



JAMES
WISDOM
FROM
ABOVE

James 2:1-13
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Favoritism

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NCCC

INTRO. Have you ever felt left out, shunned, or excluded. Illus. Jr High.

James catches wind of a growing TREND among the scattered churches— holding spots for the rich while booting the poor to math class.

And so James...

BEGINS: vs1 — *My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.*

BUILDS TO: vs13— *Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

The wisdom of God is mercy; The wisdom of the world is judgement.

FUNDAMENTALLY, IRREDUCIBLY...A Christian is someone who has BEEN transformed by the mercy of God. We have been saved by God's mercy for the purpose of being God's mercy to others.

But- According to James- Favoritism threatens to deceive and tempt us away from the centrality of God's mercy.

So we must learn to be vigilant against favoritism.

"Vigilant"... it means to be alert, aware, and watchful...

The early church maintained a radical standard of mercy and sacrificial love by being vigilant.

FOCUS. From James we Learn that vigilance means (1) CLEAR about what favoritism is and (2) HONEST about its presence in our community.

CLARITY— *2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

1) Define: Favoritism— to pay special attention to those who can benefit us at the expense of giving attention to those who cannot repay us.

The key phrase is "at the expense". James has no problem with showing kindness to the rich. It's placing the rich ABOVE the poor.

Favoritism is the valuing of one person BY devaluing another.

6 But you have dishonored the poor.

The wisdom of the world is to value people based on their outward appearance.

1 Samuel 16:7 The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Favoritism is a sin that deceives us into valuing people superficially and selfishly.

OT- warns against devaluing the poor, the orphans, the widows, the foreigners... The disadvantaged. Deut—> Prophets. Last week Ja 1:27... true religion... orphans & widows.

2) James helps us understand that favoritism in all its forms of discrimination— racism, chauvinism, classism— are essentially spiritual in nature.

9 But if you show favoritism, you sin...

It's a sin that manifests in psychological, sociological, political ways but it is fundamentally spiritual in nature.

TO BE CLEAR. Favoritism is...

- ❖ Devaluing of some in order to value others.
- ❖ Sin. Spiritual in nature.

HONESTY. 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

TO BE HONEST—

1. We are all tempted to discriminate
2. There are deep patterns of discrimination in our culture.

1) Because we all have sin, we are all going to be tempted to discriminate.

We may not recognize it at first but we all see ourselves as part of a group. Some groups are merely recreational... some of these groups define our identity and purpose. These can be Political, religious, social, racial, heck even sports... hooliganism... attack and bully fans of the other team.

The problem is we are quicker to give the benefit of the doubt to people in our group... and less willing to assume the best of those outside our group.

Favoritism is based on false judgements we are tempted to make of others.

There are many studies that show how children at an early age group people by the appearances... including the color of people's skin.

"Nuture Shock"— honest discussion about racism helps kids...

Being honest means we resist being easily offended when we are called out.

2) We need to be honest about the ways favoritism takes shape in our culture so we aren't deceived and tempted.

Being honest means we resist turning it into a politicized, taboo topic.

Look at how specific James gets in vs 2... the well dressed man...

Are we willing to be that honest and specific with the patterns of favoritism in our culture?

If you had to give 2 examples what would you pick?

RESPONSE— *Romans 15:7 Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

JESUS- wide open arms— the cross— mercy/ judgement.

BE A DOER: 1) Welcome a stranger 1/Sunday. 2) Invite outsiders to be insiders.

This Week's Memory Verse:

Mercy triumphs over judgement. —James 2:13