

James 2:1-13
No Favorites

Introduction

Question: Have you ever seen anyone given preferential treatment at church because of their wealth, status, appearance, or other reasons?

We are naturally drawn toward those that are either like us or that we believe might do us some good. Even in Christian circles we seem to rejoice more when a celebrity becomes a Christian than when a poor widow does. In James 2:1-13 we are told not to show preferential treatment. This is no minor exhortation. It is at the heart of the gospel.

James 2:1-13

Question: What does it mean to show favoritism or partiality (vv. 1-4)? Why shouldn't we show favoritism to the rich?

Question: In what other ways can we make distinctions among us or show partiality?

Question: Why have these believers become judges with evil thoughts when they discriminate (v. 4)? How do their actions compare to God in the way He judges?

Question: What similarities are there between verse 5 and the previous verses?

Question: What three actions have the rich inflicted upon the poor (vv. 6-7)? Are these attacks still being carried out against the church today?

Question: Have you ever been ignored or treated differently at church? How did you feel?

Question: What is the royal law (v. 8)?

Question: How does one fulfill the royal law (vv. 8-11)? What is the result when one shows partiality?

Question: Does James contradict the idea that believers will be judged by mercy and grace rather than by strict justice and the Law (vv. 10-13)?

Question: In the context of this passage, what kind of mercy is James saying we should practice?

Reflection

Question: How do favoritism and discrimination show that we love ourselves more than others? To whom do you need to show mercy this week, rather than prejudice, indifference, or resentment?