

INTRODUCE

Good Morning Church! My name is Kyle, if I haven't met you yet, I'm the Youth Minister here at Fathom. Go ahead and open up your Bibles to James chapter 2. Yes, we are finally in chapter 2!

Open up your Bible or your Bible App, whatever works for you. We have black Bibles underneath each chair if you want to pull one of those out it will be on page **1011**. James chapter 2.

INTRODUCTION

So whenever I'm up here and I get the chance to preach you know I gotta update you on my kids, I mean that's just what preachers do, right?

So Austin, my 5 year old, is in Kindergarten. He's been in school now for a couple months. And it's been going great! He loves it, he loves all his new friends he's made, he loves all the fun activities they get to do, he loves all the fun rewards he can earn in his classroom, and he loves recess...of course, right?

I mean that's all we hear about when we pick him up every day.

"What'd you do at school today?"

"We played tag at recess!"

"Dad, we played dinosaurs at recess and I got to be the Raptor!" Cool man, no idea what that means...

It's just recess recess recess.

Now one thing that Austin doesn't like about school is the homework! *Can I get an amen from the teenagers?*

Yep, Kindergarteners get homework. I had no idea he would actually have homework to do every night, but he does. Now sometimes it's answering one math problem, or writing a set of ten numbers in a row, most of the time it's reading a couple books. But nonetheless, it's homework. And he doesn't want to do it! *So parents of teeangers, I'm gonna need some help and guidance with that...*

But even a couple months in, for a 5 year old, he still hasn't gotten used to it. So we get a tantrum thrown at least a few nights a week when it's time for him to do his homework.

So when Austin started school we had to explain to him,
"Buddy, this is part of it. This is part of school. You don't just go to school and have fun and come home and not continue to do your work and what you learned."

And at first he would say something like,
"Well Dad, I just wanna go to school and not do homework. I just wanna do the fun stuff...like recess."

So we had to have this conversation with him a couple times earlier in the semester that you have to DO school. You have to do the work! He *loves* telling everyone that he's in school and that he loves Kindergarten, but then when it comes to actually DOING school, like doing his homework, he's annoyed and even surprised when he has to do that.

TRANSITION

And that's where we're at in James...

As we know James is the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, so he's writing this letter to Christians. And last week Chris started talking about how we are to be Doers of the Word,

- Not just hearers
- Not just Christians who say we're Christians
- But actual doers of what the Scripture tells us to do in order to model our lives after Christ.

And this next section is a continuation of that. James is starting to give us more and more practical ways in which we, as Christians, can be actually living out a genuine faith in Jesus.

And so we come to Chapter 2, **SLIDE THE SIN OF PARTIALITY**

So let's go ahead and start reading what James has for us in chapter 2, a section in most of our Bibles titled The Sin of Partiality, or in some it might say Favoritism Forbidden, or A Warning Against Prejudice.

JAMES 2:1

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

EXPLAIN

Alright let's already pause there.

Now, full disclosure, as I was assigned this section of James to preach on, let's just say I wasn't super excited. I mean just reading the heading, The Sin of Partiality, I sort of thought to myself

“Hmph, ok. Well I mean it isn’t Faith Without Works, or Taming the Tongue. I mean it’s partiality...so...ok.”

I mean, I don’t know about you but when I see this section I sort of think to myself a couple things that maybe you’re thinking to yourself as well:

“Ok I know showing partiality or favoritism is wrong, I get that.”

“Yes I get how that could be a sin...or maybe favoring someone a little bit over another, like your best friend over your other friends or something like that...”

“But hey I don’t do this one that much, right? I mean I don’t really show favoritism in my life so this isn’t that big of a deal, I mean I don’t have a favorite kid or anything...right, parents?”

And as I studied this text this past week, and I learned why James has this here, in this section of his book that he’s writing, and understanding that this is more than just calling someone your best friend over your other friends.

As the Holy Spirit just worked on my heart this week through this passage...honestly my heart began to break. For our church, for our community, for the many people that I come in contact with on a weekly basis, for everyone in this room on a weekly basis.

My heart was breaking as I reflected on the seriousness of this sin of Partiality and how, as I said before, I didn’t even think this was that big of a deal.

I’m blind to this in my own life, and hear me church, I think a lot of us are blind to this sin in our own lives too.

EXPLAIN: PARTIALITY

Partiality literally means to receive someone according to their face. And as we will see in the example James gives in a second, it's pretty much judging someone based on their external appearances.

And to start this chapter off, James is saying...

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

So here's the deal...because this sin of Partiality is getting its own section towards the beginning of James' letter to the Christians in Jerusalem at that time...this MUST be a big deal, right?

