

GOSPEL OF IMPARTIALITY – James 2:1-13

In our text James addresses the topic of “partiality” within the church. **What is partiality?** **Partiality: unfair bias in favor of one thing or person compared with another; favoritism.** We live in a time of *great partiality*, “unfair bias,” which is nothing “new!” Mankind has been judging one another according to “partiality” for ages! **But as James points out here, such judgement, “partiality” has “no place” within the church!**

It should be pointed out, *in our overly sensitive, politically correct society*, that “partiality” is **not** the same as “preference.” **Preference: a greater liking for one alternative over another.** (*James Brown; Country; Salsa/Mariachis*). Your “preference” does **not** make you a “racist!” However, *as believers*, when our “preference,” is **guided** by “unfair bias,” then *preference* becomes *partiality*; which God calls, **“evil!”** The apostle Paul willingly set aside his “preference,” for the sake of the gospel – “...to the Jew, a Jew, Gentile, a Gentile...that I might by all means save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

“Partiality” is **evil** for **two** reasons: **1) Demears and devalues the worth of others.** In doing so, *as believers*, we are replacing God’s standard of “righteousness,” *His Son*, for our own! **2) Defies the “Great Commission.”** It *prevents* us from “making disciples” of all “nations,” (ethnicities). According to the 2015 U.S. Census report, the population of El Paso County around 674,471; Colorado Springs 455,535. Many think C.S. is a “Christian Mecca.”

But in study conducted by the Gallup organization, C.S. ranked in the “bottom third” of all cities, in regard to “religious fervor.” I believe “partiality” is the *greatest* obstacle facing the church in our city! ***We seem to have bought into the “lie,” that we are a “Christian Mecca”; and have become “partial” to attracting more people “like us,” rather than reaching our city for Christ!***

James give us **three ways** in which we, *in a culture of divisiveness*, can avoid the *under-tow* of “partiality,” and become an “impartial,” *impactful*

witness, for the glory of God! First – Hold your faith correctly. (v.1-4). This is the fundamental of Christian living; it all starts here. If we don't get this right we will become "victims," rather than "victors" in today's culture. Scripture tells us we've all been given a "measure of faith," (**Rom.12:3**), for the "glory" of God, and **not** ourselves. To "mix" (hold) our *faith*, with "partiality," is "sinful," and *robs* Christ of His glory!

The Greek verb for hold "echo" – in the sense of wearing, possession of mind. It's where we get our English word "echo" - **Echo: a sound or series of sounds caused by the reflection of sound waves from a surface back to the listener.** In our text the word "hold" thus, implies a "life of faith," *reflecting* or "**echoing**" back to God, *the word (voice) of God!* **Our lives should be an "echo" of His word.** "**Partiality**" is a **distortion of the word of God in our lives.** The "word" says "forgive," but "bitterness" and "unforgiveness" is the **echo** we are sending to the *ear* of God! **Partiality is a "mishandling" of the word of God; an "echo" of the flesh, rather than the Spirit!**

Apart from obedience to God's word (faith), we are *incapable* of "holding faith" apart from "partiality!" (**v.4**). David understood that it was essential to have a love for the word, that his life might "echo" it! (**ttt**) **Psalm 19:7-11.**

If Jesus came, *not to "judge" the world* (John 3:17); why do we spend so much time "judging" it; and one another! Paul declared in **1 Corinthians 4:3-5** that Christ is the **only** "judge," and *neither* his opinion, or the *opinion* of others really matter! Yes, we are to have "discernment," but discernment is **not** judgment! **Discernment** is for our spiritual protection, and wisdom. "**Judgment**," *however*, involves "finality"; it places *limitations* upon the "power of God!" "**Judgment**" (**partiality**) is merely another form of "**unbelief**," the **antithesis of "faith!"**

The second way we can avoid the undertow of partiality; **Honor others.** (v.5-7) James is not saying here that we should “dishonor” the rich; but rather, he points out how the world’s “values” are *diametrically opposed* to God’s. Partiality should not be found among us; but *sadly*, to our “shame,” many Christian fellowships have brought the *value system* of the world into the House of God! Whereby, the “***carnal golden rule***” applies; “he who has the gold rules!” The “**wealthy**” have influence, and the poor are devalued!

Jesus said: (Luke 16:15) “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

Notice: (v.5) God’s “value system” here; He places a premium on being “rich in faith!” Yet, many pulpits in America are obsessed with “worldly wealth”; in fact, they teach to possess worldly riches is to truly be “blessed!” Faith is “true riches” in God’s economy. We tend to honor that which is “detrimental” to us! (v.6,7). (1 Tim. 6:10) 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. (1 Peter 2:17) Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. We can’t do this if we’re living by according to *partiality*, the “value system” of this world!

The third way we can avoid the undertow of partiality; **Love others.** (v.8-11) “Partiality,” *always* produces “legalism,” rather than “love.” **Notice:** the heart of “partiality” is *soon* exposed (v.9a). It’s evidence of the fact, something “internally” is wrong. (Psalm 139:23-24) Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting. **God will “try us.”** He places you around people *different from you*, to show you what’s really in your heart! *In the church we’re all quick to say; “I’m not prejudice,” (partial), until someone of another color or ethnicity moves in next door; or your daughter wants to marry outside of your race or culture; or you find out your co-worker is gay; or your new boss is a woman! etc.*

Love is not love until it’s “uncomfortable!” Marriage is a “test” of true love (cruise). Legalism, is “conditional love”; God’s love is “unconditional!” And

those who have come to know His love, *through faith in Christ*, are called to a “**higher law,**” (love); a “**royal law,**” (v.8a); not “legalism,” (v.10). Those who keep the law, (the legalistic); are capable of “murder”; and Jesus equated our “internal judgmental attitudes,” with “**murder!**”

(ttt) Matthew 5:21-26. Becoming “angry” and assuming a position of “superiority” over another by calling him/her a derogatory name, **Aramaic – Raca; “you fool” – demonstrates sinfulness of heart** – is an act of “murder!” To have such an attitude towards others, Jesus said, is to be in *danger* of “hell’s fire!” In other words; you cannot be “saved” and be “comfortable,” living with this “attitude!” (1 John 4:7-8) **Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. Love is the “royal law!”** It’s an accurate “echo,” testament of our faith, in Christ!

APPLICATION: (v.12, 13) “Speak and do.” The *law of liberty*, which judges us according to grace; should be extended to others, **not** only in “word,” but in “action!” The same “mercy” granted us, *through faith in Christ*, should be applied in our relationships; for without it “judgement” and *partiality, division and spiritual anarchy*, will rule! **(v.13).** (Psalm 147:11) **The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy.** This week, resist the “partiality” hype; don’t drink the “Kool-Aid” of *carnal* “unfair bias”; **Hold faith, honor and love others, without “partiality!”** (1 Peter 3:15) **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.**

CONCLUSION: Peter said: (Acts 10:34b) **“In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.”** His mercy and grace is extended to all; His love knows no limit!