

Music Video:**Video Illustration:** Shoes**Slide Background:** Love Your Neighbor**Sermon Series: Book of James****Title: Faith in Action**

Big Idea: James reminds us that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. No one stand head and shoulders above anyone else. We often see individuals who become social outcast because they are a little different in the way people see them. There many factors that divide people. Social, monetary, heritage and race are some of the dividing factors that may cause people to shun some people and be drawn to others. Look into the mass shooting in recent history it has been noted that the people who commit these atrocities have been rejected by society. James points out that Jesus has died for all and we are not to show partiality to some and shun others. Whatever the reasons for ignoring people in the light of the Gospel we are all created equal in the eyes of God. We have all sinned, we all need a Savior, and Jesus died for us all. Therefore, we are all God's children and we all will be together in Heaven with Him. There will be no segregation or separation when we all get to Heaven. It is our fault that many of the tragedies that happen and could have been avoided if we had shown the Christian love for people regardless of the perceived barriers which we try to separate us from the unlovable. There is no such thing as the unlovable, there is only the unloved. We must love all God's children with the love of Christ.

Introductory Illustration:

Dr. D. James Kennedy tells the story about a boy named Brian Warner who started going to church with a friend years ago. Brian was a skinny pizza faced nerdy looking kid that nobody liked. He was also a loner who looked out of place most of the time.

The youth group took a trip to an amusement park one weekend and when they got there the Youth Pastor instructed everyone to pair up with someone so nobody would get lost or left behind. Everybody got a partner but Brian. Nobody wanted to hang out with him, so he was left by himself.

The weeks went by after that little trip and Brian came to church occasionally but he was never really accepted there and he never felt welcome. Eventually he just quit altogether, and sadly, nobody seemed to notice.

Years later that Youth Pastor got a call from one of the teens that had been in that group. The former teen asked, "Do you remember Brian Warner?" The youth pastor didn't. The former-teen said "Let me refresh your memory, he was a skinny nerdy kid that nobody liked" The youth pastor said, "Oh, I remember him. Whatever happened to him?" The teen said "He changed his name. He took the first name of Marilyn Monroe because she committed suicide and the last name of Charles Manson because he was

a serial killer. Now he calls himself Marilyn Manson. He formed a band and all the members have taken the first name of a movie star and the last name of a serial killer.”

Most people have heard of Marilyn Manson because he sings some of the most satanic and anti-Christian songs of all time. One of his albums is titled “Antichrist Superstar” He once said it was his goal to totally wipe out Christianity. (Source Sermon Central)

Read Sermon Text

James 2:1-13 (Beware of Personal Favoritism)

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

NKJV

1. Honoring God (vs. 1-4)

James 2:1-4 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? NKJV

- a. James points out that when we hold in high esteem the person who appears to be affluent the person who is well dressed and is wearing the best clothes and we put the person who is not dressed in similar refinement

or who's clothing may dirty. When we shun the one and cater to the other that is sinful. We must realize that Jesus died for all the poor and the wealthy alike. While it has been said that clothes make the man and cleanliness is next to Godliness. There is no justification to demonstrate partiality to one over the other. The less fortunate of this world and just a valuable in the eyes of God as those who have much!

- b. The outward appearance of people provides no reflection as to what kind of person is wearing the clothes. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees that they were like whitewashed tombs. While we may not go places where should not go, and not say things we should not say and live our lives in the Christian way and we show favoritism to people because of how they dress and how they speak or look. We judge people with our actions.

Matthew 23:27-28

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. NKJV

Text Illustration:

There is a story of a young hippie who gave his life to Christ during the Jesus Movement of the late sixties and early seventies.

One Sunday he went to a church, not knowing it was one of the more "upper class" churches in the area. He was late to the service, and the pastor was about to begin the message. As he walked in, he saw that the place was packed and he could not find a place to sit. So, not knowing any better, he sat down on the floor in front of the platform where the pastor was standing. Well, you can guess what kind of reaction he caused, although people were quiet about it. Everyone was wondering how the pastor was going to handle the situation, and how they were going to get rid of this unmannered young man. After what seemed like an eternity, an elderly gentleman rose from his seat and headed down the aisle toward the young man. "Finally, we'll get some action. He'll tell this guy what's what, and we'll be done with him." Everyone held their breath as they waited to hear how the old man would tell the hippie to leave. The old man bent over as if to talk to the young man, then bent his knees, and sat down next to the young man, worshiping with him for the rest of the service. He saw past the social barrier and saw the heart of the matter. (Source: Brian La Croix)

2. Loves God (vs. 5-7)

James 2:5-7 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? NKJV

- a. James point out that God has chosen the poor of this world, be careful and do not think that God has chosen all poor, for He has not. But people who may be classified as poor don't depend on their riches but trust in God. And people who are wealthy trust in the perceived monetary power to get what they want. Luke 18:25 Jesus said that it is very difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. That is not to say that they can't enter the Kingdom of God but it is difficult. But all things are possible with God.

Luke 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." NKJV

- b. Remember the parable of the "Rich Man and Lazarus the Beggar", Lazarus trusted God for the miniscule food he was able to get, while the rich man had only to trust in his perceived wealth. Both had some things in common; both were men, both died, both went to their eternal rewards. But, this is where the commonality ends. Lazarus went to Heaven and the rich man went to hell. Now don't suppose the rich man went to hell because of his wealth because his wealth had no bearing on his eternal destination. He went to hell because he trusted in his wealth to get what he wanted. But, Lazarus trusted in God, he had no monetary wealth but he was rich in the faith in Jesus Christ and was a joint heir of the Kingdom.

Luke 16:20-23 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. NKJV

Romans 8:17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. NKJV

Text Illustration: Billy Graham said:

“We are rich in the things that perish, but poor in the things of the spirit. We are rich in gadgets, but poor in faith. We are rich in goods, but poor in grace. We are rich in know-how, but poor in character. We are rich in words, but poor in deeds.”

Jesus said that our life does not consist in the material possession we have. Our peace of mind, our joy, our happiness, our comfort, and our eternal destiny does not depend upon our earthly possessions. (From Bill Butsko’s Sermon: Oh To Be Rich)

3. Love All For God (vs. 8-13)

James 2:8-13 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. NKJV

- a. James states that to fulfill the royal law according the Scriptures is “To love your neighbor and yourself.” Loving our neighbor is not dependent on the person wealth, dress or status in life. James very plainly states that we commit a sin if we choose others over those who don’t meet our standards. James also point that when we sin we are guilty of all sin when we commit one sin. When we transgress just one of the laws we are guilty of breaking all the law.
- b. The punishment for transgression of the law is death. But, it is because of the mercy of God which triumphs over the judgment imposed by the law.

Text Illustration: People do judge you by what you wear.

A young man came into our worship service a few weeks ago. He was wearing lots of leather and chains. His hair was spiked blue. He wore black eye liner and had a ring in his lip. I could tell what lots of people were thinking when he strolled down the aisle and sat up front. They were thinking this kid must be a rebellious teenager who is probably hooked on alcohol and drugs. He probably has a criminal record and uses filthy language. Little did we know, he was in costume? The guest speaker that day had him come in dressed that way to go along with the sermon on showing favoritism. It may be sad, it may be wrong, but people do judge you on the way you dress. God judges you on the way you dress spiritually. He will judge us based on the kind of "spiritual clothes" we are wearing. Are we wearing sexual immorality, impurity, rage, anger, filthy

language? or are we wearing love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.