He says, show NO partiality or favoritism as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. None. Not even just a little from time to time.

Now, what we need to do is look at the context. What is James really talking about, why is James talking about this, what is going on that he felt the need to write this down and therefore have it also be of importance to us today.

Let's keep reading cause James is going to give us an example of this partiality that we are told NOT to partake in...

END SLIDE

JAMES 2:2-4

[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?

EXPLAIN: THE TWO DUDES

Alright, so here we have more context of what James is talking about when he says there should be no partiality amongst you.

To set the scene a bit this example James is talking about is taking place he says in “your assembly”, meaning most likely he’s talking about a gathering taking place and even more likely he’s talking about your church gathering.

So now we get some context that this was probably going on in James’ church, so that is why it is so important for him to bring this up.

So James is saying

“Picture a church gathering...”

And James goes on to describe two people walking into the church gathering. And let’s just say these two people are completely new visitors. They’re guests. They’ve never been there before, no one knows them, ok.

1. One of the guests is blinged out, from head to toe. He’s got gold rings on, shiny clothes, he seems to be doing pretty well for himself. He’s obviously got the clothes and jewelry but you can just tell he has money. That even outside of just his appearance he’s got it together. But he looks good.

And so he is getting all kinds of attention right? He is attracting the attention of pretty much everybody there.

2. Then there's another guy that comes in as well. And let's just say this guy is pretty much the opposite of the first guy. This guy comes in looking rough...

James says, a poor man in *shabby* or sometimes translated "*filthy*" clothes also comes in. He probably smells. Probably looks like he hasn't showered in a long time. Maybe his clothes are torn and his hair and beard are looking pretty mangy.

And this guy is also attracting attention, but definitely not the same attention the first guy is getting, right? This attention is different. He's getting attention alright, but probably because he smells weird and people are noticing him and getting out of the way!

3. So James gives this example of these two completely different people walking into the church gathering. Completely different in how they look, how they dress, how they carry themselves, how they smell, and most likely completely different lives.

And then James let's us in on the response from the people at the gathering where these two showed up, their church, ok.

James says, let's just say these two people walk 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?

So you got the well dressed, gold ringed, fancy pants, rich guy walking in, and James says

- His church sees him
- They connect with him
- They chat with him
- And they offer him the best seat in the house...right up in front right...so everyone can see him.

But then to the other guy, the poor man who's looking pretty bad they say to him

- Ok you can actually stand over there, way back in the corner, against the wall
- Or actually better yet...just sit down at our feet
- You don't deserve a chair, you don't deserve a good seat, you can either stand or sit at our feet.

James is saying that this assembly, this church, where these two guys just walked into, treated them completely different.

FATHOM:

So here's the thing Fathom.

There's always a reason for these examples in Scripture. It's to get us to look at parallels and similarities in our own lives.

So let's do that with our assembly, ok.

Now, I know what some of you are thinking, and it's what I was thinking right as I was first reading through these verses...

- *“Not here, not at Fathom Church would that happen.”*
- *“I mean come on, that's a bit extreme. I think we would treat those two different guys with respect and talk to both of them and help them out.”*
- *“I don't see that happening here, maybe at a different church, maybe at those bigger churches where someone could just get overlooked...but not here at our church.”*

And to that I would say...

I totally agree! That's hard to imagine here. That that exact scenario would ever happen here at Fathom, so we're good. Right

But here's the truth, church. It has happened here.

I've heard of people coming into this building and being overlooked. I've heard of people coming here and feeling like because of how they dress or what they look like they weren't treated as well as someone else.

I've heard of instances where people just wanted to leave...or did leave because they felt they didn't belong and were treated as such.

And yeah, maybe these types of things used to happen more in the past and not much now, I hope not!

But the reality is that we do show favoritism.

AND...It's a sin. It's wrong. We might not know we're doing it...but we do it. It's in our sinful nature that we do this.

I've seen it at other churches too! It's not just here. Every church has this problem.

- Working and being a part of other churches I've seen people get treated differently because of what they look like, because of what they wear, because of their age, because of their skin color. I've seen it.

And hear me, I want to honor our welcome and hospitality team here at Fathom cause they really are the best and they try their absolute hardest for things like this to not happen here...they do.

But here's the bigger picture, church.

- This example James is giving of his church assembly and the partiality that is shown to people who look different...is just an example of something bigger.

There's an even bigger issue here!

We've got a problem.

We've got a sin problem that isn't just infecting our church, but it's infected our daily Christian lives outside of church and if we want to actually live out a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, we need to take this Sin of Partiality seriously and really examine where it creeps up in our lives.

