

“Steadfast Part 3: The Law of Love” (2-5-23)

Introduction: Summer Camp story

James 2:1 (ESV)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

Note: A warning against showing Partiality or Favoritism

1) The Prison of Partiality

- **Partiality is Judgment**

James 2:2-4 (ESV)

(2) For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, (3) and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” (4) have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Note: Showing favoritism or partiality is a form of judging - and it's wrong!

distinctions (definition): separate thoroughly, to withdraw from, or oppose, to discriminate, or hesitate

evil (definition): bad, unsound - of an ethical sense (evil, wicked, bad), of a physical sense (diseased or blind) toilsome, hurtful - full of labors, annoyances, hardship

- **Our Judgment is Evil**

James 2:5-7 (ESV)

(5) Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (6) But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? (7) Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

Note: (vs 5) God makes no distinctions - he has opened his kingdom wide to “whosoever” (John 3:16)

But our judgement is harmful & inaccurate - we miss understand each other, & we ourselves are harmed too!

- **Our Judgement is Broken & Inaccurate.** In fact it works to our detriment!

Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)

(1) “Judge not, that you be not judged. (2) For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (3) Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

Note: There is another way, but our blindness must be dealt with first!

2) The Law of Love

James 2:8 (ESV)

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

Note: Love is what is truly royal (kingly) - it stands apart from the kings of the earth, because the King of kings operates on the basis of love.

- **God’s Love** - He sacrificially gives for the benefit of others instead of using others for the benefit of himself.

Jesus talks about this often - Matthew 7:12 (**Sermon on the Mount**), Luke 10:25-37 (**Good Samaritan**)

James 2:9-11 (ESV)

(9) But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (10) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. (11) For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

Note: When we break this law of showing partiality - it’s the same mentality that leads to all law-breaking.

When we show partiality, then we separate & either use people (those we “prefer”) or remove people (those we “reject”). That breaks God’s law - it separates us from each other and also from God!

James 2:12-13 (ESV)

(12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. (13) For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Note: The law of love - that chooses mercy over judgment is liberating!

Jesus (in Matthew 5:7) - “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Connect back to where we started in verse 1 . . .

James 2:1 (ESV)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

Conclusion: We are called to trust (have faith) or rely upon Jesus. He is the fulfillment (or culmination) of the law of love, therefore we ought to use the liberty we have in Him to love well . . .

If we are truly to follow Christ in faith, then we need to love like Him, otherwise we are just like any other law breaker - to the great harm of ourselves and those around us!

Galatians 5:13-15 (ESV)

(13) For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (14) For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (15) But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.