

Session 3 | The Pressure of Partiality | James 2:1-13 | 9/15/13

- Sin of Favoritism | James 2:1-4 | Page 32
 - So James is writing to believers and discussing the sin of favoritism.
 - This favoritism isn't so much like how maybe we favor our child over another because they are ours but regarding how a Christian is to treat and respect others.
 - James points this out because it was something the early church had issues with this much like we do today.
 - This sin that is described by James specifically looks at showing favoritism over someone who is wealthy and likely a high social status but the poor man was looked down upon.
 - If we look at verse 1 we say that James says "do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ"
 - So you Christians who put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ do not show favoritism.
 - James is speaking to the Christian character as well as this is an attitude that all Christians should not have.
 - Example:
 - This illustration could easily be applied to a church setting where say you have a man enter that is well dressed, has on an expensive suite. His wife is wearing fine jewelry and their children are dressed equally nice.
 - Then you have a second family enter, the dad is wearing a faded t-shirt and wranglers that look like he just arrived from working on the farm. His wife is not wearing jewelry and is wearing a dress that might have been around since the 1950's. The children appear to be dirty with cloths that are too small and well worn.
 - Then the congregations turns to great these two families, they look up the rich man and his family and eagerly great them. Their appearance says we are somebody and the congregation might benefit from making friends with them and being very hospitable. I mean because they might write a BIG tithe check ☹
 - Then the congregation greets the other family and they are NOT so eager to great them. They obviously are nobody's and do not have a lot of money based on their appearances. They don't want to greet them because that might look bad if they were associated with this family. They obviously cannot tithe much if anything and in fact they might want something from us, we might have to give them food!
 - So the well-dressed family is made to feel welcome while the poor family isn't made very welcome in fact they probably feel unwelcome.
 - This could never happen!
 - So we may think well this would NEVER happen here, true not sure I have seen that but this is something we may do subconsciously without even thinking about it.
 - Because we are naturally drawn to people that we are comfortable with.
 - So what are some of the problems' with this scenario?
 - The Gospel of Christ is freely given to all and we must treat everyone as the same worth.
 - First and most important is that the Gospel of Christ is given freely to all and is for all regardless of their monetary worth or social status.

- If we as a church treat people the way the congregation acted we are not being obedient and doing what Christ has commanded us.
- The Gospel is for everyone.
 - Romans 10:9-13
 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, not those who are dressed well or may benefit you.
 - To treat people the way the congregation did in our example is to say that some people are more deserving than others and that is NOT true.
 - If Christians or the lost are treated poorly by the church just because of their appearance then it is likely they will feel that they are not good enough for Christ...which is SO far from the truth.
 - Christ didn't come to save people because of their social status!
- God does not show favoritism among his people and neither should we.
 - Romans 2:11
 - "There is no favoritism with God"
 - There is no favoritism with God so likewise we should not show favoritism.
 - Acts 10:34
 - "Then Peter began to speak: "Now I really understand that God doesn't show favoritism, but in every nation the person who fears him and does righteousness is acceptable to Him."
- Worldly judgment and wisdom was used.
 - In this example the Christians are using earthly wisdom to judge the individuals based on their social and financial status regarding how they are going to treat them.
 - They placed value on the families based on their social status or perceived value.
 - Is that not the world's view on people? That you are valued on how much money you have or because of your social status.
 - You have no worth if you don't have many possessions or are dressed to look like you do, and if you are not well known and liked then you just don't have much worth.
 - Go to a restaurant wearing nice clothes then return wearing torn and worn clothing, how will you be treated?
 - Duck Dynasty- Jace was kicked out because they thought he was homeless!
 - Christians are judging others with a sinful worldview instead of a Godly one.
 - Social status should be completely removed when it comes to the Gospel.
 - We might expect this behavior from the world but not from Christians and certainly not in the house of God.
 - Christians want to show favoritism to those that may be able to return the favor.
 - As in our example the Christian church looks upon the poor man in overalls and says well what can this man do for me, if I pour time and energy into him he obviously cannot repay me.
 - And this man may actually cost me or the church!
 - But the rich man he is obviously "someone" so if I'm friendly with him then maybe it will pay off for me later.
 - This is a world view that should never take place.

- 1 Timothy 6:17-19
 - “Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real.”
 - **Question #3: Why is the heart of God so close to those who are poor and excluded?**
- Love your neighbor as yourself | James 2:8-13 | Pages 34-35
 - James makes it clear to state that showing favoritism based on someone’s outwardly appearance, race or otherwise is in fact a sin.
 - In fact James goes on to point out that this sin is no different than committing adultery or even murder.
 - It’s common for us to put ratings levels on sin because well for one society does certain offenses are dealt more severely than others
 - But to God a sin is a sin and that has been made very clear.
 - James does teach us though how we keep ourselves from doing this which is to obey the royal law (God’s law) which is to love your neighbor as yourself.
 - Why is this law so significant?
 - Romans 13:8-10
 - Love does no wrong to a neighbor so if we look at the sins listed in these commandments we can see that they all involve doing wrong to someone.
 - So if we love our neighbor as ourselves, because we don’t general want to harm ourselves then we won’t have any desire to commit those other sins.
 - Adultery hurts our spouse, murder hurts well the person killed, stealing and covertness etc all cause pain.
 - To love your neighbor as yourself can sound so simple because it is, but to actually carry this out is another story.
 - Show mercy | James 2:13
 - If we ourselves want to be shown mercy then we must also show mercy to others.
 - Simple treat others as you would like to be treated
 - Proverbs 21:13
 - “The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will himself also call out and not be answered.”
 - Jesus has commanded us to show mercy to our neighbor
 - Luke 10:25-37