

James 2:1-13 (Teaching)

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[0 : 0 0] Morning. It will be back in the book of James this morning, James chapter two. Bless you. I've got in mind how far I was locked to get in James chapter two this morning. However, that being said, we've had three sessions in James chapter one, and I'm over three getting as far as I was locked to get in any of those sessions.

So we'll just, we'll see how far we get today. But last week, we ended chapter one, with James explaining pure religion and undefiled being to look after the widows and the orphans, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world or by the world.

And then James goes into chapter two here. You need to keep that last verse of chapter one in mind. Remember, in the original Greek, there was no chapter divisions.

In this, it was just one continuous letter. The chapter divisions were put in there for our benefit, so that I wouldn't say, you know, get up here and have to say, turn to the book of James and find the 15th paragraph or something along those lines.

[1 : 2 6] Those chapter divisions and verse numbers were put in here to help us. They were put in here by man to help us find things a lot easier. But keep in mind that last verse of chapter one, as we stroll on into chapter two here, of the book of James, the first verse in James chapter two says, my brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

So James here begins chapter two with a commandment unto his readers. He says, not to have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And a lot of people misread that because it says, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of in our Lord Jesus Christ. But James here is not saying for us to not have the faith that Jesus Christ has.

He's simply stating not to let us have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he calls him the Lord of glory with respect of persons. This commandment in and of itself is actually a pretty brutal commandment of James.

But evidently there were some things like this going on. Remember James in James chapter one, at the very beginning of this epistle, he says that he's a servant of Jesus Christ and that he's writing to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad.

[2 : 5 5] So he's writing to a mainly Jewish audience here, but it's Jewish believers in Jesus Christ that he's writing to. And he's telling them don't have or don't claim your faith in Jesus Christ and have respect of persons.

The Bible makes it very plain in more than one spot, the Old and New Testament alike, that Almighty God is no respecter of persons. And if God Almighty is not a respecter of persons, what gives us a right to be a respecter of persons?

And some folks may hear that, some folks may read this, may read the Bible and say, well, if God's not a respecter of persons, why can so and so sing and I can't?

Or why can so and so play ball, play baseball or basketball, but I don't have that talent. God give them something, that gives me that's being a respecter of persons folks. As far as salvation is concerned, God is no respecter of persons.

Someone may have a different talent than you have, I may have a different talent than you do, you may have a different talent than I do. But as far as salvation itself is concerned, God is no respecter of persons.

[4 : 0 8] It's for everyone that is on this planet, be it male or female, no matter what the case is with this person, or with these people, God is no respecter of persons as far as salvation goes.

And within the church house, within the church body, I should say, not just the church house, there should be no respect of persons within the congregation of those that profess belief and those that

carry and proclaim the name of Jesus Christ.

And James gets into that a little bit more in depth here. James gives a scenario here, and I'm going to dare say it was more than a scenario, it was probably something that James had heard had actually happened to this, in specific groups of believers that he knew would be reading this letter. And verse 2 he says, for if they come under your assembly, a man with a gold ring and goodly apparel, and they're coming also a poor man and vile raiment, and you have respect to him that wear up the gay clothing and say to him, sit down here in a good place and say to the poor, stand out there, or sit down, sit here under my footstool, are you not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thoughts?

And James really, in making this statement, he's not really appealing to, he's pleading with the human nature of mankind.

[5 : 38] If someone walked into this church house this morning and vile raiment, as he's saying, say it's a homeless person that they had a shower in five days or seven days, or wherever the case is, someone come in like that, but someone else comes in in a three-piece suit and a gold ring on their finger as James here says, it is human nature, it is human nature to pay more attention to one than it is the other.

It is human nature to want to shove the one that may smell bad, may it look bad, maybe dressed a whole lot different than you are. It's human nature to want to put them up in a corner somewhere and have the other one sit up toward the front of the congregation.

It's human nature to be like that, but James here is saying, if this is the case, we're making ourselves judges of evil thoughts. That's a brutal statement that James makes there.

But we're to make no judgment whatsoever on people. This book is what judges. It judges you and it judges me, it condemns me and it condemns you, it condemns the poor, it condemns the rich, it condemns everyone, and judgment is passed by God through His Word.

We have no right when we preach against sin. We are not pronouncing condemnation on people when that happens. The condemnation has already been pronounced.

[7 : 06] We are simply warning people of the condemnation and the wrath of God that already abides upon them. I have no right to judge someone, I have no right to condemn anyone.

