, *in every case*, it is God’s work by which a person is ultimately saved!

- b. **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** [*lit. good*] **name by which you were called?** // They blaspheme God’s name by *falsely* claiming to be His followers. Jesus said to the: “...scribes and Pharisees... you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones...” (Mt. 23:27 NAS) *Let us not play favorites with anyone!*

Conclusion: Let’s remember and apply God’s Word:

- Two steps: (1) God gives us _____ in Jesus; (2) we desire to imitate God by putting aside _____!
- Even if the rich expect special treatment in the church, as in the world, we should treat everyone the _____!

Saved through Christ, let us live for Christ! **Amen!**

JOIN US IN GROWING UP IN CHRIST		
Read, Understand, and Apply God’s Holy Word!		
Verse and Key Word	Greek and Transliteration	Meaning of Key Word
...show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ	ἠσοῦς (nom.): Hesous Initial rough breathing mark before “I” = “H” sound	Jesus: It means “the Lord saves,” it’s Hebrew equivalent is Joshua / Yeshua

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