

The Book of James Part 4 – James 2:1-8

Today, we're going to continue our study in the book of James. But first, in the book of John chapter 20, you remember the account of Thomas, how he didn't believe that Jesus had actually risen. In John 20:27, it says, ²⁷*Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*** ²⁸*And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.* ²⁹*Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.***

We are blessed when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We haven't seen Him physically, but we see Him through faith's eye. And then when we look into the Word of God, we're blessed even more as we study His Word. We see Him even clearer, more plain, as we study in His Word. So, today, let's continue our study in the book of James, and let's let God speak to our hearts today and just bless us greatly with His Word.

Last time, we left off with verse 1 of James chapter 2. It says, *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.* In other words, don't show favoritism, and we read this last week in I Corinthians 12:5 and I Corinthians 1:10 and Romans 10:12. Romans 10:12 says, *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

We're all the same. We're human beings and we're all the same, and then, when we get saved, we're all the same. You know, we're the children of God, and He looks on all of us as the same. God does not make distinctions among Christian brethren on account of differences of

worldly positions. The Lord shows no partiality. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, is not to be held with partiality.

Now, in James 2:2-3, it says, ²*For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; ³And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.*

We're seeing here in verse 3 that clothes do not make the man. We hear that in a lot of commercials today. It's commercialized, but clothes do not make the man or the woman. Proverbs 22:2 says, *The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.*

In Acts 10:34, it says, *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.* That means that, no matter, our clothes do not get us more respect with the Lord. God sees everyone as the same. He does not show partiality. And this thought is carried on from verse 1 down through these three verses, as we've read.

There are other verses that we could read. In Matthew 5:45, it says, ***That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.***

Notice in verse 3 the verse goes on to say we are to show no respect to the poor in the assembly. The indication seems to be that people, whether saved or unsaved, were being discriminated against in James' day in the early church because of the way they dressed, or as

to the quality of their clothes. We could also liken this to an unsaved person who wants to come to church but is snubbed because they are not saved. When we think of this, they haven't been clothed with the robe of righteousness, which God provides, but God sees them as a person who needs to be saved.

And these mentioned in the verses that we're looking at today would be treated as outcasts instead of being encouraged to attend to hear the Word of God. We show favoritism a lot of times in churches today, and we shouldn't do that. Not only because a person is unsaved but because of the way...maybe they don't have the proper clothing that we would see as proper, but God sees them. If they've trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior, we're all clothed with the robe of righteousness. And if they're unsaved, God still sees them as a person who needs Jesus as Lord.

As we look on now, in verses 4-7, we see the proof of partiality that James is saying here. There's proof. In verse 4, it says, *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?* James continues his indictment of the assembly by pointing to certain actions that should not be taken by a church against individuals, saved or unsaved. He also seems to indicate that what he's talking about is being tolerated, practiced, in that local assembly. In other words, it seems to be all right with them. But in verse 4 and the first part of verse 4, it talks about being partial. You become biased when you are partial.

And then in the last part of that verse, you become a judge with sinful thoughts when you are partial. In other words, don't make a difference in people. Everyone's the same. We're all humans and we need to be treated the same way, saved or unsaved.

Now in verse 5, God has chosen the poor who are first of all, strong in faith, saved. The verse

says this: *⁵Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith... strong in the faith, saved.*

In I Corinthians 1:26 it says, *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*

And verse 27 goes on to say, *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.*

And James seems to be thinking, as well, of Matthew 5:3 which says, *Blessed are the poor of spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Inheritors of the kingdom. Saved, according to verse 5 of James chapter 2.*

And the poor, as far as the world is concerned are those who don't have much money. But in God's sight, the rich are those who have trusted Christ as Savior. Moses knew about the riches in Christ. In Hebrews 11:26, it says, *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*

God does not ignore the rich, but He also pours forth His grace on the rich in common with the poor. The Lord does honor those who choose Him rather than riches. He honors us because we choose Him over the things of this world.

Well, as we continue on, we see in verses 6-7, it says, *But ye have despised the poor.* Now, here comes James, and he says, "Look, you've done this. You've despised the poor." In other words, "You have intensely disliked the poor." In other words, "You have contempt for the poor."

And the verse goes on to say, *Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the*

judgment seats? “The rich treat you harshly and say evil things about you,” James is saying here. “And the rich treat you the same as you treat the poor and it’s not right.”

As we look on, we need to realize as we read verse 7, it says, *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?* Those outside the church blaspheme Jesus Christ. Part of the reason is that sometimes it’s because we might even say we’re blaspheming when we turn people away because they don’t look exactly the way we think they should look. Or maybe they don’t act the way we think they should act. But God says He loves all of us. He loves every person, and He wants all of us to be saved, and He wants all of us to be treated the same within the church.

Notice now with me in verses 8-13. We may not get down through all of these verses, but let’s look at some of them. We see the royal law of God is evidenced by love. And the royal law and partiality seen in verses 8-13 here. James 2:8 says, *If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.* The royal law says, “Love your neighbor.” How? As yourself, according to verse 8. The royal law.

The Bible refers to the royal law no less than nine times. We see that in Leviticus 19:18. It says, *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

And it’s carried over into the New Testament in Matthew 22:39. *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Mark 12:31: *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

And you can look up other verses—Luke 10:27, Matthew 5:43. Also in Matthew 5:44, it says, *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

I would submit to you today that’s part of the royal law, that we’re not only to love those who love us and love our neighbors, but we are to love those who are our enemies, those people who would despitefully use us. We’re to love those people. Why? Because God first loved us. In James 2:8, it says, *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.* No wonder it is called the “royal law.”

Do you love God today? Do you love the Lord? That’s the most important question. Do you love Him? If you love Him, then you’ve asked Jesus to come into your heart. “Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I receive you as my Savior.” If you’ve done that, then you’ve shown God that you love Him and you love His Son. But if you’ve not done that, you’re not showing your love for the Lord. Ask Him to come into your heart today. Ask Him to save you so you can be fit, so you can be made ready for heaven.

And if you have trusted Him, you need to be living for Him today and for the rest of your life while on this earth. God loves you and He wants you to be saved. God loves you and He wants you to serve Him today.

Why not look at our Website today, www.LRWM.org. On the Website, you’ll be able to download this program and other programs of “It’s a Good Life.” You’ll also find Bible study helps on there, as well.

Until the next time when you hear me say, “It is a good life,” may the Lord bless you richly in my prayer.