And I don't do either of those things, but I warn them of the wrath to come. And I warn them to flee from the wrath that is to come. But James here says that if there come one in your assembly, and with a gold ring and a goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, and by all raiment you have respect to him, and worth gate clothing and sand, and sit down here in a good place, and say to the poor, sit down there, or sit here under my footstool, are you then not partial in yourselves? Yes, we would be partial in ourselves if we did that. And it is simple human inclination to act in that manner. But folks, if you notice here in this scripture, and I've heard it preached and taught, the way I'm about to bring it up, and it's preached and taught wrongly, James isn't condemning the man for being rich, and he's not condemning the poor man for being poor.

What's James saying? He's talking about the assembly that they walk into. They are the ones that are in the judgment of God, because they're treating the one that's rich differently than they're treating the one that's poor, and vice versa.

It's not the rich and the poor that he's concerned with. It's the assembly of the people that are professing the name of Jesus Christ that James is concerned with. This isn't a proclamation of condemnation at all for being rich or for being poor.

[8 : 45] It's a proclamation of condemnation on the assembly of God, on the people that are professing the name of Jesus Christ. James is saying, you're not acting this manner.

As I've already said, God's not a respecter of persons, and we shouldn't be either. I think God that He's not a respecter of persons. I think God that He can come right here in Kingsport, Tennessee, or He can go on the other side of the world to people that are wearing turbans on their heads, and wear robes and sandals, look a whole lot differently than I do, and act a whole lot differently than I do, come from a different culture as what I do, but He can save their soul just as easily as He can save my soul.

He's able to save to the other most, and that applies to every man, woman, boy, and girl on the face of the planet. He is no respecter of persons. Are you not then partial in yourselves?

Yes, we are if we act that way, and are become judges of evil thoughts. Mark and my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He hath promised to them that love Him?

Notice that ends with a question mark. He's asking them a question. Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith? Now, on the physical aspect of this, the first century church was very poor. [10:10] I'm not going to say there weren't rich people in the assembly of the first century church, but for the most part, the first century church was extremely poor. They had very little, but that's who it appealed to.

The rich people, the rich people, they had their riches, they had their materials, they had things to help them along this way. The poor people didn't have a lot of those things though, so all that they had was faith.

Faith that God would deliver them, faith that God would help them, faith that God would do exactly what He said in the Old Testament that He would do, that He would deliver the Jews from oppression, and that He would do these things. That's all that they had was faith.

And that's what the Bible here says, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith? Folks, when it boils down to it, I said we're talking about physically there, but if you put that on a spiritual level, everybody, including Bill Gates, including Elon Musk, including all these rich folks that we read about and know about, everyone on the planet is poor on a spiritual level until they get saved. Every one of us, we have nothing, we have nothing on the spiritual plane until we get saved. But when we get saved, then we become errors. We become errors to God and join errors with Jesus Christ according to the Book of Romans at Paul Row.

[11:41] We become errors to everything because we're errors to God and join errors with Christ. We stand to inherit it all. We stand to inherit it all.

How much richer could you possibly imagine being than to own it all? So God already asked the question, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith in errors of the kingdom which he had promised to them that love him?

He's chosen the poor of the world to be the richest in faith. Praise God. But ye have despised the poor. You despised the poor.

No, you're showing respect under this rich man that walks into your assembly once again, nothing toward the man for being rich but toward the people of God for showing respect toward that rich man.

He says, you have despised the poor. You've set them on the back burner. You've stuffed them over in a corner so that they don't interfere with your services.

[12:46] You've stuffed them over there out of the way so that in case some other visitors come in, maybe they won't notice them. That's basically what James is getting at here. He says, you despised the poor.

Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats? He's saying, this man walks into your assembly in his goodly apparel and his gold ring on and this is the same type of person that draws you before the judgment seats, that draws you into court, that sims you over silly things. He's the same one that oppresses you and you're showing respect under him. I'm not saying all rich people are like that and James wasn't saying all rich people were like that. But folks should read what Jesus had to say about the rich over in the gospels.

What did Jesus say about it? He said, it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. He didn't say it was impossible because just after those verses, he said, with man it is impossible but not with God, for with God all things are possible.

It is completely possible for a rich man to inherit the kingdom of God but it's harder for them. Why? Because what I just said a little while ago, they depend on their things.

[13:58] They depend on the material goods that they have. They depend on their own wealth. They depend on their own means more. The poor don't have those things to depend on. And that's not to say that every poor person's going to heaven and every rich person's going to hell.

That's not what I'm saying. That's not what James was saying here. But it's much, much harder for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because he's dependent on himself. He depends upon himself.

