

The Wickedness of being Partial in the Ministry

Scripture

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, [and] to keep oneself unspotted from the world. My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with partiality. 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, 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," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 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? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? If you really fulfill [the] royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one [point], he is guilty of all. 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. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”
(James 1:27-2:13 NKJV)

Thesis

Church bodies are often guilty of favoritism.

Commentary

There is a great evil among the brethren. It is a spirit of judgment. The poor, weak, or different are often treated as objects of physical ministry, but are rarely embraced as equals in the church. Men are quick to point out their service to this needy person, but then they shun him like a leper. This sin is aggravated when it is committed by leadership.

Pure religion is to visit the orphans and widows in their trouble. How often we see the braggart and the rich, influential man standing at the front of the church while the unseemly are treated as objects instead of brethren. I tell you this wickedness will be judged by our Lord. Remember, judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.

Do you practice partiality? Do you really treat everyone [who names the name of Christ and has credible evidence of the same] as your brother or sister in Christ? How do you treat those who do not know Christ? Do you pursue all with equal fervor to share the Gospel?

James shares some practical points with his readers. He points out how the rich are the ones that oppress them and drag them to court. Yet they still run after them. Why do they cater to such men? The answer lies in the failure to keep the second greatest commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Instead, they love themselves, and seek associations that will benefit themselves most.

Look carefully at your life. Make sure you love your neighbor as yourself. Don't get caught up in the factions that isolate and exclude. If you do, you are guilty of breaking the law of God.

Prayer

Father, help us to see our wickedness that it might humble us and allow us to guard our hearts against this awful sin. We do not want to be controlled by our greed, but by your Spirit. Remind us often of your great love for us when we were sinners that we might have mercy as you did, amen.