

SERMON NOTES

Preacher: Andy deHoog

Date: July 2, 2023

Text: James 2:1-13

Title: The Sin of Partiality

Big Idea: Because of our faith in Christ, we can be released from mercilessly judging and instead, be free to mercifully love.



We all play favourites. We are all biased. No one is truly objective. The sin of partiality starts in the heart, there are good logical and theological reasons to avoid it, and the proper alternative is freely showing mercy as you've been shown mercy.

This Is About Our Hearts (vv. 1-5)

- "My brothers and sisters, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an *attitude* of personal favoritism." (NASB)
- "as you *hold the faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory"
- We make decisions based on external factors; what we see. But as believers, holders of faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ, we are to be like him, looking not at outward appearances, but inwardly at the heart, remembering that *all people* are image-bearers of God.
- "Consistently Christian conduct comes only from a consistently Christian heart and mind." - Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*

Two Reasons to Avoid the Sin of Partiality (vv. 6-11)

1. Logical
 - a. Who are you trying to impress anyways? (v. 6-7)
 - b. We're all sinners in the same sinful boat (v. 9-11)
2. Theological
 - We are called to love because God is love. Simple as that.
 - Love as the "royal law", the greatest value of the kingdom of God by which we "build...a genuine counterculture" - Moo

The Proper Alternative (vv. 12-13)

- Speak and act (i.e. operate your life) as a free person, as one who has been set free by Christ's work on the cross.
- You have been shown mercy, therefore show others mercy. This is the exact opposite of partiality.
- Matthew 18:23-35

The greatest act of mercy was shown to us in the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This is what we remember and celebrate at the Table.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

To be used for personal reflection and/or sermon-based small group discussion.

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Carefully read through the passage. What stands out to you? Is there anything you don't understand?

What are some ways that you have played favourites? Think of specific examples.

Have you ever been tempted to "fawn over" someone to try to impress them? What was the end result of that situation?

Do you have a natural tendency towards the sin of partiality? Or are you more naturally merciful? What areas of your heart need the most transformation?

How have you experienced the genuine counterculture of love being built in your life, your family, your church?

Why are both words and actions important?

Who, in your life, have you been showing partiality towards? Who have you been mercilessly judging? Who needs your merciful love right now?

Pray for one another:

- For genuine heart transformation; repentance from sin and growing faith.
- For spiritual awareness and Spirit-empowerment to show mercy.
- For opportunity and excitement to join together in building a culture of love.