

JAMES 2:1-13
FAITH IS PROVED BY LOVE!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to James chapter 2 as we continue our study through this letter that James wrote to Jewish believers who had been scattered from Jerusalem due to persecution. And the reason James is writing this letter is to call these Jewish believers to maturity in the faith.

And we have looked at in James chapter 1, ***THE BELIEVER AND SUFFERING!*** And we saw how God wants us to grow, to mature in the faith and these trials will help show us where we are at.

And as much as these believers had gone through and were probably still going through difficult times, James wants them to endure these trials with joy in their hearts knowing that God is working in them.

James also speaks of not allowing these trials to tempt them to sin because the Devil loves to use the trials we face to tempt us. Keep your eyes upon Jesus, endure these temptations and do what God has called you to do. And if you lack wisdom as you are going through these trials, just ask God to give you the wisdom you need to help you through these times!

And James concludes chapter 1 by focusing on obeying the Word of God, not just hearing what God is saying but living what God is saying! Put feet to your faith and walk accordingly!

Now, as we get into James chapter 2 the focus is on ***THE BELIEVER AND SERVICE!*** What are we doing? How are we living out our faith? And the area we are going to be looking at this morning is our prejudices.

And this is a tough one because we all have them. You see a person walking down the street dressed a certain way, maybe it is the color of their skin, maybe it is just the way they look, and red flags go up and you make a judgment upon them and you don't even know them!

James is going to hit this point in a heavy way. And I think the Holy Spirit wants us to take a look at our own heart and see where we are at. Because, like I have said, we all have those prejudices in our lives that are judging people on many different levels, but they are still prejudices and they are wrong.

Think about this for a minute. Did God create all of us? Of course He did and thus, why do we look down upon one and lift up another? Because of the prejudices that we have. Be very careful here because, as we will see, James is going to expose how wrong that is.

Let me explain it like this and I think you will see the danger of judging a book by its cover you might say. We are told,

The following story appeared in the newsletter Our America;

“Dodie Gadiant, a schoolteacher for thirteen years, decided to travel across America and see the sights she had taught about. Traveling alone in a truck with camper in tow, she launched out. One afternoon rounding a curve on I-5 near Sacramento in rush-hour traffic, a water pump blew on her truck. She was tired, exasperated, scared, and alone. In spite of the traffic jam she caused, no one seemed interested in helping.

Leaning up against the trailer, she prayed, ‘Please God, send me an angel . . . preferably one with mechanical experience.’

Within four minutes, a huge Harley drove up, ridden by an enormous man sporting long, black hair, a beard and tattooed arms. With an incredible air of confidence, he jumped off and, without even glancing at Dodie, went to work on the truck. Within another few minutes, he flagged down a larger truck, attached a tow chain to the frame of the disabled Chevy, and

whisked the whole 56-foot rig off the freeway onto a side street, where he calmly continued to work on the water pump.

The intimidated schoolteacher was too dumbfounded to talk. Especially when she read the paralyzing words on the back of his leather jacket: 'Hell's Angels - California'. As he finished the task, she finally got up the courage to say, 'Thanks so much,' and carry on a brief conversation. Noticing her surprise at the whole ordeal, he looked her straight in the eye and mumbled, 'Don't judge a book by its cover. You may not know who you're talking to.' With that, he smiled, closed the hood of the truck, and straddled his Harley. With a wave, he was gone as fast as he had appeared."

Given half a chance, people often crawl out of the boxes into which we've relegated them."

- Larry D. Wright

Now, before we are too quick to judge her, put yourself in her shoes. Here is a woman on the road and her vehicle has broken down. That is bad enough. And now someone stops, and this guy is not only riding a Harley, but he has on the back of his jacket these terrifying words, ***"Hell's Angels - California."***

I am sure we can come up with all kinds of reasons why we would not only be terrified of this man, but we can probably come up with many reasons why we should look down upon him. That is what James is getting at and it is not easy.

I am not saying we are not to be wise, but we are to be careful that we don't let the way a person looks cause us to think differently of them.

I have called this study, ***FAITH IS PROVED BY LOVE*** and how true that is. Think about it. How do we show love to others? By accepting them for what they are and seeing them as persons for whom Christ died for! I am not saying we condone their sin, but we are to love them as Christ loves them and died for them!

You see, perspective is everything! Does God love the people of this world? Of course He does.