He says, you just do not rich man oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats. The rich are the very ones that were oppressing the first century church.

They're the ones that could afford to oppress the first century church. They could hem bribes to the actual judges. They could hem bribes to Pharisees and the priests and all these other people to

have their own agenda worked out.

The poor didn't have that. They were oppressed by the rich. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the witch year called? So not only are they oppressing the poor, as the scripture says here, and drawing them before the judgment seats, they say, do not they blaspheme the very name by which you're called, the very name that you have assembled yourselves together to worship.

[15:22] These rich people are the very ones that blaspheme that. Well, I said, I'm not coming against rich people in general. And neither was James. But James knew what was going on and James knew who had the money, who had the power and who had the authority.

And if they didn't have the authority, they could scoot enough money under the table or in the pocket or where the case was to the people that were in authority to get done what they wanted done.

He says, they blaspheme that worthy name by which you're called. And blaspheme was a serious charge in the Old Testament blaspheme was punishable by death.

He says, they're blaspheming the very name by which you're called the very name of Jesus Christ. They're smirking it. They're dragging it through the mud. They're making a mockery of it. And these are the ones that you're shown respect to. Now, why would they have done that?

I'll tell you why. For the exact same reason that it's done today in 2022. Rich people come to the church or people with more money than what the general congregation may have or the general lay members of the church may have.

[16:32] And I've seen it happen. I've seen it with my own eyes and you all may have seen it too. And they're catered to. Why are they catered to? Because they got more to throw in the coffers when the plates passed.

I've seen it happen and they get in there and they throw their money around. And before you know it, they've taken over the church and anything that they won't or anything that they don't want for that matter.

That is what's done. I'd rather be part of a congregation of ten people that didn't have two pennies to rub together. That loved the Lord and didn't have respect to persons as to being a congregation with a hundred people that could give me any amount of money that I wanted at any given time. Amen. If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thou sell, you do well. But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin or are convinced of the law as transgressions.

If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thou sell, you do well. If you do this thing, James has said, if you fulfill the royal law, then you do well.

[17:45] If we love our neighbors ourselves, we do well. But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin and are convinced of the law as transgressors. In other words, if you have respect to persons, you're not loving your neighbors yourself.

Basically is what James is getting at here. And like I said, it is our natural inclination as human beings. Every one of us is wired the same way to have respect to persons.

I ain't talking about just rich and poor. I mean, there's all kinds of different aspects we can use on that. It's no different than how we watch the news at night, or we read the newspaper in the morning, where the case is, and we look for the worst, grossest, most horrible centers that are out there.

Why is that? Because it makes us feel better about ourselves. Man rapes and kills three women. Well, I'm not that bad. Yeah, you are.

We're all on the same level playing ground. It may not seem that way in your mind or in your heart, but we're going to read it here in just a little while, that he that keeps it the whole law, you have to finish it at one point.

[18:59] He is guilty of all. You're guilty of breaking the entire law. We haven't gotten that far yet. But if we show respect to persons, regardless of who it is, someone comes into our assembly and we show respect to persons, both we have committed sin, we've committed transgression against the law, against the very law that God spoke into existence of Tash, I love thy neighbor as thyself.

And I realize that wasn't in the Ten Commandments, but folks are part of the law. If God spoke it, it's law. If God said it at all throughout the pages of Scripture, it's law.

And it came from the only lawgiver that there is. We cannot be a respecter of persons and keep the law. We certainly can't be a respecter of persons and love our neighbor as thyself.

I said it before, probably here, and I'll say it again. He doesn't say you're a saved neighbor, he doesn't say you're a Christian neighbor. He doesn't say you're a white neighbor, you're a black neighbor, you're a gay neighbor, you're a straight neighbor.

He says, love thy neighbor as thyself. And that's the commandment from Almighty God. And he taught that throughout the Old Testament and it bleeds on into the New Testament.

[20 : 18] Praise God for it. We have respect to persons who commit sin or are convinced of the law as transgressors. Keep the whole law and yet, offended one point, he is guilty of all. That's what I just quoted a few seconds ago.

And that should humble every one of us down and that should keep us in a humbled state, knowing that it don't matter what we hear on the news. It don't matter what Adolf Hitler done back in the 40s. It don't matter, none of these things matter. He wasn't no more evil than I am. He was no more sinful than I am. No more sinful than you are.

Sin is sin, is sin is sin, in the eyes of a God that has never committed sin. He was no more wretched, no more wicked, and no more deserving of hell than I am.

