



Speaker: Pastor Matt

Series: James Faith/Works

Sermon Title: The Gospel Table: Impartial Love in a Partial World — Part 1

Scripture: James 2:1-13

OUTLINE

1. Principle/Truth: Partiality (favoritism) contradicts your faith in Jesus Christ (the Lord of glory) (1), by dishonoring the poor whom God has chosen (2-4, 5-6), and transgressing the royal law to love one's neighbor (8-9).
2. Problem of the Heart: When our hearts are disciplined by the world, rather than the Word, we gravitate toward those we believe can benefit us, rather than those we can serve with God's love (3-4, 6-7).
3. Gospel (What Jesus' Substitution Accomplishes for Us): Jesus came to us poor, and became the outcast for us, so we, in all our partiality and pride, might receive mercy, share His honor, and reflect His impartial love.
4. Response (Based on our Identity in Christ): Abiding in Christ rewires our desires so we can honor Jesus and others by fulfilling the royal law, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"—freely, fully, and without favoritism (8, 13).

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Icebreaker: What's one time you felt truly welcomed or truly left out? What made the difference?

Read James 2:1-13 and James 1:9-11

Principle/Truth

1. In its simplest form, what is the main principle James is stating in verse 1?
2. What about James' rhetorical question in verse 4 penetrates your heart? Why?
3. Discuss the logic James uses in verse 5-7.

1. What is the contradiction he describes? Why is it a contradiction?
2. How does he highlight their sin? Why does that sin create such a stench (7)?
4. According to verses 8-9, 13 how does James describe the Christian's motive for being impartial in our honoring others?
5. Read Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (one of Pastor Matt's favorite, humbling passages) and discuss the ways God has shown special concern for calling the economically deprived and downtrodden to Himself.

Problem of the Heart

1. How does Jesus' parable of the wedding feast in Luke 14:7-11 highlight the same heart issue James addresses?
2. How does James' rebuke impact you at a heart level?
3. Where do you see partiality, or favoritism—subtle or blatant—in your community or at Oak Grove?
4. Why might we gravitate toward the influential or wealthy? Or, consider other areas where partiality or favoritism may show up (showing preference to someone from *your* city; begrudging someone based on a generational sin, etc.)
5. What insecurities or idols might be driving favoritism in our hearts?

Gospel (What Jesus' Substitution Accomplishes for Us)

1. Read and reflect on the following passages. Discuss how Jesus, the Lord of glory lived among us.:
 1. Philippians 2:5–8 “5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
 2. 2 Corinthians 8:9 “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

Response (Based on our Identity in Christ)

1. Our motive for change is entirely wrapped up in the love of God for poor and needy sinners—you, me, and every other person who confesses Christ.
2. Finish these sentences
 1. Grace does not just call for behavioral change—it rewires our _____.
In Christ, we begin to long for what He loves: mercy, humility, and a community shaped by _____.
 2. The Spirit realigns our instincts: instead of craving _____ approval, we seek God's glory. Instead of fearing the poor, we draw near with respect and care. Instead of hoarding honor, we share it freely.
3. What is one practical way you can apply this message in your life this week (start with the heart and work outward)?
4. How might your change positively impact Oak Grove Church?

Close in Prayer