In John 3:16-17 we are told, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."**

And in I John 2:1-2 we are told, **"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."**

Notice, our **"Advocate"** or defense attorney has also become **"the propitiation for our sins."** He is the One who has come to pay in full the penalty for our sins! And what I want you to notice is that it does not say, ***"for only those who are good"*** or that ***"God loves those who are good."***

No, it says, **"for the whole world."** And if God loves the people of this world like that, why can't we? Because of the prejudices that we have, and God wants us to tear down those walls and manifest His love in our lives towards others. As I have said, ***FAITH IS PROVED BY LOVE!***

But again, this is not easy for us because human nature has a way of exalting one person and putting down another and James is telling us that this should not be taking place in the life of a believer. True faith will manifest godly character, godly action on our part.

We are going to break these verses down into five points and they are,

FAITH LIVED OUT – JAMES 2:1

FAITH AND DISCRIMINATION – JAMES 2:2-4

PROPER FAITH – JAMES 2:5-7

THE LAW CONDEMNS YOUR FAITH – JAMES 2:8-12

THE CONCLUSION OF FAITH – JAMES 2:13

With that as our background, let's begin reading in James chapter 2, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study through His Word!

JAMES 2 **VERSE 1**

Here in James 2:1 we see how our ***FAITH IS LIVED OUT!*** But before we get to that James makes a very important statement here about Jesus Christ!

He speaks of "**the Lord of glory**" and James is speaking of the deity of Jesus Christ, that He is Almighty God.

Moffatt makes the following point regarding what James wrote. He said, "The Christian religion [is here called] more explicitly **belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the divine Glory** – a striking term for Christ as the full manifestation of the divine presence and majesty. The Jews called this the *shekinah*."

Keep in mind that this is one of the early letters that were written, somewhere between 45 to 48 A. D. and James is saying that Jesus is Almighty God, something that the early Christians believed and many today are rejecting!

Not only that but James is telling us that Jesus Christ, Almighty God does not show "**partiality.**"

Let me show you what I mean. In the Old Testament, in Deuteronomy 10:17 we are told, "**For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.**"

In other words, God has no favorites, or I guess I should say, we are all His favorites. He does not look upon one more than another.

Now, let's see how Jesus looks at people and we don't have to go directly to Jesus, but those who were watching His life and see what they had to say. And, keep in mind that the Jewish religious leaders were not supporting Him, but they did see how He treated people. His life was a witness to His love for people.

In Matthew 22:16 we are told, "**And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.'**"

The New Living Translation puts it like this, "**They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we know how honest you are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don't play favorites.'**"

We also see what Paul said in Romans 2:11 in regard to God having favorites. He wrote, "**For there is no partiality with God.**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“For God shows no partiality [undue favor or unfairness; with Him one man is not different from another]. [Deut 10:17; 2 Chron 19:7.]”**

The Living Bible puts it like this, **“For God treats everyone the same.”**

And, The New Living Translation puts it this way, **“For God does not show favoritism.”**

Thus, if God shows no favoritism, neither should we! And as you look at the life of Jesus, His life showed His faith being lived out and that is what God wants in us. He wants us to be like Him, to manifest that love that we say we have as we minister, as we talk, as we interact with others!

Why was this such an issue that James had to write about this? Because, in the period of time that James was living in, it was a time filled with prejudice, with all kinds of discrimination. People were placed in categories like Jew or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, Greek or Barbarian.

And as you read that, as you hear what was going on, you may be thinking, “How in the world can they even call themselves Christians when they are acting like that?” Now, before we start looking down upon them or others, we need to look in the mirror and see what God is showing us!

Remember what James said in James 1:23-24, **“For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”**

God’s Word exposes our sin in our lives, it shows us who we are, not to condemn us but to transform us. But, we tend to suck in the gut when we look in the mirror and we truly don’t see ourselves as we really are!

God wants us to live out our faith and that faith that is lived out will be done in love towards others. I am not saying we agree with everyone. I am not saying we compromise our faith to get along. But we are to love people and I don’t care how rich they are, I don’t care how influential they are, or how poor they are, it doesn’t matter. They are created by God and thus, we are to respect them!

Now, the people in James’ day, the Christians had a big problem with this and thank God we are not like that today! Or are we like that today?

You see, we really haven’t changed much over the years, we still judge people on the color of their skin, their nationality, what they wear, how they look, the jobs they have or even what church they go to!

