

Nov 29, 2020



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

◆
Lesson Leaders:
James Haymon

Class Leaders:
Inreach: Pat Hester
Deacon: C M Hester

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Prejudice builds walls; love breaks them down

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
All those who know and love the Lord
Must show by word and deed
That they will not discriminate
But welcome those in need — D. De Haan

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality
(James 2:1 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", May 18, 2003)

New Series: Call in the New Testament

UNIT: The Beginning of a Call

NEXT WEEK

Called to be Heir
(Matt 1:1-6,16-17; Heb 1:1-5)

Impartial Love **James 2:1-13**

Lesson Background and Introduction

Over 1,900 years ago, James gave definitive answers for how the church should live and behave. James offered these two ethical foundations, the royal law and the law of liberty, to guide the church. Both of these were learned from his half-brother, Jesus. These two laws go together. If we see others as our neighbors in need, whether they are beloved friends or reviled enemies, we must show mercy, not discrimination. If we set aside our natural impulse to favor certain visitors, we will find unexpected opportunities to share the love that wells up in our hearts. We should lead with love, never doubting God's willingness to show kindness to us. Churches should practice self-examination using these complementary laws. What things do we do that favor certain people over others? Do our church leaders represent the diversity of our church body, or are they predominately well-off financially, well-educated, and of a certain ethnicity that does not represent the whole? Is our congregation known as a loving place or a judgmental place? Does our community recognize us as people who take them seriously? Our answers to these questions will help us see as a congregation how we measure up to the standard of the two laws. Jesus did not treat people according to divisions of wealth or poverty, or perceived blessings or curses. James, his brother, did not either. Instead, James and Jesus show that God loves the poor, and we should too. This issue has not gone away in the nearly 2,000 years since James wrote, and we do well to listen to him today.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Discrimination in the Church - Prejudice and preferential treatment are always wrong. Treating a person in a certain way based on their external circumstances can be very dishonoring and hurtful. This is contrary to God's character; He cares for all His children regardless of their social status. James wrote during a time when people continuously judged each other based on class, ethnicity, nationality, apparel, or religious background. High-minded people looked down upon and mistreated those of the lower economic class—slaves, beggars, barbarians, and even women. When Jesus walked the earth, He corrected this prejudicial thinking. He demonstrated through His actions and teaching that God sees all of humanity as valuable, deserving of His love. It is always wrong to discriminate against people because of the size of their pocketbook, the color of their skin, the size of their nose, or any other such distinction.

Partial Treatment - James gave an example of two men who came into a church meeting, one in elegant clothing but the other poor and filthy. How would the congregation respond? Would the wealthy man get the best seat in the house and the other man be placed in the back of the church—closely watched? This is not God's heart. Indeed, the Scriptures indicate that a poor man is more likely to seek God because of his need, whereas a rich person may depend upon possessions and see no need for divine assistance (1 Tim. 6:6-10). God's children are not to show favoritism. James points out that if we treat people differently based on something external, we are violating God's law. Some may try to say, "Well, that's not as bad as adultery, stealing, or some other sin." But James wanted to make it crystal clear—favoritism is a sin. Other sins do not "trump" it. Pastor Charles Swindell sums it up well: "If there is one place where class distinctions should break down, it is in the place of worship where color, political persuasion, type of Christian experience, money, status, rank, name, apparel, smell, size, and age mean nothing."

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Injustice of Favoritism (James 2:1-4)

Injustice of favoritism in faith (1)

Injustice in faith by having a motive of pride (Matt 23:1-7)

Injustice in faith by associating with only friends and family (Luke 14:12-14)

Injustice in faith through envy (John 4:1)

Injustice in faith by using God's Word incorrectly to discriminate (Acts 10:28)

Injustice in faith through peer pressures (Gal 2:11-13)

Injustice in faith through boasting and thinking more highly of oneself than others (Luke 18:11-14)

Injustice in practice (2-3)

Injustice in practice because of status (Deut 1:17)

Injustice in practice because of wealth (Lev 19:15)

Injustice in practice through perverting justice (Deut 16:19)

Injustice in practice by not keeping God's Word (1 Tim 5:21)

Injustice in practice through secretly showing partiality (Job 13:10)

Injustice in practice shouldn't be done because there is no partiality with God (Rom 2:11)

Injustice in relationships (4)

Injustice in relationships by allowing worldly standards to stand in the way of fellowship (John 4:27)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because all Christians are one in Jesus (Gal 3:27-28)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because all Christians are members of one body (1 Cor 12:12)

Injustice in relationships should not happen because God has no distinction between Christians (Rom 10:12)

The Inconsistency of Favoritism (James 2:5-7)

God's view (5)

God shows no favoritism between the rich and the poor because they are all the work of His hands (Job 34:19)

God is not unjust (Heb 6:10)

God shows no favoritism and accepts no bribes (Deut 10:17)

There is no injustice with God (2 Chron 19:7)

God is Master over all (Eph 6:9)

God judges impartially (1 Peter 1:17)

World's view (6-7)

The world views people based on their own standard and does not see the new creation in a person (2 Cor 5:16-17)

The world does not accept all men from every nation (Acts 10:34-35)

The world judges by outward appearances that does not result in right judgments (John 7:24)

The world's view depends on surface things (2 Cor 10:7)

The world's view seeks answers through human ideas (Acts 17:16-21)

The Iniquity of Favoritism (James 2:8-13)

Iniquity in not loving (8-9)

Iniquity in not loving others (1 John 4:20-21)

Iniquity in hating our brothers and sisters (1 John 2:9-10)

Iniquity in following Satan's attributes and not loving our brothers (1 John 3:10)

Iniquity in anger with others (Matt 5:21-22)

Iniquity in disobedience to God's Word (10-11)

Disobedience through being deceived by empty words (Eph 5:6)

Disobedience through minds being corrupted (Titus 1:15-16)

Disobedience because of rejecting the gospel (Heb 4:6)

Disobedience because of not accepting God's advice (Prov 1:29-31)

Disobedience through forsaking God's word (Jer 9:13-14)

Disobedience through violating God's covenant Word (Deut 17:2-5)

Iniquity in not showing mercy (12-13)

Not showing mercy because of shutting ears to the cries of others (Prov 21:13)

Not showing mercy because of ungratefulness (Matt 18:28-19:1)

Not showing mercy through not helping others (Matt 25:41-46)

Not showing mercy because of wickedness (Prov 21:10)

Not showing mercy because of disobedience (Jer 21:3-7)