

AM 02-01 No Partiality in the Church - Pulpit

Faith Without Favoritism

James 2:1–9

Springboard Scripture

Deuteronomy 10:17 (NASB 1995)

“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.”

We live in a world defined by the "Velvet Rope." In stadiums and airports, money buys expedited access and VIP treatment. We expect this from the world.

But this commercial spirit often infiltrates the religious world as well. We see it in fundraising campaigns that sell "naming rights" for bricks, pews, or buildings—offering special honor in exchange for sponsorship.

The question is simple and uncomfortable:

What happens when we measure a visitor's worth not by the blood of Christ, but by the clothes on their back or the potential of their donation?

Introduction

James is writing to a church in danger of selling its soul for social approval. He paints a vivid picture of a worship assembly where a wealthy man is ushered to the front row, while a poor Christian is told to stand in the back.

James does not treat this as a minor breach of manners; he treats it as a theological crisis.

To show partiality is to fundamentally misunderstand who God is.

Thesis

Living faith treats all individuals within the Church without favoritism or rank, recognizing that prejudice violates the royal law of love.

I. The Failure of Favoritism (James 2:1–4)

A. The Command Is Absolute

James 2:1 — “My brethren, do not hold your faith...with an attitude of personal favoritism.”

- The command links our behavior directly to the **"Lord of glory."**
- In the presence of His glory, all human status fades to dust.
- You cannot hold faith in the One who emptied Himself while filling yourself with admiration for worldly rank.

Preaching Emphasis:

If our Lord was born in a manger and died on a cross, we have no business building a pedestal for the wealthy.

B. The Contrast Is Visual

James 2:2

- **The Gold Ring:** Represents power, wealth, and social capital. A "good prospect."
- **The Dirty Clothes:** Represents destitution and social repulsion. Nothing to offer.

The contrast is drawn strictly on external lines.

C. The Discrimination Is Active

James 2:3

- The rich man is offered the best seat ("sit here").
- The poor man is managed as an obstacle ("stand there" or "by my footstool").

This is not hospitality; it is solicitation.

D. The Verdict Is Internal

James 2:4

- You have become "judges with evil motives."
- The motives are evil because they calculate worth using the world's currency (greed/pride) rather than God's truth.

If our welcome depends on their wallet, our worship is already compromised.

Truth:

When the church elevates people by status, it ceases to be the body of Christ and becomes a corrupt courtroom.

II. The Reversal of Values (James 2:5–7)

A. God's Choice Exposes Our Error

James 2:5

- God chose the "poor of this world" to be rich in faith.
- Poverty does not save, but self-sufficiency often blinds.
- We must align our vision with God's: the man at the footstool may be a prince in God's eyes.

Supporting Text:

1 Corinthians 1:27 — "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise."

B. The Church's Behavior Opposes God

James 2:6 — *"But you have dishonored the poor man."*

- God exalts the humble.
 - The church shames them.
 - This is not neutrality; it is active resistance to God's work.
-

C. The Irony Is Embarrassing

James 2:6–7

- The Rich **Oppress** (Tyrannize).
- The Rich **Drag** you into court.
- The Rich **Blaspheme** the noble name.

To honor the wealthy oppressor is to flatter the enemies of the Cross.

Truth:

We cannot claim to serve the Master while fawning over those who blaspheme His name.

III. The Victory of the Royal Law (James 2:8–9)

A. The Standard Is Royal

James 2:8 — *"If...you are fulfilling the royal law...you are doing well."*

- It is "Royal" because it belongs to the King.
 - **Leviticus 19:18**: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - You would never want to be told to sit at a footstool; therefore, do not command it of another.
-

B. Partiality Is Transgression

James 2:9

- Favoritism is not a "blind spot." It is **sin**.
- You cannot keep the law of love by violating the dignity of your brother.

James 2:10

- God's law is a whole.
- Prejudice breaks the chain of obedience just as surely as adultery or murder.

Love is the non-negotiable constitution of the Kingdom.

Truth:

We cannot claim to fulfill the Royal Law while systematically violating the dignity of those the King loves.

Conclusion

Faith in action has no patience for prejudice.

The Church must be the one place on earth where the velvet rope is cut down.

In this House:

- Wealth buys no access.
- Poverty brings no shame.
- Only the blood of Christ provides standing.

Examine the seats you offer, the welcomes you give, and the respect you withhold.

Invitation

If you are outside of Christ, you stand judged by your sin, regardless of your earthly status.

The Lord invites you to become a child of the King through humble obedience:

- **Hear** the Gospel.
- **Believe** Jesus is the Christ.
- **Repent** of sin (including pride).

- **Confess** His name.
- **Be Baptized** for the remission of sins.

If you are a Christian whose heart has been controlled by the world's values, repent of the sin of favoritism.

Let the royal law rule your actions today.