But we as believers should never show partiality, we should never discriminate because our Lord is not a respecter of people and we are to follow His example for us!

What if someone walked in here with pink hair, a guy, spiked upwards, had all kinds of tattoos, had a nose ring, besides earrings, and his clothes, well, not exactly something that you would wear. How would you feel?

Well, James is going to address that issue, not exactly like the person I just described but the illustrations point will be the same, how we are to treat them.

And to do this James is going to give us a hypothetical example of what he is talking about. We might call this illustration, ***“The Shortsighted Usher!”***

Sorry, I am not picking on ushers, but I picture that this is the person seating those coming in the church here in James’ illustration. But the reality is, this is for all of us to look at.

You see, God wants us to examine our own hearts and make sure we are treating everyone the same as God desires us to treat them!

So, this first point is, ***OUR FAITH LIVED OUT*** and Jesus, Almighty God is our example. He did not show partiality or favoritism, and neither should we.

VERSES 2-4

The Second point is, ***FAITH AND DISCRIMINATION***. Keep in mind that James is writing to Jewish believers before Gentiles were widely received into the church, before the Gospel message went forth to the Gentiles. Thus, the Greek word that James uses for “**assembly**” is literally “synagogue” or the place the Jews gathered to worship the Lord.

Interestingly enough, this is the only place in the New Testament where Christians are said to have assembled together in a synagogue to worship God.

Paul, in speaking to the church in Colosse made this observation, maybe some 20 to 30 years or so from when James wrote his letter, as the Gospel message spread to the Gentiles.

And Paul said, **“We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth.”** Colossians 1:3:6.

And today the Word of God continues to spread bringing salvation to all who will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior!

Now the picture that James is painting for them was one that was very familiar to them.

You see, in the Roman society the rich would wear rings on their left hand to show their prosperity and if you wanted, for special occasions, you could even rent these rings, making yourself look like something that maybe you really were not, wealthy.

Now this rich man is coming to church and as the usher sees him enter with all those rings on, he sits him down in the best seat, he honors this man’s riches, he shows partiality to him! You know, he is going to be a big tither, so he needs the good seats!

But the story is not over, not even close. Because we see that not only did this rich man enter the church, but now comes a very poor man who is filthy, has nothing and yet he too has come to worship God.

The usher sees him, wanting to save the good seats for the big tithers, the rich, he places him on the floor or makes him stand in the back.

Now, as wrong as that is in the world, it is completely wrong in the church!

Does this happen today? Yes, more than I like to admit.

We are very blessed here with the people that welcome us into the church. But that is not always the case in churches.

There was one story that took place several years ago where this woman, wearing very filthy clothes, came to a church and the ushers refused to let her in until she dressed better. Sadly, that is all she had, she could not afford fancy clothes and thus, she could not worship God. At least that is what they were demonstrating to her. She had to look a certain way before she could come in! How sad that is.

And, as I have said, we are very blessed here, but God did not put this in here for others, He put this here for us to be on guard, to check our hearts, to make sure we are not preventing

people from coming to worship God because of the way they look, the way they dress or whatever! It is something we as individuals need to be on guard against!

Let me share this with you because it really is the start of Calvary Chapel and what the Lord put on Pastor Chuck and his wife, Kay. We are told,

One morning Kay and I looked out into the California streets and on the beaches, and we beheld another radiantly colorful sight: human forms, extending as far as the eye could see. The countercultural revolution of the '60s had begun, and the new citizens were the hippies, "heads," and trippers. Their colorful outfits belied [opposed] the deeper problem they represented. If God was trying to tell us something, as we looked out on that field, we faced the problem of a gap of culture and thought that stood between our generations. I was brought up in old-world piety compared to the fast-track rebellion of the hippies. How could my wife and I cross this gulf?

The Lord pressed it on our hearts clearly, *Reach out in love*. Now we knew that love could never be contrived with a group of sensitive and perceptive as that one. So, to quote my wife, we saturated the air with prayers. She organized late-night prayer groups and morning prayer groups. It seemed that Kay and her friends were praying all the time. Meanwhile I prayed with elders and some church members. Before too long, we both felt a quiet change in the air, an excitement just beneath the surface. . . .

[And God did an amazing work. By the time the mid-70s came around, Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa performed more than 8,000 baptisms. And most of these were from that hippie culture. God transformed their hearts, but there were still some issues to deal with in regard to the non-hippies and those who were overseeing the church.]

