

NO FAVORITISM IN THE GOSPEL

September 2, 2018—East Audobon Baptist Church

Welcome

Our text for this morning is James chapter 2, verses 1 through 13. As you turn there, by way of introduction,

Introduction

From a young age we begin to develop favorites. Favorite foods, favorite smells, favorite family members, we even denote our favorite friend with the term “best” friend. They are my best friend. On the surface these preferences are not off-hand and certainly not evil. The favoritism that James talks about in his letter is a sinful type of favoritism. One in which he says is evil and that when it takes place we have become “judges with evil thoughts”. Today we will discuss the importance of recognizing favoritism as sin, and treat our sinful hearts with the gospel medicine that has shown no favoritism to us.

So let us approach our text this morning with ears ready to listen to these inspired words, hearts ready to repent when necessary, and hands and feet ready to obey its charge.

James, chapter 2, verse 1 through 13.

Text—James 2:1-13

Prayer

I want to give a quick context for where we find ourselves this morning.

Context

The book of James functions as a repeated three-part wisdom letter focused on **Trials** (1:2), **Wisdom** (1:5), and **Rich and Poor** (1:9). These core messages are then expanded as James emphasizes them further throughout chapter one. He unpacks trials in (1:12-19), Wisdom (1:19-26), and rich and poor (1:27) which you heard if you were here last week.

This, James repeats through out the rest of his letter covering Rich and Poor (2:1-26), Wisdom (chapter 3) and Trials (chapter 4). Chapter 5 then bookends the message with final words on the themes of trials, wisdom, and rich and poor.

James writes this letter in the early first century to those of the dispersion (1:1) and thus we recognize that this letter would have had a broad reading. One conclusion we can draw from this is it applies to us today. That James intending Christians everywhere to heed these warnings, while also knowing that this word is inspired, authoritative and sufficient for us to live lives of godliness.

James writes, not to build up theological knowledge but to promote their obedience to the word of God. This is seen in his practical applications and pointed warnings to these first century believers. Let us heed them as well and live lives as we heard last week as not merely hearers but doers of the word of God.

No favoritism in the Gospel

If I were to give this sermon a title it would be “**there is no favoritism in the gospel.**” James is so strongly illustrating the sinfulness of these believers to look at the outward appearance of a person and to cast judgment. This James says does not accord to the Gospel by which we have been saved. Before we go any further, I would quickly like to define terms.

First, James uses a Greek word that is sometimes translated as **partiality**. Some of your bibles may have the word favoritism. Obviously these words can be used interchangeably without the meaning being changed.

Secondly, when I say the word **Gospel** you may most closely associate that with good news and praise God! It is good news, but I want to be very explicit. This good news is that God the Father sent God the Son to earth as a man to live the life that we could not live, keeping God’s law perfectly. Then, dying a grueling death on the cross fully cleansing, forgiving, and purifying the sins of those who believe in him for eternal life, he made us acceptable to God. And, on the third day He rose again defeating the bonds of death and Satan and is making all things new! This is the good news. This is the Gospel. When you hear Gospel this morning, know that it is Christ’s sacrificial work on the cross for sinful humanity.

Story

I love the show storage wars. Have you ever seen it? It is this crazy show where these people bid, auction style, on storage units. The auctioneer opens the door of the storage unit for the bidders to take a look inside. They cannot go in, and they cannot touch anything. They must decide based only on the

storage unit's **visual appearance**.

If you have seen this show you know that the results vary. Some units return a good profit while many end up being a complete waste of money. Similarly, these Christians that James writes to are guilty of making judgments based on only visual appearance. In storage wars the result is only wasted money, in life, casting judgments James says is caused by evil thoughts and will bring upon ourselves judgement from God.

This morning we will see from James 2:1-13 that Favoritism is sinful. The sin of favoritism will be judged. And lastly, the gospel triumphs over judgement.

1. Favoritism is Sinful (1-7)

- I. Favoritism is sin against God. (1-5)
 - a. Become Judges with evil thoughts.
 1. God is the judge. There will be a day where we stand before the Lord to give an account. All people will stand before Jesus on that day. We need not pronounce our own evil judgements.

God is holy (perfect) He will not judge unjustly. He is omniscient (knows all) he will not pronounce a wrong verdict; there will never be a mistrial for he sees into the hearts of men and women. He is able to pronounce judgments without our help.

- b. **Romans 2:11-** "There is no partiality with God."
 1. God's plan includes the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he promised to those who love him.

We are the poor man, Church! We have no value in and of ourselves, yet God loved us and sent his son to die for us. Romans 5:8 says, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Do you understand the gravity of your sin? It is because of God's goodness that we are saved! We are saved by grace through faith, not of ourselves as Paul says in Ephesians 2. God did not show favoritism. He did not withhold anything from us. Let us not show favoritism with God as our example.

- II. Favoritism is sin against Man. (6)
 - a. Dishonored the poor man.
- III. Favoritism is of no value. (7)
 - a. They oppress you.
 - b. They drag you into court.
 - c. They blaspheme the name of Christ.

2. The sin of favoritism will be judged (8-11)

- I. If you love neighbor (+), but if you show favoritism (-)
 - a. Favoritism is sin (9)
 - b. Favoritism is not a “little” sin (10)
 - 1. In a list with adultery and murder. (11)

3. The Gospel triumphs over judgment (12-13)

- I. So speak and so act as those under the Law of Liberty
 - a. James 1:25 mentions this law of liberty. As those with New hearts alive to Christ, not only are we given a command, but we are given the resources to do it. **In Christ we can love our neighbors as ourselves.**

What does this look like? To speak and act as under the Law of Liberty?

- II. If you have received mercy you will show mercy.
 - a. When all we deserved was judgment we have been shown mercy! (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Conclusion

We were the poor man. But in Christ We

“who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

We have been shown mercy. Let us speak and act as those who were shown mercy from God, the forgiveness of our transgressions.

Let us pray.