

James 26-08-26a

Greetings, it is Wednesday night at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 20 somethingth of August, 2026. And we continue our study in the book of James.

We're picking up in chapter two, hope to complete that this evening. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for the many ways that you bless us and provide for us.

There are uncounted benefits that we receive that we are probably not even aware of as you orchestrate these opportunities and circumstances on our behalf. Whether they challenge us or whether they comfort and bless us, we know that all things work together for good because we are endeavoring to be those who love you and are called according to your purpose. We pray that as we look at this portion of the book of James tonight, that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, help us to understand it and see how it can affect the way we think, speak and act in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus name, amen. Looking at our passage, my brethren, chapter two of James, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. I mentioned that this word partiality is a long tongue twister of a Greek word, *prosopolepsia*.

And the *prosopon* part of that, the first two or three syllables there is talking about the face. And this is to receive the face, to lift up the face. It's got some various forms and so on.

What I want to focus on is the notion here of being a respecter of persons. There is more emphasis on this than you would first remember or think for in scripture. Scripture emphasizes to us that God does not express partiality.

He doesn't find some of us more lovable or more attractive, more talented, more desirable than others. When it comes to objective application of his justice, God does have standards. There are those who are blessed.

There are those who are cursed. There are those who are accepted. There are those who are rejected.

But this idea of partiality means to discriminate on a false or spurious basis. To accept or reject on bad grounds, faulty reasoning, faulty evaluation. God does not respect the face, *prosopon*.

And the word that is used a lot of times in this regard in Greek is *thaumazo*, which is T-H-A-U-M-A-Z-O. This is the word that means to be amazed, to be impressed, to be dazzled by something, to be changed because something impresses. Many times it is amazement.

You can be thunderstruck. You know, the disciples were often amazed at the Lord Jesus, and this is the word that is used. But it means to have your attitude towards something altered

because it's impressive.

God is not thaumazoed by the face. This goes to the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 10.17. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He's not influenced by who you are or what you can try to give him.

It's a wonderful verse. I love that. The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords.

The Lord Jesus inherits this title in many ways, King of kings and Lord of lords. God of gods, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no favoritism. He's not impressed or amazed by your face.

And he is not influenced by what you might try to give him. It's called a bribe there. You can compare this with 2 Chronicles 19.7. Now, therefore, let the fear of the Lord be upon you.

Take care and do it, the preceding context, for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no partiality, no taking of bribes. You can't chuck a big gift in the offering plate. You can't donate to a cause.

You can't buy your way into God's favor. None of us has anything that we did not receive in the first place. But the concept starts with the way God is.

We should be godly. We should reflect his values, his impartiality, his objectivity, his adherence to truth and justice, even as he expresses grace and mercy. His grace and mercy do not compromise his righteousness and his justice.

This is tricky for us because out of love, out of shared experience, out of a lot of things, we may want to compromise righteousness or justice in someone's favor. God doesn't do that. God is love.

He is light and in him is no darkness at all. He is the God of compassion. He is a God of mercy and grace, but it is never at the expense of his righteousness or his justice.

He is impartial. His decisions and his judgments are based on truth, on what is right, on what is proper, what is fair. So people honor each other.

One comes in and bows his face. The other, metaphorically in many cases, reaches out and lifts up the face. And someone comes in and says, I bow before you.

And they say, oh, don't do that. Stand up. So Jacob and Esau in Genesis 32, verse 21, Jacob sends a present on a head.

It's sort of a bribe to his brother Esau. He's worried that he's going to get a bad reception. And to

receive the face, this is lambano instead of thaumazo.

Thaumazo is to be impressed and amazed or to be so taken with a thing that you change your judgment. Lambano means to receive. You can receive a gift.

And so do not use your epinosis of someone's face in judgment, your past experience of someone's face. This is found in this phrase, euk epinosi. You can, euk is don't, do not.

It's the negative. There's may and euk in Greek. Euk epinosi, do not use your epinosis knowledge.

This is experiential knowledge of a prosopon, a face in judgment. Crisis, crisi. Deuteronomy 117, you shall not show partiality in judgment.

That's how it's pronounced. But it literally means when it says, do not show partiality, it says, don't use your past knowledge when you see this face. You shall hear the small as well as the great.

You shall not be afraid in any man's presence for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me and I will hear it. You shall not show partiality in judgment.

You shall hear the small as well as the great. Don't take their clothing into consideration is what James says. Don't take what you know about them into consideration is what Moses says here in Deuteronomy under God's inspiration.

You can see this also in Deuteronomy 16, 19. You shall not pervert justice. To play favorites, to let improper influence enter into receiving, making policy decisions about someone.

