

First Southern Baptist Church - June 16, 2021

Not Partial - James 2:1-13

Introduction:

1. Admonition -verse 1
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3. Reasoning - verses 4-7
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I. Verse 1 - Admonition

The idea that partiality and following God are incompatible. All people are valuable to God. To discriminate (show partiality) goes against the very nature of God Himself. God shows no favoritism, he is fair. "Do not... with an attitude of favoritism" is emphatic. Do not make a practice of favoritism.

Man is partial

The word used for partiality is "*prosopolempsia*" and related only to Christians. Social systems and partiality was an accepted practice in most ancient societies. It is assumed in many cultures even today.

Christianity was new - no social system attached. A lost man who hated the faith, then received Christ (like Paul) could go into the church and sit right next to a man who'd been a believer for quite some time.

God is Impartial - FAIR

1. He does not show partiality - Dt. 10:17
2. You shall not show partiality in judgment - Dt. 1:17
3. You shall take care of the poor - Dt. 15:7-11
4. Judges were not to be partial - 2 Chron. 19:7
5. To show partiality in judgement is not good - Prov. 24:23
6. I have made you despised and abased because you show partiality - Mal. 2:9
7. Peter had to shed his Jewish prejudice - Acts 10:35
8. God's impartiality extends to His judgment - Rom. 2:9-11
9. Jesus said do not judge according to appearance - Jn. 7:24
10. He is impartial with regard to social status - Eph. 6:5-9

We should have proper respect for people

1. Gray-headed - You shall rise up before the gray headed - Lev. 19:32
2. Pastors - appreciate them - 1 Thess. 5:12-13
3. Honor elders who rule - 1 Tim. 5:17
4. Respect those in authority - Rom. 13:1-5

Jesus showed no partiality:

1. To the wealthy or the beggar
2. To a virtuous woman or a prostitute - woman taken in adultery
3. Touched the lepers

4. Educated or ignorant - Wise men or shepherds
5. Religious or irreligious
6. Law-abiding citizen or criminal - thief on the cross/ Matthew the tax-collector
-Simon the Zealot
7. Women and men equally - Samaritan woman
8. The apostles were very different - yet chosen

Eternal life is given impartially- Mt. 22:9-10 - go out into the highways and hedges of life and invite to the wedding.

II. Verses 2-3 - An Example

Most converts were Jewish and poor. Many suddenly became poor when they were ostracized because of their faith. A father might lose his job - a wife cast out of the house, because her husband did not approve of her faith.

After Pentecost, the sense of no partiality was noted. They had all things in common - Acts 2:44-45.

Two persons

1. Rich man
 - “gold ring” - literally “gold-fingered.” Could mean he had more than one gold ring. Numerous rings on fingers were a mark of status or wealth. Father Clement of Alexandria told Christians to wear no more than one ring and that one should depict a dove, a fish, an anchor, or other Christian symbols.
 - “fine” robe. “Lampros” robe - used of a “gorgeous robe”
2. Poor man
 - could only wear the cheapest clothes
 - had little opportunity to wash himself or his clothes
 - “vile” is dirty or shabby

Seating arrangements

1. Only a few benches - chief priests coveted the best seats - Mt. 23:6. Others were placed round the walls. Some would sit on a “footstool.”
2. “By my footstool” - not even on the footstool. He would not even allow him to sit on the footstool - but “by” it.
3. RSV - “have a seat here”

III. Verses 4-7 - The Reasoning

The treatment is:

1. Superficial self-interest - and worldly motives - you are thinking like the world - pride and self-interest, and position.
2. It is not just discrimination - it is evil. Verse 4.
“Evil” is “*ponerous*” - the strongest, most vicious evil.
-and what’s worse,... this is “evil thoughts” -this is how they are thinking. Wrong motives, divided allegiances.
3. Inconsistent - God’s character and their inconsistency are incompatible.
A. Inconsistent with God’s choice of the poor - siding against those God has

chosen -

****God's ways to help the poor-**

- Ps. 41:1 - God will bless those who take care of the helpless
- Ps. 68:10 - you provided for the poor
- Ps.. 72:4, 12 - Solomon told kings to vindicate the poor
- Prov. 17:5 - he who mocks the poor reproaches his maker
- Is. 3:14-15 - the Lord judges elders for crushing the poor
- Amos 2:6-7 - "sell the righteous for money"
- Lev. 1:5, 10, 14 - God made special exceptions for those too poor to pay
- Dt. 15:1-2 - jubilee year made provision for the poor
- Lev. 19:9-10 - crops were not completely picked
- Lev. 25:35-37 - poor were never charged interest
- Lev. 25:25 - a kinsman could redeem property if they sold it all

****Inconsistent with the purpose and plan of God in choosing the poor of this world to be spiritually rich**

****Inconsistent with God's deliberate strategy - 1 Cor. 1:27**

- B. The rich blaspheme your faith...these are the very people who make fun of you and haul you into court
- C. Royal law (7) - ****Inconsistent with loving your neighbor as self**
 - 1) The image of God - do not kill, why? - the image of God
 - 2) Even if it is the only sin we commit - we have broken the whole law

IV. Verses 8-11 - Conclusion - It is Sin

1. Contrary to God's royal law (verse 8**)**

- absolute binding authority of the law
- *When a king gives an edict, it is incontestably binding on all his subjects
- “Royal law” is to be equated with the entire will of God for Christians. It is the law which has at its heart love of neighbor. “Royal” it is the law that governs all the others.... the “king” or “supreme” law.
- If they show unfairness... they do not show love.

2. To show partiality is sin (verse 9**)**

- Verse 9 if not - a first-class conditional clause... but if you show partiality, and you do!
- to show partiality connects you as a serious breaker of the law. Not just break it but have a life characterized by breaking it.
- twice he says it is sin:
 - A. Sin (hamartia) - to fall short...
 - B. Transgressors - to willfully go beyond God's limit
 - C. Why? Because to break the law at one point is to break all the law. We cannot pick and chose which laws we will keep and which we will break. The law is all of one cloth. We cannot claim to be righteous because we keep one part of the law. We all tend to see some laws as heavy and some as light. Not so.

3. The seriousness of the sin is seen in that he compares it with two “heavier” sins - adultery and murder

Verses 12-13 - Warning - You will be judged

1. "Do not... with an attitude of favoritism" is emphatic. Do not make a practice of favoritism.
2. If you come before the judgment seat of God and He sees that you have lived a life that is merciful to others, he will be merciful to you. Verse 13.

Application

1. Christians are not just to simply reflect the habit of the day
2. Is our society in tiers - as was theirs?
 - the church/ it's people are to be different
3. Do we associate with the poor?
 - what is our attitude to those whose status in life is "lower" than ours?
 - how do you treat the waitress, the custodian, the garbage man?
 - do you look down on others
4. How we treat others is not a "light" matter
 - how we treat others reflects our "attitude" or "evil thoughts"
5. All human beings are precious to God