Let's keep reading.

JAMES 2:5-7

[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?

EXPLAIN: POOR IN SPIRIT

Now here we have James continuing his theme of showing Partiality and Favoritism towards the rich over the poor.

His example was favoritism in the socioeconomic status of the church gathering there.

- Rich vs Poor. This was the problem they were having.
- That was a problem in his church. That's still a problem today, in our church, in all churches.

But James goes a little deeper with this idea of the poor and reminds the Christians there of God's view of the poor.

He says [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?

James appeals to God's election of the poor.

- He wants to remind them of what God thinks about the poor.
- That the poor have been chosen to be "rich in faith".
- He's talking deeper than just what we think of poor.

He's talking about being poor in spirit that makes you rich in faith.

Those that recognize their spiritual poverty, their need for God.

We see throughout scripture many many times God's favor on the poor in spirit, but also just on the poor in general!

He has a heart for those that don't have much! He has a heart for those who hurt. *Those who need.*

James is talking about those inheriting the kingdom of God are those poor who *choose* to love God.

What James is getting at here is making sure that we see the poor the way God sees the poor.

- And this feeds into the bigger issue that is how *we view people and how God views people.*

WE HAVE A PROBLEM

We have a problem, church.

We have a sin problem and it's called showing favoritism.

- James is saying we dishonor those we show partiality against.
- And even though we might be sitting here saying to ourselves, *"well I don't think this is really a problem for me, I don't struggle with this one, I feel like I treat everyone equally, I don't have those crazy thoughts in my head when I first see or meet someone."*

We do.

We judge others, our natural bent is to immediately have an internalized judgement when we see people that manifests in our hearts because... *we are sinful people.*

In James' context it's rich and poor in this example...

- But we need to expand that even more.
- In our context it's rich and poor...and everything else!
- Everything from showing favoritism to the rich over the poor, to judging someone on their looks and what they can bring to the table, to discrimination and prejudices based on sex, race, background.

It happens everywhere outside of the church in our everyday lives pretty much everywhere we go...

But the sad thing is, it happens inside the church as well.

But here's the bigger issue that we will see in the next few verses.

- This is bigger than showing favoritism and saying you have favorites.
- This is bigger than being partial to someone.
- This is bigger than giving someone a good seat while you give someone different a worse seat.
- This is bigger than treating someone nicer based on their looks.

JAMES 2:8-11

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

TRANSITION

Hey, good thing...

- if we are truly living out the royal law, found all over Scripture, a command given by Jesus himself,
- “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Hey good news, if we’re doing that we’re all good!

But if we’re not...

- When we show partiality we’re not loving our neighbors,
- in fact, we’re sinning and breaking the Law of God,
- the command of “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

EXPLAIN: WE ARE ALL GUILTY

Truth is, we are all guilty.

And James reminds us that hey if we are *guilty of this law*,

- We are guilty of them all!

- We are guilty of breaking the Law set to us by God.
- Even when we think we're doing great for not breaking some sins...guess what...we're guilty of others!

It's SIN.

[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.

This is how serious James wants us to take showing partiality.

- We can't just pick and choose which sins we think are more sinful than others!
- He says, *"yeah...even if you aren't doing the 'big' sins, like murdering someone or committing adultery...when you are guilty of one sin you are guilty of them all!"*

And remember,

- just like Chris talked about a few weeks ago
- when he said it matters who you sin against...
- who's the one that wrote the Law?
- Who's the one who created this royal law of "Love your neighbor as yourself" and the commandments of "do not murder", "do not commit adultery."
- Yeah... God!

When we show favoritism we are breaking the law, and when it comes down to it it's *Sin. Period.*

OUR VALUE VS GOD'S VALUE

But here's the deeper issue, church.

- When we show favoritism we are showing not just how we see others,
- but it exposes what we truly think of others,
- it exposes the value we see in others.

When we are showing favoritism towards the rich for example, we are seeing them for what they can do for us.

We see them as holding a higher value to us than the poor because of what they can provide us.

Just like if we show favoritism towards those only in our friend group because they are like us,

we are holding them to a higher value than those who might be different than us.

And when we are doing this we end up viewing others differently than how God views them!

We know how God views us...each and every one of us.

- We are all created in HIS image, right?

- We are all HIS children, right?
- Now matter what we believe about him,
- no matter where we're at in or lives,
- no matter what we look like on the outside...

We are ALL image bearers of God.

So when we show favoritism

- it shows what we value and how much we value others.
- It shows that our value of others is *different* from God's value of them.
- Which just can't be!