If you do this on a bad basis, you pervert justice. Think about that phrase, you pervert, you distort, you corrupt, you defile what is right, what is just and proper. We are here to shine as lights, to reflect God's glory, His righteousness and justice, not to distort it.

So again, Deuteronomy 16, 19, you shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality. This is that same phrase of using your knowledge when you see someone's face, your past experience, epinosis.

You shall not show partiality nor take a bribe for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Blinds the eyes of the wise, you can't apply your wisdom because you can't see what's really going on anymore and twists the words of the righteous. We are here to communicate God's righteousness, to speak it.

This is upcoming in our chapter. This is our responsibility, but if we pervert justice, if we corrupt objectivity, our words are going to be twisted. They will not have the effect they should because they will no longer reflect an objective source and the ultimate source, which is God Himself, who is impartial.

So blinds the eyes, distorts the words, twists the words of the righteous. Just as there is no respect of persons with God, earthly judgments that we make must be incorruptible and just, and justice is grounded in God's word, God's law, the perfect law of liberty that James has been talking about. This has to be our standard.

Not our feelings, not our experiences, not our memories, not our shared adventures with somebody in the past. We are grounded in the word of God and to do anything else blinds the eyes of the wise, twists the words of the righteous. So in the New Testament, following this Old Testament usage of treatment of the face, reacting and changing opinions and judgments and attitudes based on who it is when we see them and maybe what they've got.

In Mark 12, 14, there are some who are coming to test Jesus and so they try to flatter Him. So they come and they say to Him, teacher, we know that you are true and you care about no one for you do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? They are encouraging Him with an Old Testament truth.

You shouldn't be a respecter of persons when it comes to what is right. You find the parallel to that in Matthew 22, 16. These that are trying to trip Jesus and trap Him in His words sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians saying, teacher, we know that you are true, you teach the way of God in truth, nor do you care about anyone for you do not regard the person of men.

You do not regard the person of men. A lot of them are paying tax to Caesar out of fear rather than because it is the word of God to obey those that have the rule over you. You can go back to the example of captivity in Babylon and the book of Jeremiah that tells the people in the Southern kingdom of Judah, obey the Babylonians.

When they say go, you go. When they put you in captivity, that's God's will for you. Do what they tell you, don't resist, don't go to Egypt.

Don't try to find your own form of salvation. This captivity is of God. They didn't listen.

But they're setting Jesus up with truth. You shouldn't be a respecter of persons. And so they want Him to say, we shouldn't pay taxes to Caesar.

And of course they fail. To receive the face, you find this same thing again. I gave you Mark 12, 14, Matthew 22, 16, Luke 20, 21, the same thing.

In Jude verse 16, it's only got one chapter, Jude 1, 16. This is, we're back to that thaumazo, that being impressed to the point of changing an attitude or changing our judgment, changing our actions. We measure it by a different standard of right and wrong because we see someone's face.

So this is thaumazane prosopon, the face. I'm amazed by the face, I'm attracted, I'm influenced

by this face. So in Jude 16, talking about apostasy in the last days, these are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts, their own desires.

We cannot walk according to our own desires. We walk according to God's perfect law of liberty, the truth. And we've got to identify when our desires are pulling us away from that.

Grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. I won't point out what's wrong. I want a relationship with this person.

I want advantage here. This will make me feel good. This will enhance my opportunities for promotion.

So I'm not going to tell the truth. I will omit the truth. I will shade the truth.

I will flatter great swelling words. Words is there in Italian. They mouth great swellings.

They paint paradise in the sky with their words, flattering people to gain advantage. And that is a reference to this. I see somebody, I'm going to try to win them to my side.

It's what we saw in James earlier with seeing a rich person with fine, shiny clothes. Let me give you a good seat. I hope you'll think well of me when you see me later.

I've already given you several Old Testament references. I won't give you more at this point. But in Romans 2.11, that Old Testament truth about God is affirmed.

There is no partiality with God. We are told this over and over again because we rely on God's impartiality. God doesn't favor the Jews over the Gentiles in our age.

He doesn't favor the rich over the poor. He doesn't favor the talented over the muddling along ones of us. God doesn't think some of us are shinier than others.

God uses the objective measure of faith and obedience. Even the poorest can be faithful and obedient. Even the richest can be faithful and obedient.

Romans 2.11, there is no partiality with God. Ephesians chapter six, verse nine. You masters do the same things to your servants, them giving up threatening, knowing that your own master also is in heaven and there is no partiality with him.

There will be objective justice. Colossians 3.25, he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done. For there is no partiality.