Ironically, the only damper we encountered came from the church itself, those from our midst who had grown up with church backgrounds, those from the "straight Society." This sudden infusion of rebellious youths met predictable resistance.

Our challenge was to overcome what most churches had not: namely, their insistence on respectability, conformity, and a judgmental attitude toward anything that departed from the norm. Many of our members rallied to the challenge, feeding off the zeal of the hippie converts. But there were still some who resisted and disdained these newest members of our church who showed up with long hair, bells on the hems of their jeans, bare feet, and who otherwise looked like wildflowers in their great diffusion of dress inspired by American Indian or Asian tribal styles. It was widely creative. But it was also threatening, especially to those with young children who did not want them emulating the hippies.

The interesting thing is how we saw love prove itself as God's adhesive force time and again. . . .

[That is faith that is lived out in love and it transforms us and unites us together.]

. . . but I think the last barrier to go in our church was the "bare feet" barrier. When we got beyond that, we were home free. The pivotal incident centered on a wide expanse of brand-new carpet that we had just put in. Those who had been inwardly protesting the hippies finally found a target to vent their discontent upon: Dirty feet soil carpets, who wants to see dirt marks on a brand-new carpet? They took it upon themselves, early one Sunday morning, to hang up a sign reading, *No bare feet allowed*.

For some reason I happened to reach the church earlier than usual, and was in time to take down the sign. It was sad to see division over things this trivial. It was also sad to see what really lay behind the outward demarcations of divisions: a we / they polarity instead of love. This time, I was the one to call the board meeting, and I would not be overwhelmed in the manner that I reported earlier. Now, not only was I on the board, but I was president of the corporation. This

did not make me a dictator by any means, but it meant that I would be free to be God's man with a clear conscience, and I would not be in a hireling status.

This I spoke from my heart to the board:

"In a sense it is we older established Christians who are on trial before the young people. We are the ones who told them about James 2 and 1 John 4:7. The kind of action we displayed today puts, as James said, a question mark across our faith. When this happens we have to ask ourselves who or what it is that controls and guides our motives.

"If because of our plush carpeting we have to close the door to one young person who has bare feet, then I'm personally in favor of ripping out all the carpeting and having concrete floors.

"If because of dirty jeans we have to say to one young person, 'I'm sorry, you can't come into church tonight, your jeans are too dirty,' then I am in favor of getting rid of the upholstered pews. Let's get benches or steel chairs or something we can wash off. But let's not ever, ever, close the door to anyone because of dress or the way he looks."

Calvary Chapel jumped over that last hurdle. We were ready to move ahead.

- Chuck Smith, Tal Brooke, Harvest, 43-44, 46, 48-50

And they did move ahead, and we see the work continue today but we need to be careful that we don't put up obstacles that prevent people from worshiping God.

And maybe bare feet are not the issue here in Wisconsin, but we need to be careful because when people don't look like us, dress like us, we can look down upon them, and that is a dangerous thing to do. It is a slippery slope to legalism!

Now I do understand that in some large churches, those who have lots of money, those who are big in the business world, those who are famous, are given special attention. I think the thought is that they give more and maybe they do, but again, we are to treat everyone equally. That is why I don't know what anyone gives, that is between you and God. I am human, and it could influence me! So, I try to be wise and what I don't know, can't hurt me here!

Let me share this with you because it gives a different perspective on how we are to look at people, evaluate people. Remember when Samuel went to Jesse to anoint the next King in Israel. And he was looking at the outward appearance thinking this is a good one, okay, maybe that one.

And there was none except one son of Jesse, a little shepherd boy named David and we are told in I Samuel 16:7, "**But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'**"

I realize that we can't look at a person's heart, but can't we pray and ask for wisdom in the situations we find ourselves in, so when we do respond we do so in the way that God wants us to? Of course we can. Remember what James said back in James 1:5, "**If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**"

And listen to what Solomon said about how God feels regarding our treatment of the poor. In Proverbs 14:31 he tells us, "**He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.**"

And in Proverbs 22:2 we are told, "**The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all.**"

Great perspective to have as we minister to people, ***THE LORD IS THE MAKER OF US ALL!***

So, **FAITH AND DISCRIMINATION**, that should not be seen in our lives. We need to be careful that we don't let that attitude in!