And that should humble all those down and thinking that. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

[21 : 27] So James in the verse preceding this says that if you keep the whole law, yet, offended one point, you're guilty of all. And he goes on to say, he goes on into more detail.

For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. Maybe not the law that you didn't commit, maybe you didn't transgress against that one, but you became a transgressor of the law that God spoke into existence.

It doesn't matter which law it is. Anything that God spoke, anything that God commands, and anything that goes against your conscience, for God has written his law upon your heart.

Anything that goes against that is a transgression of the law. And we cannot look at these things and say, well I've committed this sin, I've committed this sin, but these other five or six or eight or ten sins that I keep hearing about, I haven't committed though, so I'm in better shape than the one that has.

No you're not. Not according to scripture. Not according to scripture. You're guilty of all. Every one of us is a murderer. Every one of us has had hate in our heart for somebody at some point in our lives.

[22 : 42] Everybody in here. Everybody in here has badmouthed someone. At some point in our lives, myself included, I'm going to figure out you've got one more of me.

Every one of us has transgressed these laws. Jesus made it very plain and sermon on the Mount, what transgression of the law was. He said, if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you've committed adultery.

If you look at a woman with lust, just look on her. You've committed adultery within your heart. And that was a humbling statement. And that condemns every one of us, male and female, a lot.

It condemns all of us. No different than mine. No different than stealing. You might say, I've never stolen anything in my life. You ever took off with a paperclip from your place of work, that you were a place of work paid for, even if it was an accident.

It still didn't belong to you. It belonged to somebody else they paid for. You ever took off with a rubber band? Even by accident, it's still theft. It's not yours.

[23 : 46] And especially if you realize that when you got home and you just left it laying on the counter, or you chucked it in a drawer at that point, you're aware of the sin. And you're still like, well, it's just a rubber band. Or it's just a paperclip or an ink pen.

You can ask Missy, I used to be a world's worst. I still am. I keep that ink pen tucked behind my ear at work. I come home with an ink pen, still behind my ear. It wasn't mine. It was mine, lawyers.

Now, I'm going to take it back, but nevertheless, I did that. It's easy to do. And it's easy to say, well, I've never done this when really and truly, if you go back in your mind, you think real hard and long about it.

You committed a lot of the sins that God strictly forbids in Scripture and haven't even realized.

So speak ye and do so as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. So speak ye and do so. James here making another commandment towards the readers of this letter.

[24 : 56] And James was well aware of how this would probably work. This letter would go out to one assembly, then it would be passed on to another. And that's the way about all the epistles were.

All of them that Paul wrote, he ever read the book of Galatians. There in the introduction to the book of Galatians, it wasn't written to the church in Galatia.

It was written to the churches in Galatia. Galatia was not a country. Galatia was not a town. Galatia was a region. And that letter was to be passed around to all the different congregations as many as it could get to in the region of Galatia.

And James's letter here would have been no different. It was expected to be passed around to different assemblies within the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. So James says, so speak ye and so do.

Don't only speak these things, but you need to do these things. It goes back to the whole thing in chapter one. We talked about, I guess it was last week, the doers of the law and not hearers only.

[26 : 01] We not only need to speak the things of God, but we need to do the things of God. So speak ye and so do. And as they, they shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Everyone of us will be judged by that law of liberty. What is the law of liberty? The law is the law. Plain and simple. The law is everything that God spoke, particularly over there in the Old Testament and even more particular to that, particularly in the Ten Commandments.

The law is the law, but what's the law of liberty? The law of liberty is the law, but it's in light of the gospel. The law never had the ability to set us free.

It never had the ability to give liberty. The law showed us what bondage we were in. The law of liberty has got to be the gospel. It has got to be the gospel shining light on that law.

And we have got to use the law in order to show people what the gospel is all about. It's wonderful to tell people about the good news of Jesus Christ.

[27 : 12] But if we just go out there and tell people you need to be saved and not tell them what they need to be saved from, it's going to be to no effect. They've got to be known. They need to be saved from sin.

They need to be saved from their transgressions of the law. They need to be saved from the wrath of God that gave that law. That's what they need to be saved from. The law of liberty, that's the gospel shining light on that law.

And it's the gospel giving liberty. It's the gospel setting the captives free. He says, so speak ye and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

I'll be judged by the same law that was given to the Jews. I'll be judged by the same law that you were judged by. And you'll be judged by the same law that I will be judged by.

God will judge us according to this book. And I don't think he's going to judge us according to anything outside of this book because this is what he's left us. This is what we have to go by.