There's no getting over, getting out, pulling some strings. And of course our passage, James chapter two, verse one. Acts 10.34, Peter opens his mouth.

In truth I perceive, this is talking about to the Jews that God has obviously incorporated the Gentiles into his new program in the church age. Peter opened his mouth and said, in truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. He's not discriminating against the Gentiles.

They are welcome to come in. God judges. And it's a form of that very same word with a negative in front of it.

Our prosopolempsia word has an alpha privative in front of it. So it's a prosopolempsos. And you find this in 1 Peter 1.17. If you call on the father, do we call on the father? Do we pray to the father? We know how to pray.

We follow the Lord's instructions. When you pray, pray this way, our father. If you call on the father who without partiality judges according to each one's work, you can stop right there.

1 Peter 1.17, you call on the father who without partiality judges what? According to what you believe? According to what you affirm? According to what you write in your notes? According to what you find scribbled in the margins of your Bible? What does God judge based on? We're getting into this in a heavy way in James. Without partiality, the father judges according to each one's work. The judgment seat of Christ is a judgment of works.

The great white throne is a judgment of works. It is what we do, as we're about to see, that is the outworking of what we believe. If you call on the father who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.

This isn't abject trembling terror. This is healthy respect for the outcome of God's judgment. We call on the father.

He's gonna judge us according to our work. So we should conduct ourselves in the time that remains to us in this life in fear with great respect and deference to God's standard of judgment. We will be judged by the law of liberty.

James has already affirmed. God has no regard to persons. There should be no prosopolempsia in the Christian congregation.

He's gonna go on to illustrate this in verses two through four as we've already seen. And in verse nine of chapter two of James, if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. Showing partiality is a policy.

It shows itself in what we do, in how we treat people, how we talk to them. More about that upcoming. So how important is it? The scripture has a lot to say about cultivating objectivity that is grounded in God's standard.

God's truth. We look into the perfect law of liberty and we remember what it says. So that's what we have seen in chapter two up to this point.

So now in verse 14, having led into it with verse 13, judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy should be equally available to the poor or to the rich, to anyone who qualifies to receive that mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Speak and do, verse 12, as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. So speak and so do. There are two different words in Greek for the act of verbal communication.

They are closely related. One is lego, L-E-G-O. This is where you get logos, which is a word or a matter.

Lego, the word for lego. This is to say, laleo, L-A-L-E-O, is to speak. So if I'm going to tell you a story about tilling the ground with a rototiller, I might be speaking laleo for four or five minutes, telling you of my adventures.

The act of speaking across time. This is the progress. The action of speaking is laleo.

If while I am speaking, I say, be careful that you don't hit a large rock, I say that, the content now is in view. What I say, lego. Speaking is the broad action.

It is a practice. It stretches over time. So as a quick gloss, laleo is speaking, lego is saying.

I speak and I say. Your speech and your actions should be as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. The content of what we say, isn't in view.

It is the way we speak. This of course, is going to be a reflection of what is in our hearts. So we should be careful to address the heart.

The Lord Jesus talks about this in Matthew 15, verses 18 through 20. If I want to change my pattern of speaking, I can't just rely on God setting a watch on the door of my lips. I need to change my heart.

Jesus said in Matthew 15, 18 through 20, the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart. And these things can defile a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery.

Notice murder and adultery, the two things that James has just mentioned in our preceding context. Out of the heart come evil thoughts. Didn't we also see evil thoughts up here? Look at verse four.

Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, this face recognition and become judges with evil thoughts? It's another one of the reasons I feel certain that the James that wrote this letter is John's brother and the son of Zebedee, one of the two sons of thunder. He heard the Lord Jesus teach in Matthew 15. Things that come out of the mouth come from the heart.

These things defile a person. Out of the heart come evil thoughts, verse four. Murder and adultery, verse 11.

Commit adultery and murder. Love your neighbor as yourself. All of these are things that the Lord Jesus emphasized to his disciples over and over again.

So again, Matthew 15, 18. The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart. They defile a person.

Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, slander. These defile a person because the words, the speaking come from the heart. Matthew 12, 34, and quoted again in Luke 6, 45, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

James is gonna have a lot to say about the tongue and we're getting an advance on how to implement what he says. He's already talked about the one who can bridle the tongue. Back in verse 26, if anyone among you thinks he's religious, does not bridle his tongue, deceives his own heart.

Heart and the tongue, that link. This one's religion is useless. Gotta bridle the tongue.

How do we bridle the tongue? Don't work on the tongue, get to the heart. Matthew 12, 34, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Proverbs 4, 23, guard your heart with all diligence for from it flow springs of life.

