

James 2

1. **Partiality (verses 1-13)**
Salvation by Faith or Works? (verses 14-26)

Roxborough Bible Chapel

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Outline

- **Partiality (verses 1-13)**
 - **Example of partiality (verses 1-4)**
 - **Four reasons why partiality is not consistent with the Christian faith (verses 5-8)**
 - **Partiality is a sin (verses 9-13)**
- **Faith without works is dead (verses 14-26)**
 - **Abraham and Rahab (examples in the OT)**

Partiality (Favoritism) (verses 1-4)

- 1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.
- 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,
- 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"
- 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

- Partiality = Snobbishness or discrimination or favoritism
- This admonition about partiality is addressed to believers ("My brethren, ...")
- The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ refers to the Christian faith (not trust or believing).
- Verse 1 basically says, "My brethren, in your practice of the Christian faith, do not show partiality."

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- Verses 2-3 – Example of Partiality:



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- **But what about employer/employee (master/slave) relationships?**
 - **Ephesians 6:9** And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
 - **Rom 13:7** Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.
- **Application: Do you give preference (pay more attention) to the outwardly rich people despising the poor?**
 - **WHY would we do this?**
 - Do you want to identify with the rich?
 - Do you think you will get anything from the rich in return?
 - Do you favor those who are “like-minded”?

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- **Are you judging with evil thoughts (vicious intentions)?**
- **If you show partiality, you are setting yourself up as a judge (acting as God) with evil thoughts.**
- **Challenging Application Questions**



Partiality (Favoritism) (verses 5-8)

- 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
- 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?
- 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?
- 8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you do well;

- **Four reasons why it is ridiculous for a believer to favor the rich and look down on the poor**
 - **1. Verses 5, 6a - First of all, it means that we dishonor a man whom God honors.**
 - **2. Verse 6b - A second reason why it is foolish to show deference to the rich is that, as a class, they are the ones who have characteristically oppressed the people of God.**
 - **“Why honor your executioners?”**
 - **3. Verse 7 - A third reason why it is foolish to be partial toward the rich is that they habitually use evil or harsh speech involving the name of Christ. This is the noble name by which believers are called—Christians, or followers of Christ.**
 - **The traits which accompany riches are not ordinarily honoring to the Lord Jesus.**
 - **4. Verse 8 - James' fourth argument is that showing deference to the rich violates the law that “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” It is called the royal law because it belongs to the King and because it is the king of all laws.**
 - **Matthew 7:12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Is the way the poor man was treated in verse 2 and 3 consistent with this verse?)**

Partiality (Favoritism)

(verses 9-13)

- 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
- 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.
- 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
- 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.
- 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Supporting arguments relative to the 4th reason why partiality is not consistent with the Christian faith (violation of the law “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”)
- Verse 9 – Committing sin with partiality
 - Relative to Moses setting up wise and spiritual leaders to be judges in Israel, he says to them, Deuteronomy 1:17 You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'
 - Relative to Moses instructing the Israelites to appoint judges over the people in the promised land, he says, Deuteronomy 16:19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.
- Verse 10 - To break one part of the law is to be guilty of all.
- Verse 11 - The same God who forbids adultery also forbids murder.
- Verse 12 - “As believers, you are no longer under the law of bondage, but you are under the law of liberty — liberty to do what is right.
- Verse 13 - The general idea seems to be that if we show mercy to others, the judgment which might otherwise fall on us will be replaced by mercy.

Partiality (Favoritism)

(Summary of James 2: 1-13)

- Test - Let us test ourselves then on this important subject of partiality.
- As we answer these questions, let us remember that the way we treat the least lovable believer is the way we treat the Savior
 - Matthew 25:31-46
 - Key Verse = Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

- This is James' most controversial passage.
 - What is correct? James' teaching on justification by works OR Paul's insistence on justification by faith?
 - These verses are commonly misused to support the heresy that we are saved by faith plus works. In other words, we must trust the Lord Jesus as our Savior, but that is not enough. We must also add to His redemptive work our own deeds of charity and devotion.
- This section could be titled, “Justification by works”
 - We are justified by *grace* (Rom_3:24).
 - We are justified by *faith* (Rom_5:1).
 - We are justified by *blood* (Rom_5:9).
 - We are justified by *God* (Rom_8:33).
 - We are justified by *power* (Rom_4:25).
 - We are justified by *works* (Jam_2:24).
- From this we see that there is no contradiction at all. These statements simply present different aspects of the same truth.

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

- 14 What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?
- 15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
- 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?
- 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- Verse 14
 - James is speaking about a *say-so faith* that is not backed up by good works. Such a faith is worthless. It is all words, and nothing else.
- Verses 15-16
 - The futility of words without deeds is now illustrated. "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled." What good are such words? They are positively worthless! They neither satisfy the appetite nor provide warmth for the body.
 - I John 3:17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
- Verse 17
 - A faith without works is not real faith at all.
 - In other words, works are not the root of salvation but the fruit; they are not the cause but the effect.

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.
19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!
20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?
21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

- Verse 18
 - The key to this verse lies in the word *show*: To **show** faith apart from works is impossible. Faith is invisible. The only way others can know you have faith is by a life that demonstrates it.
- Verses 19-20
 - It is not enough to believe in the existence of **God**. **Even the demons believe** in the existence of God and they shudder at the thought of their eventual punishment by Him. **The demons believe** the fact, but they do not surrender to the Person. This is not saving faith.
 - Faith apart from works is head belief, and therefore dead belief.
- Verses 21 (Abraham as an example)
 - After God told Abraham that he would have a son and that he would have descendents as numerous as the stars that he could see, He says in Genesis 15:6 "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."
 - Here Abraham was justified by believing; in other words, he was justified by faith. It is not until we come to Genesis 22 that we find Abraham offering up his son. It is then that he was justified by works.

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

- 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?
23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." And he was called the friend of God.
24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

- Verses 22-23
 - It is clear then that Abraham's faith inspired his works, and by his works his faith was made perfect. In the offering of Isaac we see a practical demonstration of the faith of Abraham. It was the practical fulfillment of the Scripture which said that Abraham was justified by believing. His good works identified him as the friend of God.
- Verse 24
 - We conclude from this, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Again, this does *not* mean that he was justified by faith *plus* works. He was justified by faith Godward, and by works manward. God justified him the moment he believed. Man says, "Show me the reality of your faith." The only way to do this is by good works.

Faith Without Works is Dead

James 2:14-26

- 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?
- 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

- Verse 25
 - The second OT illustration is Rahab the harlot. She certainly was *not* saved by good character (she was a prostitute!). But she was justified by works because she received the messengers (or spies) and sent them out another way.
- Verse 26
 - James compares faith to the human body. He likens works to the spirit. The body without the spirit is lifeless, useless, valueless. So faith without works is dead, ineffective, worthless.

Conclusions

- To summarize, then, James tests our faith by our answers to the following questions.
 - Am I willing like Abraham to offer the dearest thing in my life to God?
 - Am I willing like Rahab to turn traitor to the world in order to be loyal to Christ?