

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 2:8-13

-) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7-9.** Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 10.** We continue today in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #11. I have titled today’s message *“Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment”* (2:13).
-) **SLIDE 11.** Today’s text from JAMES 2:8-13 teaches us three rather basic principles of Christianity. 1) Love your neighbor as yourself. 2) Stumble with one sin you break the entire law. 3) Show mercy over judgment.
-) The important thought we need to capture from these three points is the context in which they are written. Remember the first three rules of Scripture interpretation. Context.
-) The context of this text is about showing favoritism in the church. And we covered that last week with v1-7. One cannot show favoritism (partiality) towards the rich over the poor when they come in to your assembly. So, let’s look at our first truth and how it applies to the context of the topic of favoritism.
-) **SLIDE 12.** Love your neighbor as yourself. JAMES 2:8.
-) **SLIDE 13.** This truth is universal. LEV 19:18. It was first given to the Israelites as part of the Mosaic Law.
-) **SLIDE 14.** MARK 12:29-31. The 2nd greatest commandment.
-) So, how does this universal command to love our neighbor as ourself apply to our context of favoritism? Pretty simple. Love the poor man who comes into your assembly as much as you love the rich man who comes into your assembly.

-) And love them both as you love yourself. And we really do love ourselves. And James says you are doing well if you do this.
-) **SLIDE 15**. But what does James say in response to their neglect over this basic commandment? JAMES 2:9.
-) **SLIDE 16**. Showing favoritism in the assembly of the church is **SINFUL**. Again, we covered this last week. But today we learn it is a direct violation of the second greatest commandment to love our neighbor as ourself and is therefore sinful to do so.
-) Let's look at our second truth and how it applies to the context of the topic of favoritism.
-) **SLIDE 17**. Stumble with one sin you break the entire law. JAMES 2:10-11. Human beings are good at categorizing sins and making some sins more evil than others. And let's be honest. Some sins will carry a more disastrous effect in society as others. Murder takes the life of a person where telling a little white lie may only momentarily hurt someone's feelings.
-) And something similar may have been going on at this time with James. The brethren may have thought their favoritism towards these rich people coming into their assembly may have been insignificant. But here James reminds them that it is sinful and that by doing so you have broken the entire Law.
-) **SLIDE 18**. Showing favoritism in the assembly of the church makes one a transgressor of **BREAKING** the entire law.
-) James wants them to know that a sin is a sin is a sin. You commit murder, you sin. You commit adultery, you sin. You show favoritism in the church, you sin. All of these break the law. Do not think that in the eyes of the Lord any one of these is less sinful than the others. They all break the law.
-) **SLIDE 19**. And Paul tells the people in the churches at Galatia something similar. GALATIANS 5:3. Want to be saved by the law? Then you better keep the whole law.

-) 1) Favoritism is sinful. 2) If you stumble (break) one law you have violated the entire law. And that leads us to our third and final truth we want to glean from these six verses today.
-) **SLIDE 20**. Show mercy over judgment. JAMES 2:12-13.
-) This is one of those Scripture texts that if not read in context, can be easily misconstrued. What is the context of this chapter so far? Favoritism. So, if two people walk into the church assembly, what might a person do? A person may judge by the appearance of that person and respond accordingly.
-) **SLIDE 21**. Hey! This person has a gold ring and is dressed in fine clothes. Let's usher him/her to the good seats. Hey! This person is dressed in ragged clothes and smells bad. Let's make him/her sit on the floor or stand in the back. Judging.
-) **SLIDE 22**. But James tells us in this situation (context) that mercy triumphs over judgment. What is mercy? Webster.
-) **SLIDE 23**. The word "*mercy*" is used 54 times in the NT. Here is one of many examples where the Lord showed mercy to a person in need. MATTHEW 20:30-34. Mercy. Lenient or compassionate treatment.
-) **SLIDE 24**. Parable of the Unforgiving Servant in MATTHEW 18:23-35. MATTHEW 18:33. The lesson here is that we have been shown mercy. Therefore, we must do the same.
-) **SLIDE 25**. Showing favoritism in the assembly of the church demonstrates a **LACK** of mercy.
-) **SLIDE 26**. What does James say to those who fail to show mercy in such cases? JAMES 2:13. Those people will receive judgment without mercy. I don't think that's good.
-) Yes, there is a time for showing mercy and being lenient and being compassionate. And the context of today's passage teaches us that we better show mercy and not judge when people who are different than us come into our church

assembly. Mercy triumphs over judgment in this context is always applicable when the outward (rich, poor, black, white, beautiful, ugly, etc.) is what we judge by.

-) But may I warn all of us that “*mercy triumphs over judgment*” is not a blanket statement for all times and for all church situations. In 1COR 5, there is a very immoral situation going on in the church where a man has his father’s wife. And what does Paul tell the elders of that church to do? Show mercy?
-) **SLIDE 26.** 1COR 5:12-13. There is a time and a place when judgment must happen within the church. No, we are to never judge by the outside (are they rich or poor and then seat them accordingly). But we are to judge the inside (will a little leaven leaven the whole lump).
-) I don’t want to get into this judgment issue here this morning because that is a sermon for another day. But I will conclude by saying this. The church has become impotent because of its failure to judge the inside timely and righteously.
-) And it makes no difference if this immoral brother in 1COR 5 is the one finely dressed with the gold ring who gives all the money to the church. Expel that immoral brother. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Jesus says in JOHN 7:24 to make a righteous judgment.
-) Our context today is about favoritism. 1) Favoritism is sinful. 2) Favoritism isn’t just breaking a small part of the law, it is about breaking the entire law. 3) Favoritism, in this context, demonstrates judgment over mercy. And that is wrong.
-) Next week we begin to cover verses 14 through 26. These verses are the main focus in what separates Catholic theology from Protestant theology. Faith and works. Come back.

4/3/2022 at Beech Grove Christian Church