Your words can be apples of gold and pictures of silver. You can give an answer to those who ask a reason for hope. Your conversation can be seasoned with salt and can be a benefit and a blessing to others.

We have to start at the heart. Proverbs 18, 21, the tongue has the power of life and death and those who love it will eat its fruit. So, when we come to verse 12, so speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

And judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Our merciful attitude, but our mercy has to be tempered with fairness.

You can't throw your mercy around improperly. Mercy triumphs over judgment. What does it profit my brothers? Verse 14, if someone says he has faith, this is Lego.

Now here's the content of what he's saying. This is the logos that comes out of his mouth, the word, the matter, the concept. Someone says he has faith, but does not have works.

He says he has faith, but he does not have works. Can faith save him at the judgment of works? This is not Lake of Fire judgment faith. He's already talking about, we will be judged by the law of liberty.

The only people who are judged according to the law of liberty are believers. So this is deliverance. This isn't Lake of Fire salvation.

Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, *Lego*, depart in peace, be warmed and filled. But you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what profit? You can scratch out the italicized words, what profit? No profit to them, and no profit to you either. You're not gonna have that mercy that is gonna triumph over judgment at the judgment in the light of the law of liberty.

We are free to express mercy or not. In that freedom, we should be doing the will of God. Thus also, faith by itself, verse 17, if it does not have works, is dead.

But someone will say, you have faith and I have works. I'm gonna start this and we'll finish it after the break. You see in your New King James, there are quotation marks there.

This is the classic passage in the Bible where Daffy Duck should appear and say, pronoun trouble. Do you see it? Do you see the problem in this verse, the way it is punctuated? According to the way the English reads here, someone will say, and then we have the quote. So let's say Ahab over here says, you have faith and I have works.

So he's talking to James and he says, James, you have faith and I have works. That's backwards of James' whole point. James' whole point is you don't have the works that you should have.

So the person isn't gonna come up and say, you have faith and I have works. So what you have to do is realize that it's in English, this is bad grammar. It's not bad in Greek, but it's bad in English.

You've got to scribble out the quotation marks. We do this in informal conversation all the time. Somebody will come up and say, you've got this and I've got that.

And the somebody is the you. The easiest way to fix this for understanding is when it says, somebody will say, scratch out someone and put you. He's basically saying somebody of you that I'm talking to.

You're hearing this message from me. And even though I've been tactful, one of you, someone of you will say, and it's not a quotation. One of you will say you have works.

The person that is speaking is gonna say, I've got faith. And you, James, have works. And you're splitting the two up.

You'll say, you've got faith and faith is all you need. Didn't we just see James point, can faith deliver you at the judgment, faith alone? One of you will say, well, I've got faith. And you've got works.

So there's some awkwardness here. So someone of you will say you have faith and I, James, have works. James is the advocate of works.

You can't just tell somebody, go be warm, be fed. You need to give them what they need. So someone of you will say you have faith and I, James, have works.

Show me your faith. See how this now makes sense? You say you have faith and I have works. You show me your faith without your works.

And I will show you, I, James, will show you my faith by my works. You can't say you have faith if it doesn't come out in works. So if you make the suggested change there, just add someone of you will say and scratch out the quotation marks.

One of you will say that you, one of you has faith and that's all you need. And that I have works and maybe I don't have faith. So somebody in the congregation is gonna say they have faith and James is all about works.

James says, how are you gonna show me your faith if you don't have works that accompany it? I will show you my faith by my works. My works reflect my faith. That's what's going on.

It's pretty understandable. So now he's gonna go on to talk about, you're talking about your faith. What is the content of that faith? Verse 19, you believe that there's one God.

Well, that's good. You do well. Even the demons believe that and they tremble.

But do you want to know, oh foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Do you want me to help you understand this? Because you are saying that faith is all you need. It doesn't matter whether your actions reflect faith or not. It's consistent all the way through.

We just have bad punctuation here in our new King James. So he's gonna say, do you want to know? And this is a question. If you don't want to know, I can stop now.

If you do want to know, I'm gonna give you an example from your Bible, from the law of liberty, the perfect law by which we will be judged, what we know from it, what we learn from it. So this is where we're heading. Notice the flow.

We've started out with attitudes that are reflected in what people say if a rich guy and a ragged guy come into the synagogue, into the assembly, and you express your attitude this way. Now we've moved to what you say about yourself. Attitudes, now speech.

And it's gonna move into actions. Attitudes, speech, actions. There is the flow.

The attitude begins in the heart. Oh, the overflow of the heart is gonna result in speech. And actions are gonna show what's really in the heart.

It's a wonderful circle. Heart, speech, actions, showing what's really in the heart. That's where we're headed, but we'll pause here and take our break.