ILLUSTRATION: VALUE DOLLAR BILLS

It reminds me of a little illustration that I like to do with teenagers whenever we are talking about value,

- and how we value ourselves,
- and how we should value others,
- and most importantly how God views and values us.

And when we're talking about this I like to bring out this new dollar bill. Brand new.

- It's super clean on the outside.
- It looks so nice and new.
- It's crisp.
- It's a really nice dollar bill.

- I mean I'd like that dollar, I would want that dollar for sure.

And then I pull out this dollar bill from my pocket.

- It's definitely seen better days.
- Sorry, it's ripped and torn and crinkled,
- and yeah it's definitely dirty.
- I have no idea where this dollar has been but it really doesn't look good.

And when I ask the teens which dollar would you want?

Which dollar would you like to take home with you, to spend on something, to keep. Which one.

Well most of the time they pick the new, nice looking dollar bill.

I mean I think most of us would.

But we forget that this old, dirty, ripped bill is still a dollar bill, right?

- It actually still has the same value as the nice clean dollar, I can still go to the store with this one and buy the same thing I can with this other one.
- It just looks a bit rough around the edges right?

So really, these two dollars are completely the same in their worth, they're valued the same.

One of them just happens to be like the rich,

- blinged out guy that comes into the church and gets treated very nicely because of how he looks...

While the other is a lot like that poor,

- dirty, smelly guy that just gets tossed to the back.

When really, for those two very different guys

- their value to God is the same.
- Their insides are the same. Their hearts are the same. They were both created by God and are both His image bearers.

And if we're not careful, when we show even slight partiality and favoritism, we aren't viewing others the way God views us.

AND THAT IS NOT OK!

APPLICATION

Ok let's start wrapping this up.

So how do we do this?

How do we, as Christians, begin seeing everyone the way God sees them?
How do we make sure that no matter what someone looks like on the outside, that we are showing them the same amount of love and grace and kindness that God would show them.

The answer is Mercy.

Let's finish reading:

JAMES 2:12-13

[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.

Here's the truth church.

- We are guilty of this sin.
- We are guilty of many sins, and therefore we deserve the judgement that is coming to us.

The good news. Mercy!

- Even though we have sinned, and definitely in this way of viewing others differently than how God views them, and showing favoritism.

We have grace and mercy that was poured out for us on the cross!

James says, **Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

Now, whose Mercy is he talking about?

- Well God's mercy yes.
 - Because we are all guilty, and we need his mercy poured out upon us for our sins and he did that for us on the cross.
- But, James is also talking about OUR mercy towards others.

Listen, church

- if we want to take our faith seriously,

- if we want to continue to mature in our relationship with God
- and have a genuine faith in him.
- If we want to eradicate this sin of partiality from our lives
- and in our church and have no part of it...

We are to practice Mercy.

SLIDE MERCY OVER PARTIALITY

That's for us too.

It's human mercy.

The mercy we show toward others shows

- our desire to obey the law and command of
- "Love your neighbor as yourself"
- and share that mercy and grace that we receive from God towards others.

"Mercy triumphs over judgement".

How we value others.

- Hear me, this mercy is NOT just a feeling of concern for others!
- This isn't just a feeling of mercy you have for someone...
- but it has to be active! Mercy is an action! We need to show others mercy!

This sin is something we have to correct in order to *mature* in our Faith,

and that means we need to live this Mercy out in our lives,

- in our church,
- in our homes,
- in our jobs,
- on the street.
- Everywhere.

Jesus said it in Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

And James said if we don't show mercy, we will have judgement without mercy...

[13] For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.
Mercy triumphs over judgment.

QUESTIONS

Here's some questions for you, church that we need to think about when it comes to how we are viewing others...

- How do you fall into partiality in your life?
- If Jesus and his crew walked up to Fathom next Sunday, how would you view them?

- Who do you need to show mercy to right now instead of judgement? Who needs to see God's mercy through you this week?

We need to root Partiality, Favoritism, Unfair bias out of our lives!
We need to cut everything out of our lives that devalues anyone else!
We need to show others the mercy God shows us.

We need to practice God's mercy on everyone we meet and see,
- no matter what they look like,
- no matter what they do or do not bring to the table for us.

God's Mercy, lived out through us, is what will help us view others the way we are all intended to be viewed...by how God views us.

Let's live lives of Mercy towards others!

Let's pray! **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER (we do this every week, and we ask if you are not a Christian joining us to to just abstain from communion. We are so glad you’re here and you are welcome here but we believe communion is for those who have put their life in Jesus Christ).
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give (also if this is not your home church than don’t feel obligated to give at all, just be our guest today)
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let's stand and sing together.