

# Faith Loves, Part 2

## Lesson for Sunday, October 22, 2023

Today we enter chapter 2! The key verse we want to encourage our people to memorize from this chapter is verse 17.

### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ How would you define personal holiness? *Allow for some discussion...*
  - The truth is – this is not an easy thing to do! Everyone seems to have their ideas about this very important topic.
- ⇒ Here's a definition that is easy to remember: Holiness is going against the grain of the world.
  - When we are living holy lives, we are not living according to the ways of the world.
  - Instead, we are living according to the instructions of the Living Word.
- ⇒ In last week's lesson, we covered James 1:26-27 where James is defining what true religion looks like. In verse 27, James ends with the phrase, "to keep himself unspotted from the world."
  - James is saying, "Keep yourself holy!"
  - There should be a clear separation between the Christian and the world.
- ⇒ In today's text, James 2:1-13, James provides the application of 1:27.

### BIBLE STUDY:

James is teaching in these verses that genuine faith and favoritism are completely incompatible. The problem is that favoritism seems to be ingrained in every human being. Discuss how favoritism might be seen in one's life. Then point out that in these verses, James provides us with five reminders that will keep us focused on holiness and away from playing favorites.

1. We are to be focused on the **glory** of Christ (vs. 1-4).
  - a. James is practical as always. If we are captivated by "the Lord of glory," we will not be captivated by men.
  - b. What do we see in Jesus that keeps us thinking properly in our dealings with others?
    - i. In Jesus we see the **supremacy** of Christ over the wealthy.
    - ii. And we remember His **sacrifice** for the needy (see 2 Corinthians 8:9).
  - c. What should we see when we look on others? There are several biblical truths to remember:
    - i. Each person is stamped with the image of God.
    - ii. Each person will spend eternity somewhere forever.
    - iii. Each person is a soul for whom Christ died.
  - d. We are not to be captured by the temporary glory of men. We are instead to be captivated by the glory of Christ.
2. We are to be gripped by the **grace** of Christ (vs. 5-7).
  - a. In this verse we see another example of how Jesus turns the world's thinking upside down.
  - b. First, Jesus **reverses** our status in this world.
    - i. James points out that God has chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith.
    - ii. This is the exact opposite of how the world – and most Christians – think. All the importance is placed on those with an elevated social status such as the wealthy and the powerful. See Psalm 68:10 & Galatians 2:10.
    - iii. But this also applies to those who understand their spiritual poverty. Ready Matthew 5:3.
    - iv. The testimony of the Scripture is that God has chosen to show His grace greatly to the poor – to those who suffer with physical needs, and most importantly to those who acknowledge their spiritual need.

- v. James is teaching us that when we neglect the poor we are negating the grace that lies at the heart of God.
- c. Second, Jesus **transforms** our standards in this world.
  - i. When we look at a man, we look at outward appearance and we often honor him based on things such as his possessions, status, position, etc.
  - ii. But Scripture tells us to look at men through the lens of the grace of God in Christ. This is key in terms of how we treat people.
- 3. We are to be devoted to the **law** of Christ (vs. 8-10).
  - a. What is the “royal law”? It is found in Matthew 22:37-39. Also, in Deuteronomy 6:4. It is stated eight times in the Scripture.
  - b. To show favoritism is to break God’s royal law.
  - c. Verse 9 teaches that favoritism **disrespects** man.
  - d. Verse 10 teaches that favoritism **dishonors** man.
- 4. We are to be cognizant of the **judgment** of Christ (vs. 12-13).
  - a. James brings us back to an important reality: We will all be judged one day.
  - b. In verse 12a, James says our **words** will be judged. Discuss: How do we show favoritism in our words?
  - c. In 12b, our **deeds** will be judged. Discuss: How do we show favoritism in our deeds?
  - d. How should God’s judgment impact how we live on a daily basis?
- 5. We are to be a reflection of the **mercy** of Christ (vs. 13).
  - a. When we study a passage like this (looking into the perfect law of liberty) we should all feel some conviction.
  - b. It is a reminder that we all stand in need of God’s mercy. Praise the Lord that we serve a merciful Savior.
  - c. If you have shown favoritism, confess it to God and experience His mercy.
  - d. This last point summarizes this section nicely. As Christians, we have all received God’s mercy. And God’s mercy that is in us should overflow out of us to others.

DISCUSSION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ How do we experience favoritism in our culture today?
- ⇒ How are Christians often guilty of showing favoritism?
- ⇒ How has the text challenged you? What changes will you have to make as a result?
- ⇒ Is there someone you need to seek forgiveness from? What do you need to do this week to make that right?