THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

JAMES 2: 1 - 13

7-1-2020

INTRO:

*** YOU and I MUST NOT HAVE PARTIALITY!** (v. 1)
Why not? 4 Reasons:

I. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU HAVE A WRONG VALUE SYSTEM (v. 2-4)

II. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE INCONSISTENT (v. 5 - 7)

A. THEOLOGICALLY – inconsistent with the method of God (v. 5-6a)
1. Those you reject, God selects (v. 5).
2. Those you reject, you dishonor (v. 6a).

B. LOGICALLY - inconsistent with practice of the rich.
1. Those you favor, oppress you (v. 6b).
2. Those you favor, dishonor God (v. 7)

III. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU BREAK THE ROYAL LAW OF LOVE (V. 8-11).

IV. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE GUILTY OF HYPOCRISY (v. 12-13).

Ask yourself:
1. *Am I as interested in the salvation of a poor man as one who is rich? (i.e. - "wierd vs. normal")*
2. *Am I willing to put as much effort into the winning of one who is uncultured as one who is educated?*
3. *Do I show as much compassion for a black as for a white person?*
4. *Am I more excited when a person gets saved who is talented, gifted (a potential leader) as when one with limited gifts gets saved? (Look at their potential! - What God can make them)*

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INTRO: Illus. - First time impressions are rarely correct.

60% of those in the Roman Empire were of the poor/slave class.

He is saying: Don't try to combine faith in Christ with partiality (the two don't mix).

Snobbery cannot be combined with genuine Christian faith.

"The Lord of glory" - the glory of God was radiant on the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6). In the radiance of divine glory that shines from Jesus Christ, all distinctions between rich and poor really disappear.

"There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles . . ." Gal 3:28

"Respect of persons" = lit. to "receive the face"; to show partiality, personal favoritism.

"Respect of persons" = a biased judgment, based on external appearances or circumstances such as race, wealth, social rank, or popularity while not looking at the person's internal true worth (value).

"Respect of persons" - to judge people superficially rather than on the basis of their true worth in God's sight.

Deut. 1:16, 17 - God commanded the judges to "judge righteously between every man and his brother . . . Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man . . ."

Prov. 29:25 - "The fear of man bringeth a snare."

Ro. 2:11 - "For there is no respect of persons with God" (cp. Acts 10:34 - Peter realized that God accepted the Gentile Cornelius).

*** YOU MUST NOT HAVE PARTIALITY! (v. 1)**

Why not? 4 Reasons:

I. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU HAVE A WRONG VALUE SYSTEM (v. 2-4)

"Gold ring" - "It was common to wear rings in the ancient world either as a signet ring or as a piece of jewelry for adornment. Sometimes more than one ring was worn and the social status of a person could be noted by the quality of his ring" (cp. Luke 15:22).

"Goodly" = Gk. "Lampros" - from which we get our Eng. word lamp.

> "Goodly apparel" = shining clothes. Some robes were said to have been made from silver which would glisten in the sunlight (Acts 12:21).

"Vile raiment" = dirty, filthy clothes. The normal toga of the Romans was white, as was the robe of the Jews, and political candidates wore a brighter white, which was produced by rubbing it with chalk.

"Respect" = to look upon with attention or interest or favor.

Note the contrast:

"Sit thou here . . ." - expresses the cordial reception of an usher to a rich man; offers him his seat.

"Stand thou there . . ." - expresses an indifferent, unconcerned, rude command.

"Sit here under my footstool" - the speaker has a good seat but will not offer it. He doesn't even offer the footstool; but basically says "Sit on the floor."

"Footstool" = recently excavated synagogues reveal a stone bench running along the walls, with a lower tier for the feet of those sitting ont he bench.

Such harsh, unloving treatment will all the more embitter and discourage the soul of the poor man who perhaps in a sort of desperation from the hardness of the world outside came to find refuge, consideration,a nd respect from God's children.

Jesus did not respect persons. Even his enemies admitted: "We know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are" (Mt. 22:16 NIV).

"The Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:17).

Illus. - widow gave her last mite.

Appli: Church membership - some do not want certain people to join their church (not high enough on the cultural scale, different skin color, nationality, etc.).

Illus: of rich lady who bought her pastor off. She only wanted certain people to join her church.

"Partial" = to judge between two; to discriminate; to differentiate; made a distinction and favor one over another.

Preferential treatment is wrong because you are rejecting one of God's creatures in doing so. Ex. - You can not say you love God and mistreat one of his children, just as you can't say you respect me and mistreat my daughter.

What partiality is not:

Being impartial does <u>not</u> mean that you are not to have close, intimate friends. Jesus was not wrongly partial when He stayed with Mary, Martha, & Lazarus, or when He took Peter James & John apart.

Nor does it mean that you are to like his habits, or agree with everyone on everything.

This verse is dealing with "not being partial in meeting the spiritual needs of all men (favoring rich or neglecting poor).

V. 4 - "Judges" - you need to judge a person's worth as God judges it (He is an immortal soul, created in the image of God).

"Evil thoughts" Sinful motives. Can this happen in a Church today? <u>Yes</u>!

1) When special attention is given to the rich in hopes that they will give money liberally.

Social and economic distinctions should be wiped out by the Gospel.

In the early church, there must have been a sense of awkwardness when the master would sit next to his slave; or if the slave led the service in which his master was but a member of the congregation.

We cater to the rich because we hope to <u>get something out</u> of them, and to avoid the poor because they <u>embarrass</u> us.

II. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE <u>INCONSISTENT</u> (v. 5 - 7)

A. <u>THEOLOGICALLY</u> - INCONSISTENT WITH THE METHOD OF GOD (v. 5-6a)

1. Those you reject, God <u>selects</u> (v. 5).

"Rich in faith" = wealthy in spiritual matters. Because they lack physical possessions, they are more dependent upon God.

God selected the poor - See I Cor. 1:26-29.

Rich people in a church often prove to be a <u>corrupting</u> influence.
---They think they own the place.
---They try to "buy the preacher off" and get him to compromise.

Illus. of Governor Felix who thought that he could get Paul to offer him a bribe (money so that Felix might do Paul a special favor) - Acts 24:26.

It is possible to be poor in this world and rich in the next, or rich in this world and poor in the next. (Luke 16 - Rich man and Lazarus;

I Tim. 6:17-18 - "Charge them that rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in Good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

2. Those you reject, you <u>dishonor</u> (v. 6a).

"Despised = to treat without honor; (to dishonor), to view as valueless.

B. LOGICALLY - inconsistent with practice of the rich.

1. Those you favor, oppress you (v. 6b).

"Judgment seats = the place where cases are judged, tribunal, law court.

Acts 5:17-18 - "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison."

The very people you are honoring, are the ones that are persecuting you!

Ex. - It seems that when we see someone with great potential and invest much time in them, that they end up stabbing you in the back.

If we are to honor Christ, we must stand with the oppressed, not with oppressors.
Illus. of children in school who like making friends with the bullies so as not to get beaten up themselves.

2. Those you favor, dishonor God (v. 7)

"Worthy name" = Christian

I Peter 4:14-16 - "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye . . . If any man suffer as a Christian, let him glorify God on this behalf."

III. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU BREAK THE ROYAL LAW OF LOVE (V. 8-11).

James anticipated the reply: "God's Law commands us to love our neighbors, and that was what we were doing when we welcomed the rich man."

If love was your motive - OK!

Why called "Royal Law?"
1) It is given by the King (JN. 13:34)
2) t rules all other laws (Ro. 13:10)

"Royal Law" = the sovereign law from our king - Jesus.

God is not saying that we should not love the rich. What He is saying is that we should not love them anymore than the poor. We need to treat the rich and poor equally.

"Love" = not sentimental or romantic, but an attitude of unselfish devotion to seek the well-being of others.

Our motive is not money - it is the spiritual welfare of others.

The priest and the Levite would be the first to say: "We don't respect persons"; but in actuality they did. But the good Samaritan did not.

"Sin" = to miss the mark.

"Transgressor" = one who oversteps the boundaries (steps across into forbidden territory).

Sin always springs from a lack of love. (Love fulfills the whole OT Law).

Applic. - Being a friend to witness to some people (rich, famous, etc.) is partiality - hence it is sin!

Neglecting to witness to some (ex. poor) is also sin.

James responds in verse 10 because the tendency for man is to think that favoritism is a little thing and to say: "Oh, partiality is not wrong; it's not that bad."

Illus. The law is a unity - One missing piece in a puzzle ruins the whole.

The amount of sin doesn't matter - any is wrong. Someone who kept the law 99% of the time but broke it 1% is like the man who kept the law 1% and broke it 99% of the

time.

Applic. - What known sin (however small) are you tolerating?
Today we are not under the Israelite civil and ceremonial law, but still under the moral law that contains timeless, continuing principles.

If you disobey one law, this shows that you are capable of disobeying all of them.

V. 11 - The kind of sin doesn't matter with God - it's still wrong.

With God it does not matter what law we break. No sin is small with God.

IV. BECAUSE WHEN YOU ARE PARTIAL, YOU ARE GUILTY OF HYPOCRISY (v. 12-13).

Note Context: James is still dealing with his teaching that we are not to be hearers only, but doers.

You can hide attitude (whether or not you are partial), but you cannot hide your works.

Our works will be tried by fire (I Cor. 3). What we said and what we did will be judged.

"Law of Liberty" = law that gives freedom.

We will be judged by an impartial law of love (a law that will give us freedom! (salvation) This mercy of God should motivate us to be merciful.

If God will treat us this way, how should we treat others?

Your practice (treatment of others) must be consistent with how Christ treated you. Did he show special favor to you because of any wealth, gifts, abilities, etc. that you had? -- NO!

V. 13 - refusal to show mercy will be like a boomerang in the day of judgment.

"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" - Mt. 5:7.

V. 13 - We must not twist this truth into a lie –

1. It does not mean that we earn mercy by showing mercy, because it is impossible to earn mercy. If it is earned, it is not mercy!

2. Nor does it mean that we should be "soft on sin" and never judge it in the lives of others" (Wiersbe, p. 72)

If you have no mercy for others despite economic level (which is an indication that you are not truly saved) you will find none from God (cp. Matt. 18:21-35 - Parable of the unforgiving master).

Paraphrase - "Mercy smiles in the face of judgment" (Phillips transl.).

Mercy can triumph over judgment (not at the expense of justice) because of Calvary. Christ took our judgment for us.

"Rejoiceth" = triumph

Because God's mercy has triumphed over the judgment we deserved, our mercy must triumph in our treatment of others.

Conclusion: Application to Soul-winning -

Ask yourself:

1. Am I as interested in the salvation of a poor man as one who is rich? (i.e. - "wierd vs. normal")

2. Am I willing to put as much effort into the winning of one who is uncultured as one who is educated?

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By God's help we can learn like Peter never to call any man "common or unclean" (Acts 10).

Are you willing to bridge the barriers that are separating us from one another in our church?

(Not form cliques)

Let us look at each other as a true brother in the Lord.