VERSES 5-7

The third point is **PROPER FAITH**, and we have talked a little about this in our last section. But this is important for us to understand if we are going to mature in the faith!

Now this may seem strange that the poor are rich, but the idea here is spiritually speaking they are rich in the Lord! One writer put it like this, "The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must. . . . the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God." (Meyer)

That is not a bad thing. And we all have that ability to rest in Him, to trust in Him, but when the rich, and all of us are included, we have more than most people in this world, are in trouble, we get out the check book or the credit card and take care of the problem instead of laying our request before the Lord!

Now please understand that James is not saying that the rich cannot get saved, but it is difficult because possessions, wealth many times gets in the way. In fact, Hiebert makes this interesting point, "Church history demonstrates the comparatively more poor people than rich have responded to the Gospel."

Let me show you the lesson Jesus teaches us on this. Remember in Matthew chapter 19 as the rich young ruler came to Jesus wanting to know what he needed to do to have eternal life?

In that story Jesus is drawing this man to Himself and there is one thing that is blocking his relationship with the Savior- that is his riches!

Jesus told him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor and he would have eternal life. You see, his treasures would be in the Savior and not in his riches, he would have treasures in heaven if he followed Jesus.

The response of this man is given to us in Matthew 19:22 which says, "**But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**"

Now that is not saying that we have to sell everything we have and become poor to be saved.

This was an issue for this man and it kept him out of the kingdom of God as we have seen.

And, in Matthew 19:23-24 we are told, "**Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'**"

In other words, it is impossible for a rich man to be saved, and it is impossible for any of us to be saved.

Don't fret, because in Matthew 19:26 we are told, "**But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'**"

If it wasn't for God, none of us would be saved, but again, for the rich, it seems to be harder for them to give up their riches, it seems to stumble them from coming to the Savior, to Jesus!

And James puts it all in front of those who were looking with favor upon the rich and putting down the poor. He reminds them that the rich oppress them, the rich drag them into court, they take advantage of them, they treat them like dirt and worst of all, they mock their faith in

the true and living God. And now they show partiality to them? That doesn't make sense. But, again, for gain they do this.

Also, I thought these people were going to church? They were but they were religious people and not saved people. There is a big difference. And because of that they treated the poor very poorly. But make no mistake about it, we as Christians can do the same. Be careful!

Now, why do the rich behave like this? And keep in mind that we are included in this. Why do they oppress and sue and mock the poor, take advantage of people?

Paul, in I Timothy 6:9-10 tells us, **“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”**

You see, the love of money causes people to do evil things to gain more money but there is never true satisfaction found in money, you are always desiring more of it.

That is why Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, **“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”**

Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, **“But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.”**

And in verse 7 here in James chapter 2 we are told, **“Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?”**

“If the rich here spoken of were Christians, then they may be said to blaspheme Christ's name, when by their wicked carriage [posture] they caused it to be blasphemed by others . . . but if rich unbelievers be here meant, the rich men of those times being generally great enemies to Christianity.” (Poole)

Thus, *PROPER FAITH* is manifested in our lives by putting everyone on the same playing field, not exalting one above another! That just makes sense.

VERSES 8-12

I have called these verses *THE LAW CONDEMNS YOUR FAITH* and you will see why in a minute.

Remember back in James 1:25 Paul spoke of this **“law of liberty”** just as he does here in James 2:8. What is this **“perfect law of liberty”**?

Simply put, it is the New Covenant that the King has established for us to live by. Let me show you what I mean. The eighth commandment says, **“You shall not steal.”** Pretty straightforward.

The Law could force me not to steal but now, with the New Covenant, what the Law couldn't do, that is to make me share with you what belongs to me, the New Covenant enables me to do so because the royal law is a law of *LOVE!*

In Romans chapter 3 we are told, **“For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. . . . Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on**

faith. 28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.” Romans 3:20-22, 27-28. (New Living Translation)

And think about what religion does to people. It can only make us look good outwardly and yet, it is superficial.

But when we come to Christ, when we are born again, God works on the inside and what He is doing on the inside will overflow outwardly in the things that we do and the things that we say! We will be kind to others, treat them as the Lord has called us to. We will not be a respecter of person's.

You see, what the Law could not do Jesus has done, this perfect law of liberty or this law of love that is the New Covenant!

And here's the thing, something that James has been dealing with here. There is nothing wrong with loving the rich, the problem comes when we show partiality to the rich and put down the poor man.

