

Living Faith ~ Pastor Alex Perednia ~ October 15, 2017

#4 FAITHBOOK ~ A Merciful Faith? (James 2:1-13)

Examining what the book of James (*Faithbook*) teaches us about what faith is and how to strengthen it.

Opening: On Facebook, you may be asked to “*share this post if you love Jesus.*” But, isn’t there a better way to show the reality of our faith?

BIG IDEA: *The real test of our faith is whether we treat others with mercy.*

I. There is a **CASE STUDY** to Test Our Faith. (2:1- 2:4)

- A. Our faith is really expressed in the way we treat others. (1:27-2:1)
- B. A way to test our *faith* is whether we show **FAVORITISM** (2:1a – “partiality” – ESV; “favor some people more than others” – NLT) in our congregational life.
- C. Take this test case: How you would treat a *rich* and *poor* man in the congregation? (2:2-3) What other situations would challenge us today?
- D. If we show favoritism toward the rich man, then we have failed the test case because it shows we have “discriminated” and become “judges with evil thoughts.” (2:4)
- E. A faith exhibiting favoritism is defective in several ways.
 1. It denies the sovereign grace and choice of God Himself. (2:5-6a)
 2. It aligns us with those who treat others poorly and blaspheme God. (2:6b-7)
 3. It violates God’s law and shows we are indeed lawbreakers. (2:8-11)

"A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing." (Martin Luther)

II. There are **REMEDIES** to this kind of defective faith.

- A. **Keep reminding ourselves that the **TESTING** of our faith (1:3) will happen in practical ways.** It will often occur in the real-life tests of how treat others (1:27a) and whether we are being “polluted by the world” in our decisions. (1:27b)
- B. **Keep reminding ourselves of the **OBJECT** of our faith:** “our *glorious* Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1b), who modeled (Phil 2:5-8) and taught (Matt 5:5) that spiritual poverty was the only way to be rich in the things of God.
- C. **Keep reminding ourselves of the **JUDGEMENT** of our faith that is coming.** “speak and act as those who are going to be judged... mercy triumphs over judgment.” (2:12-13; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10)
- D. **Keep reminding ourselves that the grace & **MERCY** of the Gospel frees us to be merciful to others:** “...as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom...mercy triumphs over judgment.” (2:12-13)



CONNECTION GROUPS at Living Faith
Sermon-based Group
Wednesday, Oct. 18 @ 2PM and 7PM

1. What are some of the superficial ways that we can “prove” our faith on social media, email or other outward displays? Have you ever felt compelled to participate? What is the problem with such a “proof” of our faith? How does Martin Luther’s statement challenge us to look for a more authentic way to prove our faith?
2. Read James 1:27-2:13. Watch this week’s video from Francis Chan on James, <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/159923#4>
3. According to James 2:1-4, what is the perfect “case study” for showing our faith? What are some additional scenarios for how this might “test of faith” might play out in our lives? Let’s be honest, how can we show favoritism in our church life?
4. Do you think James is promoting a “reverse favoritism,” in which we welcome and honor the poor more than the rich? What is the “royal law” James mentions in verse 8? How does showing favoritism break that law? According to verses 10–12, how would James respond to someone who said, “I’ve kept seven of the Ten Commandments. That’s a passing grade, right?” How can we use this an evangelistic approach?
5. In James 2:12, James speaks again of the “the law that gives freedom” (see also 1:25), is he referring to and how it this law different than the “royal law” in vv. 8-10? How does *this law* give us freedom? There are two key words appear in verse 13. What is judgment? What is mercy? How does the idea of mercy bring us back to the matter of showing favoritism?
6. Look over the four remedies that Alex spoke about on Sunday. Which one stands out to you the most as something you need to be reminded of to recover a more Merciful Faith? Put in your own words what James means when he tells us to: “speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom...”? (v. 12) What does this look like?

MEMORY VERSE: James 2:12