

James 2:1-4

Intro: When talking about the attributes of God, many would list omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability, just, love, gracious, merciful, faithfulness, goodness, eternal, sovereign. Another one that is not as memorable is impartiality. This is one way that God truly is different than us. We have the tendency to make judgments based on all kinds of superficial things, looks, clothes, ethnic background, social status, personality, intelligence, wealth, power, the type of car they drive, house they own, the neighborhood they live in. None of these are a concern to God - De 10:17 "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. God is concerned that His people reflect His character.

De 15:7-11 "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, "but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. "Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

1Jo 3:16-19 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 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? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

James is a very practical letter. In James 1:3-12 deals with how we deal with trials, vs 13-18 how we respond to temptation, vs 19-27 how we react to the word of God. Here we look at partiality in regard to social and economic status

VII. Th Evil Favoritism in the Church - Part 1

A. The Principle - vs 1

1. My brethren

- a. speaking out of love and care
- b. the proper attitude to have before an admonition

2. our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory,

- a. lit. our Lord Jesus Christ of the glory
- b. possibly refers to the Lord's Shekinah Glory
 - i. filled the tabernacle and temple - Ex 40:34; 1 Kgs 8:11
 - ii. Left the temple - Eze 10

3. do not hold the faith of with partiality

- a. do not with partiality
 - i. in the emphatic position
 - ii. give special force to the imperative admonition
 - iii. do not continue making a practice of partiality
- b. Partiality

i. *prosopolepsia* - partiality, i.e. favoritism:--respect of persons.

- only used in Christian literature, prob. b/c it was so common in secular society

- lit. lifting up someone's face w/ the idea of judging by appearance and on that basis giving special favor and respect
- Judging purely on superficial level, or a temporary value system
- ii. not simply disrespectful, it is a serious sin
 - Le 19:15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.
 - Pr 24:23b These things also belong to the wise: It is not good to show partiality in judgment.
 - Pr 28:21 To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.
- iii. Contrary to the character of God - Ro 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1Pe 1:17

B. The Example - vs 2-4

1. The state of economics in the 1st century church

a. The Poor

- i. 1Co 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.
- ii. In a Roman diatribe against Christians in 178 AD, a philosopher, Celsus attacked Christians for being poor, vulgar, uneducated, and common
- iii. Absence of partiality in early Church, shared everything
 - Ac 2:44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.
 - Ac 4:34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.
- iv. Persecution caused many to lose jobs, homes, ostracized by family, and friends; their need for food, clothes, shelter, and necessities increased to critical proportions - Ac 6:1
- v. Paul's pursuing financial help for those in Jerusalem from the churches of the Gentiles - 2 Co 8-9

b. The Rich

- i. Barnabas - Ac 4
- ii. Joseph of Arimathea - Mr 15:43; Jo 19:38
- iii. Nicodemus - Jo 19:38-40
- iv. The Ethiopian Eunuch - Ac 8:26-38
- v. the Roman, Cornelius - Ac 10
- vi. Sergius Paulus - Ac 13:7, 12
- vii. Lydia - Ac 16:14

2. The Hypothetical - vs 2-3

a. For if there should come into your assembly

- i. if - some of the churches had either wealthy people or visitors
- ii. assembly - **sunagoge** - an assemblage of persons; specially, a Jewish "synagogue" (the meeting or the place); by analogy, a Christian church:-- assembly, congregation, synagogue.
 - **ekklesia** - a calling out, a popular meeting, especially a religious

congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):--assembly, church.

Used in 5:14

- evidence that the audience is Jewish

b. The Visitors

i. a man with gold rings, in fine apparel

- **chrusodaktulios** - gold-ringed, wearing a golden finger-ring or similar jewelry:--with a gold ring. The idea is multiple rings

- **lampros** - radiant; magnificent or sumptuous (in appearance):--bright, clear, gay, goodly, gorgeous, white. Used of clothes that angels wear - Lk 23:11

- imaginary visitor is probably an unbeliever

ii. and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

- **ptochos** - a beggar (as cringing), pauper (distressed):--beggar(-ly), poor.

- **rhuparos** - dirty, (relatively) cheap or shabby; morally, wicked:--vile.

- clean clothes and body are desirable, but the poor would wear cast offs and had less opportunity to wash himself or his clothes

c. Their response to the visitors

i. and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes

- **epiblepo** - to gaze at (with favor, pity or partiality):--look upon, regard, have respect to.

- and say to him, "You sit here in a good place,"

- most Synagogues only had a few benches

- Mt 23:6 "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

ii. and say to the poor man,

- "You stand there," - most stood or sat crossed legged on the floor

- or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

- **hupopodion** - something under the feet, a foot-rest:--footstool.

-some people brought footstools

-a double insult in that they were not offered the footstool, but to sit on the floor next to it

3. The sin - vs 4

a. have you not shown partiality among yourselves,

i. **diakrino** - to separate thoroughly, to withdraw from, or oppose; to discriminate (decide), or hesitate:--contend, make (to) differ(-ence), discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver.

ii. Among yourselves - by showing favor to the rich and discourtesy or contempt to the poor

b. and become judges with evil thoughts?

i. **krites** - a judge.

ii. **poneros** - hurtful, evil (in effect or influence); calamitous; also ill, diseased; (morally) culpable, derelict, vicious, facinorous; mischief, malice, or guilt; the devil, or sinners:--bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness).

iii. **dialogismos** - discussion, (internal) consideration (motive, purpose), (external) debate, dispute, doubtful, imagination, reasoning, thought.