

# Readings

## Scripture

<sup>1</sup>My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>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," <sup>4</sup>have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>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? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

- James 2:1-7 (English Standard Version)

## Reflection

You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor...you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

- Leviticus 19:15, 18b (English Standard Version)

You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's...

- Deuteronomy 1:17 (English Standard Version)

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.

- Deuteronomy 10:17-21 (English Standard Version)

True faith has no place for the social distinctions of the world.

- Peter Davids, *The Epistle of James* (p. 105)

James shows the fundamental incompatibility of holding faith in Christ and showing partiality among people.

- ESV Study Bible

There is no place for prejudice in the life of faith. "Partiality" combines a group of terms signifying "to accept/judge according to face" and refers to favoritism shown on the basis of status in society.

- ESV Study Bible

In this way, when Moses asked to see the Lord's glory (Ex. 33:18) the Lord in effect answered by saying: 'You will certainly see my glory, for I will come to you myself, reveal my essential goodness and spell out my very nature to you.' Glory, then, is 'shorthand' for the personal presence of the Lord in all his goodness and in the fullness of his revealed character. The Lord Jesus Christ is God's Glory: God himself come among us in all his goodness and in the full revelation of his person.

- J.A. Motyer, *The Message of James* (p. 84)

# Sermon Outline

## The Sin of Favoritism

James 2:1-7

*True Religion*

Matt Esswein

### Faith in Christ leaves no place for favoritism...

#### The Foundation: Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory (James 2:1)

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#### The Situation: A rich man and a poor man walk into a church (James 2:2-4)

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#### The Redirection: Partiality is utterly unlike God and dangerous for us

(James 2:5-7)

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### Reflection Questions

- Reread James 2:1-4 – What is the particular problem that James is addressing?
- Why do you think believers would act in this way showing favoritism to the rich and powerful?
- On what principle should we challenge discrimination in any form?
- Why do you think it is so tempting for us to show partiality or favoritism to the rich, powerful, famous, beautiful, etc.?
- How is the glory of Christ Jesus the Lord a foundation for us to show no partiality?
- Why are we tempted to pursue the glory of the people around us over the glory of the Lord?
- How does the Lord view the poor, weak, and afflicted throughout the Old Testament? Who did Jesus pursue after in his ministry on earth?
- In what ways can weakness, poverty, or pain lead us to humbly lean on God? Have you experienced this personally? How?
- How can we grow in seeing people as God sees them and further loving them as God loves them?