I like this story because it puts things into perspective for us and that is so important. We are told,

General Robert E. Lee was a devout follower of Jesus Christ. It is said that soon after the end of the American Civil War, he visited a church in Washington, D.C. During the communion service he knelt beside a black man. An onlooker said to him later, “How could you do that?” Lee replied, “My friend, all ground is level beneath the cross.”

- Source Unknown

How true that is, and may we not lose that perspective.

Also, like I have said, in some churches people are promoted into leadership positions because of their status in society, their wealth and that is a disaster.

You look to put people in leadership that are saved, that have servant's hearts and as God leads. Remember what we read in Leviticus 19:18, “**. . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.**”

And again, we see that Jesus picked up on that Old Testament command and expounded on it in Matthew 22:35-40, “**Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**”

You see, all are important in God's eyes and we should not show partiality to the rich or the poor. Thus, if we fulfill the Royal Law, the Supreme Law, the Law of love then we will love as Christ loves, we will keep the commands of God.

Jesus said in John 13:34-35, “**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**”

If you don't, then you are missing the mark that God has set, you are disobeying Him, and your walk is not matching your talk!

Now we are to show respect to those that are in authority over us, to the elderly, both in the church and outside the church, in society. It doesn't make them better, but they are to be respected for the position that God has placed them in. In Leviticus 19:32 we are told, “**You**

shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD.”

And Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 5:12-13, **“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”**

And in Romans 13:1 Paul said, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”**

Not partiality but respect. Don't put them on a pedestal but honor them and respect them.

Now we looked this law of liberty or this law of love, the New Covenant and James speaks of the Law, the Old Covenant now in regard to keeping it for our salvation. Listen again to what he says in James 2:10-12, **“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.”**

Here's the thing. We are under the Law of Liberty and as we obey God's Law, the New Covenant, we find true freedom.

But, if you want to be justified by the Law then you must keep all 613 commandments, not breaking one of them your entire life for as soon as you do, you are guilty of breaking them all!

Thus, if you are sinless, if you are perfect, keeping all of the Law, then you can enter into heaven.

Now for those who think they can do that, Jesus tells us it is more than just the outward action, it is a matter of the heart – lusting after someone, coveting something and-so-on.

“But then it is impossible to keep the Law!” Exactly and that is the point, you can't keep the Law for justification, for salvation, only Jesus has done that!

Then what is the point of the Law? To show us our failure and then to point us to our Savior for the forgiveness of our sins!

Paul put it this way in Galatians 3:23-26, **“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”**

The Law, the Old Covenant condemns our faith because we fail. But the New Covenant, the Law of liberty or the Law of love we want to be judged by because it is God working in us and through us that allows us to shine for Him.

All my sins, all my failure in keeping the Law was paid for by Jesus and now I enjoy the liberty that He has given me, and I serve Him, I obey Him out of love and not the Law! Make no mistake about it, ***THE LAW CONDEMNS YOUR FAITH!***

VERSE 13

And now we come to the ***CONCLUSION*** of what James was speaking about.

What James is saying here is that someone who shows consistent mercy to others demonstrates that the Spirit of God lives in their heart, they are born-again, and therefore have passed from death to life and will never come into condemnation.

This action does not save them, but it is the evidence for their faith!

Now, maybe some of you are thinking that this is not such a big deal. Maybe you think that it really does not matter. Let me say this, God did not put these words here to fill in some space. He put them here for a reason and we need to not only understand what He is saying, but we need to apply these things to our lives.

Let me show you how important it is to not be a respecter of people but to love them, reach out to them as you would your best friend! We are told,

Mahatma Gandhi shares in his autobiography that in his student days in England he was deeply touched by reading the Gospels and seriously considered becoming a convert to Christianity, which seemed to offer a real solution to the caste system that divided the people of India. One Sunday he attended church services and decided to ask the minister for enlightenment on salvation and other doctrines. But when Gandhi entered the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go elsewhere to worship with his own people. He left and never came back. "If Christians have caste differences also," he said to himself, "I might as well remain a Hindu!"

- R. Kent Hughes, Acts – The Church Afire, p. 149

May we live out our faith in such a way that it draws people to Jesus and it doesn't push them away from Jesus! Less of me and more of Him, more of Jesus in my life so that people can see Him through my life. How about you?

Remember - ***FAITH IS PROVED BY LOVE!***