

Faith in Action - James

[James 2:1-13](#)

"The sin of partiality" – September 6, 2020

Introduction

James has been talking about what it looks like to remain steadfast in trials and remain faithful in the Christian life. Now he directs our attention to the sin of partiality. James reminds us in [1:26](#) that if we don't bridle our tongues our religion is worthless – he reminds us in [1:27](#) that true worship (or 'religion') involves caring for those who the world may overlook ('orphans and widows'). James helps us identify and overcome partiality that we may honor God *together*.

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Sermon Outline

- I. Understand what partiality is. ([2:1-11](#))
- II. The cure for partiality. ([2:12-13](#))

Read & Discuss

1) Read [2:1-11](#)

To help us understand (and identify) partiality, James employs an illustration (vv2-3), theology (vv4-7) and the law (vv8-11). To show partiality is to show favoritism. It is to make a judgement about someone's value based upon externals. [Romans 2:11](#) reminds us that God is not partial and James calls us not measure people as the world does. What are some things you may be tempted to show partiality with (education, ethnicity, wealth, political party, etc.)?

Partiality is wicked because it's our attempt to usurp God as judge and make *ourselves* the judge forgetting that we have accepted by God's grace. In the world's *performance-based* value system, value is determined by comparison and competition; in but in Christ, our value is determined by God's grace. He loves us because He graciously chooses to love us. Such love should leave us marveling at the value God has set on us not only in that we bear His image, but that He has made the Christian a *new creation*. What is man that you are mindful of him (Psalm 8:4)?

Instead of adopting the world's standards of importance and value, we are to look to Jesus, the 'Lord of glory' ([2:1](#)) as our standard. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve ([Mark](#)

[10:45](#)). He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant. He humbled himself to death on a cross ([Phil. 2:5-11](#)). Why do all these things? To take our curse, set us free and open our eyes to His glory. Following Jesus' lead, being impartial involves actively loving, reaching out to and caring for others that are different than us. This is part of keeping the *royal law*.

If someone in First Baptist is hurting, we should hurt together. We are called to be slow to speak, be quick to listen and to be empathetic to each other. Pray for hearts that are empathetic towards those in the church whom you may disagree with on opinions. Seek to get to know someone who looks or lives differently than you in the church. Are you pursuing friendships in our church that look different than you? Are you seeking to love and care for them as you would your own self?

Additional Reading: [1 Samuel 16:7](#) , [1 Cor. 4:7](#), [Leviticus 19:15](#)

2) Read [2:12-13](#)

Mercy triumphs over judgement. To show partiality in the church (and set *myself* up as judge) is to reject the means by which God let me in: *His mercy*. If God's grace is the undeserved gift of kindness/goodness to sinners, His mercy is when he does not give us what we deserve – His *righteous* wrath. James' command does not mean we're blind to differences. God made us different - we are all fearfully and wonderfully made ([Ps. 139:14](#)). The point James is making is that even though we are all different in many ways, we are all sinners reconciled by God the exact same way. We have the most important things in common. Experiencing God's mercy should make us merciful people. How does looking at God's mercy towards you affect your heart towards those who are different than you? We will not agree on every opinion. However, our differences as individuals are an opportunity for us to show mercy as God has shown mercy to us and a wonderful chance to show the gospel's unifying affect.

Additional Reading: [Titus 3:3-5](#), [Matthew 18:21-35](#)

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

*Next week's sermon text: we turn to James 2:14-26 "Faith That Saves."
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