

# Love Without Bias

## Սիրել Առանց Խտրութեան

**James 2:8-13**

**Favoritism is a sin.** It is not just a sin where destroys human relationship; **it destroys our witness for our God.** We represent our Lord Jesus in daily interactions. If we love Jesus, we love his creation as well. How does God treat His creation?

**“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.” (2:1 NIV)**

God does not show favoritism. **“For God shows no partiality”** (Rom 2.11 ESV).

Jesus did not ignore the poor, the rich, the prostitutes, the lepers, the Pharisees, the Centurion... the oppressed and the oppressor... name it.

Last Sunday we also covered that there is no other way to come to God. God chose the poor because there is no other side. We all are sinners and we all need God. There is no other way to come to God.

Let us move to today’s passage.

**If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**

(James 2:8-9 ESV)

Let us analyze this passage:

### **1. Royal Law**

James is quoting from Leviticus: **“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”** (Lev 19.18 ESV)

Why does James call loving the neighbor a royal law?

They asked Jesus what was the **greatest commandment**.

**Love God and love one's neighbor as oneself** (Mat. 22:34-40). It is a royal law because it is coming from Jesus the King. It is royal because obeying this law will lead you to Jesus the King.

Coming back to main topic of this chapter: **showing partiality (favoritism) is a serious sin**. "Jesus established **the law of love as** a central demand of the kingdom he inaugurated. It is to this 'law' that James probably refers."<sup>1</sup>

**Love without bias**. In true love there cannot be favoritism. Love should be without discrimination, race, color, economic status...

Illustration: Two-year-old Samantha Savitz is deaf and loves interacting with her neighbors, so they all learned sign language in order to communicate with her better. The little girl is just so charming and adorable that it's hard not to want to be able to have simple conversations with her. If it takes a village to raise this child, then they need to learn to properly interact with her.<sup>2</sup>

Wow, what a commitment to love someone.

## 2. Keeping the whole law

**For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.** (James 2:10-11 ESV)

James is warning his audience not to play with God's law. You cannot pick and choose which law you will keep and which one you will break. You can be a faithful husband but if you kill someone, you will have broken the law. Please notice, if one broke the law; it is not just that particular law. The person disobeyed against God the Lawgiver. We all are going to be judged under God's law. So, James is warning how to be careful not to manipulate God's law.

## 3. The Law of Liberty

**So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.** (James 2:12 ESV)

What is the law of liberty? James does not define it. (It appears in 1:25)

Let me look at the context:

No favoritism; God chose the poor; love your neighbor as yourself; obey God's law in its entirety. Then James uses two verbs that often will appear in this letter. One's words and action should be in harmony.

**Speak and act**

“Both ‘speak’ and ‘act’ are in a Greek tense that stresses the continuing nature of these actions: ‘be constantly speaking,’ ‘always be acting.’ **Speak in such a manner and act in such a manner as those who are about to be judged by the law of liberty.**”<sup>3</sup>

Our lives, our words and conduct will be judged one day (eschatology); under what?<sup>4</sup>

What is the law that liberates us?

Paul explains this in Galatians:

**For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Gal 5:13-14 ESV)**

John Piper explains:

Christians are set free from their sins. That is, we are forgiven and freed from the condemnation and dominion of sin. Now we are to live in that freedom—forgiven, not condemned by God. Does that produce lawlessness? Both Paul and James answer no. It produces love. For James the summary of the law of liberty is given in verse 8: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” And for Paul the summary of the law of liberty is given in Galatians 5:13, “Through love serve one another.”<sup>5</sup>

**God's love teaches us how to love and care for the neighbor.** This is serious thing. To love someone is not a luxury; it is not a suggestion; it is the law of liberty that only through Christ we can do. This is not a light thing. How we treat others is the evidence of our relation to Christ. It reminds me of an old song: "Yes they know we are Christian by our love..." By our love people, the neighbors, the marginalized, will know that we are disciples of Christ.

#### 4. Having Mercy

**For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.** (James 2:13 ESV)

Why in the world James ends this section emphasizing mercy over judgment?

Through Christ we are liberated from sin and the judgment of death. Use your imagination. You are convicted with the most terrible crime. You are standing in front of the judge. You fully deserve the death penalty, yet you are given freedom. James knows we cannot fulfill the law. Only Christ can do that on the cross by paying it all and giving us His righteousness. What is this? This is the mercy of God. This is the Grace of God.

**James asks us to speak and act in MERCY.** Do you remember the parable of two debtors? One owed millions of dollars and the debtor forgave him. The same person was ready to kill the person who owed him \$100.

If you show mercy, we will receive mercy.

It is one of the beatitudes:

**Blessed are merciful for they shall receive mercy.** (Matthew 5:7 ESV)

David Roper says:

"Let's get one thing straight: James is not suggesting that mercy has purchasing power. Showing mercy others does not obligate God to show mercy to us. Our mercy is only evidential in that it demonstrates that we understand depth of our misery and the incredible mercy of God in accepting us in that state."<sup>6</sup>

So how do I end this section?

Summary

Love without bias.

How can I do that? How can I come poor, open to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord?

On our knees and at the foot of the cross, we see that we are all sinners saved only by the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God chose his family on the basis of His mercy and grace.

Questions:

1. Do you obey God's commandment of love your neighbor (the Royal law)? What is hindering your from doing that? Can you come humbly on your knees to Jesus asking his love to be filled in you?
2. Are you merciful? Have you ever experienced God's mercy? If you cannot be merciful, ask God to help you. Please show mercy to someone that you have been ignoring.

1. Commentary ZIBBCNT Douglas J. Moo

2. <https://www.thethings.com/neighbourhood-sign-language-communicate-2-year-old-deaf-girl/>

3. Pillar New Testament Commentary on James: Doug Moo

4. *ibid*, Doug Moo rights: God's gracious acceptance of us does not end our obligation to obey him; it sets it on a new footing. No longer is God's law a threatening, confining burden. For the will of God now confronts us as a law of liberty — an obligation we discharge in the joyful knowledge that God has both "liberated" us from the penalty of sin and given us, in his Spirit, the power to obey his will. To use James's own description, this law is an "implanted word," "written on the heart," that has the power to save us (Jas. 1:21).

5. John Piper. JANUARY 18, 2004 The Peril of Partiality: Riches and Race in the Christian Church. For both of them (James and Paul), love is the natural fruit and the necessary evidence of being justified by faith (Galatians 5:6; James 2:17 ). Love is the kind of law that governs us when we are freed from condemnation by the blood and righteousness of Christ. And we will be judged under this law of liberty. If we have not loved, we will perish, because there will be no evidence that we are born again and justified by faith. This is not a light thing. How we treat others is the evidence of our relation to Christ. If we have been set free from sin's condemnation and dominion by Christ, then we live in liberty. And in

this liberty there is a law—the law of liberty, that is, the law of love. We will be judged under this law. And this law says, Do not show partiality on the basis of race or riches.  
6.David Roper, *Growing Slowly Wise*. P 86