Everyone of us has heard that this is an instruction manual for life.

[28 : 13] This is our roadmap to heaven. I've heard it called all kinds of things and I agree with those things. I do. But, so speak ye and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

We need to act like that's what we're being judged by. In other words, going all the way back to the beginning of this chapter, when he's talking about the man that comes in and he's wearing the goodly apparel and the nice clothes and the golden ring and everything.

He says, so speak ye and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. We're to have no respect or respect of persons and we are to love our neighbor as ourselves just like we know, just like it is embedded in our minds and in our hearts as believers in God and as believers in Jesus Christ.

We're to so speak and to so do that we know we're to be judged by that law. So speak and so do. So speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

We need to act like that's what we're going to be judged by because that is what we're going to be judged by. We'll be judged by the law that praise God, we're going to have the gospel, we're going to have the law of liberty, we're going to have Jesus Christ because of our ability, because of your ability and mind to keep the law and to do the commandments.

[29 : 36] Because of all these things, we have got the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, the one that was able to keep the law, the one that was able to do the commandments and do them

perfectly, every jot and every tittle.

You didn't leave one eye not dotted with one taint not crossed in keeping the law. Because of him, then I'll be able to pass through that judgment.

I'll be able to pass through that judgment uncondimbed not because of my own abilities but because of what Christ has done on the cross for me. For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shoot no mercy and mercy rejoices against judgment.

He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shoot no mercy. What are they just saying the verse previous to this that we should so speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. Then he says that's the what y'all heard me say this a million times.

That's the what then he gives the why for for he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shoot no mercy. If we don't show mercy and folks have a respect or a respect of persons is not showing mercy.

[30 : 49] It's showing favoritism. That's all it shows. And it shows the true condition of our heart when we do that. It shows a need to repent and a believer and it shows a need to be saved and a non-believer.

If we do these things but for he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shoot no mercy. I hate to think of the merciless judgment of Almighty God but that's exactly what James is talking about here.

I fear that judgment and I'm not even going to be in that judgment. I'm not going to hell. God's done. God's done made that plane to me but I still I fear hell.

I'm not afraid of going there but I fear it. I fear it for the world. I fear it for the lost. I fear for those that don't have the gospel. They don't have a lot of Jesus Christ. They don't have the Holy Spirit.

I fear it for them because that's going to be a merciless judgment of God. People are going to be in hell screaming for mercy and they will never get it.

[31 : 58] They will never get it. And people especially nowadays in a lot of the churches fault. People say, well God loves me. He won't send me to a place like that. Not a court of scripture.

That place is full of as hell and large as its borders daily. But one reason I can think of why I would have to do that is because it ain't got rooms or everything that's moving in there.

What's the scary thought? There's a lot of people. A lot of people, a lot of souls that are going to have that merciless judgment. He should have judgment without mercy.

That's shooting of mercy. We'd better be shown mercy as believers in Christ. We need to show mercy as believers in Christ.

That's loving your neighbor as yourself. I said earlier, when we preach against sin and we preach about hell or we teach about these things, whatever the case is, it's not out of hate.

[33 : 03] It's out of love for my neighbor. I don't need my guy in Govindale. I don't care how mean they've been to me or my family. I don't want anybody to go to that place.

That's mercy. That's mercy. What's our human reaction? We talked about this, I believe, Wednesday night. There was just a few of us here on Wednesday night. Our human reaction is you kick my cat and I'll shoot your dog.

Or vice versa. That's a human reaction. Smack me on the left. That's our human reaction. The Word of God says, for he shall have judgment, without mercy, that has to shoot no mercy.

And mercy rejoices against judgment. Praise God for that. Mercy rejoices against judgment. Mercy rejoices against judgment. The mercy of God rejoices against the judgment of God.

You might think, well, that sounds kind of contradictory. No, it doesn't. Mercy and judgment are both attributes of God. God is perfectly holy. He is perfectly righteous. And therefore, he must judge sin.

[34 : 10] It's as simple as that. So judgment is not contrary to the personality or the rest of the attributes of God. He must judge sin.

But God is merciful as well. And mercy rejoices against judgment. The Bible says that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

No pleasure in it at all. It doesn't make God happy when people walk off into hell. It doesn't make him happy when people go off into eternity without Jesus Christ.

It doesn't make God happy at all. But what does make God happy is one sinner coming to repentance. One sinner experiencing the mercy of Jesus Christ and the mercy of God that we're talking about here.

Mercy rejoices against judgment. We'll stop right there.