

Fulfilling The Royal Law

James 2:1-13

1

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism - James 2:1

"The faith" - Objective sense.

- ▶ **"One faith"** Ephesians 4:5; Galatians 3:23-24
- ▶ **"The faith"** may be preached. Romans 10:8; Galatians 1:23

2

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism - James 2:1

- ▶ **"The faith"** may be obeyed. Acts 6:7
- ▶ We may stand in **"the faith."** 1 Corinthians 16:13
- ▶ We may continue in **"the faith."** Acts 14:27; Colossians 1:23
- ▶ We may strive (or contend) for **"the faith."** Philippians 1:27; Jude 3

3

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism - James 2:1

"My brethren, hold not *the faith* of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the Lord) of glory, *with respect of persons.*"

prosopolepsia: "partiality, the fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts: Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; plural (which relates to the various occasions and instances in which this fault shows itself)." (Thayer)

4

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism - James 2:1

"My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the Lord) of glory, *with respect of persons.*" (ASV). "Partiality" (NKJV); "Personal favoritism" (NASV); "Don't show favoritism" (NIV)

prosoopolempsiais - "literally to lift up the face (countenance), meaning 'to regard with favor,' as in Mal. 1:8. If you should offer blind, lame or sick animals to your governor, will he be pleased and accept you favorably?" (James Cooper, Faith On Trial)

5

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism - James 2:1

Forbidden in the Old Testament:

Leviticus 19:15, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: *thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.*"

Deuteronomy 1:17, "*Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you ye shall bring unto me, and I will hear it.*"

James calls it **"sin."** verse 9

6

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

Impartiality is a characteristic of God and Jesus.

Luke 20:21, "And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and *acceptest not the person (of any)*, but of a truth teachest the way of God"

Acts 10:34, "Of a truth I perceive that God is *no respecter of persons*"

Galatians 2:6, "But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: *God accepteth not man's person*)."

7

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

Impartiality is a characteristic of God and Jesus.

1 Peter 1:17, "And if ye call on him as Father, who *without respect of persons* judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear"

Romans 2:10–11, "but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is *no respect of persons with God*."

Ephesians 6:9, "knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is *no respect of persons with him*."

8

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

They had demonstrated partiality: (James 2:4–6)

"*Made distinctions*"

"*Become judges with evil thoughts*"

"*Dishonored the poor man ...*"

9

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

How is favoritism shown? James 2:2–3

- ▶ Jews and Gentiles. Acts 11; 15; Galatians 2, 3
- ▶ Rich and Poor. James 2
- ▶ Background. Luke 15
- ▶ Occupation, friends, and standing. John 12

10

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

Their error: "Become judges WITH evil thoughts." James 2:4

- ▶ Judged on the basis of outward appearance. (cf. Matthew 7:1; John 4:24)
- ▶ Evil judging comes from evil hearts. Matthew 12:24–37
 - Evil hearts prevented them from seeing the power of God. Matthew 12:28
 - cf. Apostles judged because they did not follow tradition – Matthew 15:1–20

11

"The Faith" Does Not Allow Favoritism – James 2:1

The "unlikely" just may listen and obey.

- ▶ **Prejudice** – Woman at the well. John 4
- ▶ **Religious/Gentile** – Cornelius. Acts 10
- ▶ **Non-Religious** – Simon. Acts 8:9–13)
- ▶ **Worldly** – Corinthians. Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11
- ▶ **Ignorant** – Jews. Acts 2:23; 3:17
- ▶ **Persecutor** – Saul. Acts 8:3; 9:1–2; 1 Timothy 1:15
- ▶ **Political** – Jailor. Acts 16:31–33

12

Two Arguments Against Partiality

The Social Argument. James 2:5-7

- ▶ Poor have the gospel preached unto them. Matthew 11:5
- ▶ Elihu observed: *"That respecteth not the persons of princes, Nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; For they all are the work of his hands"* Job 34:19
- ▶ God has chosen *"the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love him."* James 2:5

13

Two Arguments Against Partiality

The Social Argument. James 2:5-7

- ▶ The **poor** of this world are ...
 - Chosen of God. cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
 - Rich in faith. cf. Revelation 2:9
 - Heirs of the kingdom. cf. Matthew 5:3; 11:5
- BUT **YOU** have dishonored them. James 2:6

14

Two Arguments Against Partiality

The Social Argument. James 2:5-7

- ▶ The **rich** of this world ...
 - Oppress you. cf. Acts 4:1-3
 - Drag you into court. cf. Acts 8:3
 - Blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called. cf. Acts 4:12

BUT **YOU** have honored them. James 2:6

15

Two Arguments Against Partiality

The Moral Argument: James 2:8 "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" cf. Leviticus 19:18

- ▶ **Royal law - basilikós:** "of or belonging to a king, kingly, royal, regal; of a man, the officer or minister of a prince, a courtier: John 4:46,49 befitting or worthy of a king" (Thayer)
- ▶ Received of the sanction of our king, Jesus Christ. cf. Matthew 22:36-40
- ▶ Illustrated with the good Samaritan. Luke 10:26-37

Demands overlooking outward distinctions!

16

Showing Partiality Is Sinful James 2:9

- ▶ **Judgment must be righteous.**
"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." Leviticus 19:15
- Contrast: John 7:24; Matthew 7:1

17

Showing Partiality Is Sinful James 2:9

- ▶ **Partiality violates the law, therefore sinful. 1 John 3:4**
 - Makes one a lawbreaker. James 2:9-11; cf. Galatians 3:10
 - "To violate the law at any one point is not to violate one commandment only; it is to violate the will of God, and to contradict the character of God." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

18

Showing Partiality Is Sinful James 2:9

▶ **Brotherly love and mercy to be exercised.**

*James 2:12 "So **speak ye**, and **so do**, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty."*

- ▶ We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:10
- ▶ We came under the "law of liberty" (1:25), when we became "free." John 8:32
 - We shall be judged by the "law of liberty." cf. James 1:25
 - We shall be judged by the word of Christ. John 12:48
- ▶ We shall be judged in righteousness. Romans 2:16; Acts 17:11

19

Showing Partiality Is Sinful James 2:9

▶ **Brotherly love and mercy to be exercised.**

- *James 2:13, "For judgment (is) without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment."*
- *Matt 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."*
- *Matt 9:11-13 - We need to learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."*
- Ephesians 2:2-4 - God is rich in mercy; cf. Paul. 1 Timothy 1:1:13-16
- Luke 15 Example of Jesus.

20

Conclusion:

- ▶ Do you "**fulfill the royal law**" in all your relationships?
 - The gospel is for all. Matthew 28:19ff

21