

"Living Our Faith in the Way We Treat People"

James 2:1-26

Sunday, October 9, 2016

Introduction: What would you include on a list of five attributes of God that you appreciate most? That would be hard to do because there are so many things about God that we appreciate. On the list would certainly be His unconditional love, His forgiveness, His faithfulness, His mercy, and His consistency.

This morning I want us to think about a quality of God that needs to be on our list that we probably do not think about. God's impartiality is one of the great things about God. God has no favorites. The Bible is very clear about this Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, and Ephesians 6:5-9 are just some of the verses that teach that God has no favorites.

Christians should treat people like God treats people. The way to do that is to live our faith in the way we treat people. Sometimes there is a gap between the faith we profess and the faith we practice. One thing that causes that gap is favoritism. Too often we show favoritism to people by who they are and what they are.

1. Living our faith excludes favoritism (2:1-13).

- James deals with this in James 2:1.
- One translation of this verse says, "My brothers, you cannot believe that you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, and yet continue to have respect of persons" (James 2:1—Barclay translation).
- The first century church was the one place where social distinctions did not exist. In the church, Masters would sit beside slaves. The slaves might be the leaders in the worship services. The first century church was predominantly poor which explains why James used the example he used that is recorded in 2:2-4.

Illustration: A wealthy man we will call "Mr. Gold fingers" and a poor man we will call "Mr. dirty clothes" can to church on morning and the usher showed favoritism. God's appraisal is in verse 4.

Application: Every person is a person. Young or old, minimum wage or CEO, educated or uneducated, black or white, influential or unknown, Christ loves them all and died for them. Excluding favoritism is simply living your faith.

Illustration: I learned a painful way about favoritism. It happened in 1972 in Charleston, South Carolina and I have never forgotten how I felt. In a nutshell, let me share what happened. (To hear the story, listen to the sermon on the church web page www.fbp.org).

Illustration: The experience in Charleston, South Carolina impacted my life. From that day to this day, I have never let peoples position in life make me cater to their wishes. I got tested on that very quickly in this church near the end of my first year as pastor here. I have never shared the story, but it illustrates

how hard it can be to not show favoritism. (To hear the story, listen to the sermon on the church web page www.fbp.org).

T.S. Living our faith excludes favoritism. Living our faith is evidenced by good works.

2. Living our faith is evidenced by good works (2:14-26).

- Look at James 2:24. It appears to contradict what Paul taught about being justified in Romans 3:28. Paul clearly taught that we are justified by faith. James says we are justified by works. Listen carefully. There is no contradiction.
- When Paul said we are justified by faith, he meant in the eyes of God. God has X-Ray vision. He can see in a man's heart.
- When James said we are justified by works, he meant in the eyes of man.

Illustration: James gives two illustrations of people being justified in the eyes of men by works.

1. Abraham was justified by works in the eyes of men (v.21). This is recorded in Genesis 22. Abraham was saved in Genesis 15:6. He was saved in private and God could see his heart.
2. Rahab was justified by works (James 2:25).

Illustration: Justification to Paul dealt with how to be saved. Justification to James dealt with how a saved person lives.

Conclusion: We are justified by faith alone in Christ alone, but faith that saves is never alone.

Invitation: Some of you need to be saved. God knows your heart. He has X-Ray eyes. He sees your heart. Some of you are saved. You have been justified by faith, but you need to be justified by works. You need to be justified in the eyes of man.