

## James 2:1-26

### Week 3 - Shedding Favoritism & Clothing Faith With Deeds

#### Part One: Love Versus Favoritism

##### James 2:1-13 (NIV)

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. <sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

<sup>12</sup> Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

? What does it look like to show partiality in our Church today? Who are the "rich" and "poor" in our community?

"The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community; the wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves." –Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15*

? Consider the quote above. Why do we find it hard to *not* show favoritism?

? Looking at verse five, why do you think favoritism is harmful to the Church? Why does James consider it a sin?

? Who are the types of people you tend to favor? Who do you struggle to welcome into God's kingdom?

## Part Two: Mature Faith

### James 2:14-26 (NIV)

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

<sup>20</sup> You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

<sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.



In what way does James argue that faith without deeds is incomplete?



James offers an example of how we disconnect faith from deeds by describing how the poor are neglected. What are some ways that your faith is disconnected from action in your life?



Re-read verses 8-9 in part one. Why does James use favoritism as a lead-in to talk about faith and deeds? How might favoritism suppress our faith’s display of good deeds?

### Matthew 7:21-27 (NIV)

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

<sup>24</sup>“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup>But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup>The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

? How do Jesus’ words from Matthew 7 complement James’ words in v. 14-26

? According to Jesus, what is the difference between true believers and hypocrites?

? In this passage, Jesus describes what a life marked by obedience to His word looks like. How is God calling you towards faithful obedience?

#### **For Discussion And Accountability**

? What challenges do you often face while trying to not feel favoritism in your community? Are there specific people that you want to reconcile with or pursue with humility in light of our discussion?

? Are you living a life full of loving deeds? If not, how might your faith be incomplete? Are there areas where God is calling you to act out your faith with greater deeds of love?