

Faith That Works Msg 5
 Treating People Right
 Sermon preached by Dr. Rick Mandl
 Eagle Rock Baptist Church
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Today we're continuing our verse by verse study through the book of James, talking about . . .

Treating People Right

If you have your Bible or your mobile device open up to . . .

James 2:1-13

"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes." James 2:1-2

"If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, 'You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor'—well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?" James 2:3-4

"Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court?" James 2:5-6

"Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" James 2:7-8

"But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws." James 2:9-10

"For the same God who said, 'You must not commit adultery,' also said, 'You must not murder.' So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law." James 2:11

"So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you." James 2:12-13

Treating People Right by not showing Favoritism is what we're talking about.

It's good to define our terms . . .

What is Favoritism?

It's translated in a number of different ways depending on what version of the Bible you have.

Some versions render it "PREJUDICE", or "PARTIALITY", some translate it "SNOBBERY".

Simply stated . . .

It's the inability to see beyond **Outward Appearance**

As it says on your notes . . .

The Greek word that we translate as favoritism is a compound of two words that mean **"to receive"** and **"face"**

It literally means **"To receive - somebody's face"**

To accept somebody on the basis of how they look, to make a superficial judgement, and James says don't do that.

Don't form your judgement of a person on the basis of their appearance.

Memory Verse

"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?" James 2:1

Don't have the attitude where you evaluate a person on the basis of how they look, or dress. One of the earliest examples of this in the Bible is in 1 Samuel 16 where we read of the search for a king for Israel.

You remember the story....

God sent the prophet Samuel to the home of Jesse and he said "When you get there I will show you one of his sons that I want you to anoint as the new king over Israel."

And so Samuel travelled to Jesse's house and when he arrived there he found that Jesse had not one son, but seven sons there in that house -

The first one Samuel saw was the oldest son -- and he was an impressive looking man - and Samuel thought this must be the one.

But that one wasn't the one.

And Samuel had all seven of Jesse's sons pass before him and none of them were the one that God had sent him to anoint - Finally Samuel asked - "Do you have any other sons?"

Jesse said, "Well I do have ONE MORE SON - but he's THE YOUNGEST - I've got him out in the field watching the sheep - I'm sure he's not the one you're looking for but if you want to meet him I'll send for him.

And when David arrived the Lord told Samuel - **"This is the one - go and anoint him"**

And it was through this process that God taught Samuel an important lesson as he said to him...

"Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

James repeats that same message -

He says - don't make the mistake of basing your evaluation of a person on what you see on the outside.

Maybe when you realized that this was the subject we were looking at in James this weekend, you thought to yourself, **"I sure hope that so and so over there is listening to this message**

Cuz they really need to hear it - - but not me - - because I'm not prejudiced in the least. I could have stayed home today."

You're thinking **"I'm not prejudiced, ugly little kids are some of my best friends"**

I don't need to hear this message.

Hey, I don't want to disagree with you, but humor me anyway for a moment and take a look at that

Favoritism Quiz

That I've included there on your outline . . .

Let's do a little bit of self-examination when it comes to this subject

At the top of the quiz it says . . .

If I'm honest, I sometimes find myself thinking more highly of . . .

Or treating with favoritism those who are . . .

And the first three on the list are kind of a parallel of the things that James is writing about . . .

Do you tend to think more highly of those who are . . .

1) Wealthy

Or

2) Well-dressed

Or . . .

3) Successful

These are kind of the areas that James zeroes in on . . .

He writes in verses 2-4 . . .

"For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes." James 2:1-2

James says. . .

"If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?" James 2:3-4

The first guy walks in and he is dripping with wealth.
Everybody knows he doesn't fit because in the New Testament times almost all of the Christians were poor.

Many of them were slaves.

But James says this guy has gold rings -- literally, in the Greek, "**he is gold-fingered**".

In New Testament times, you could **rent rings** to prove how wealthy you were.

I think it's worth noting that **James doesn't criticize the guy for being wealthy**; he criticizes those in the church for being partial to him.

He doesn't say there's anything wrong with having the wealth.

And then he says another guy comes in who is poor.

And the church usher makes a decision as to where will he seat these two and he does it on the basis of those first three things. . .

Wealthy, well-dressed, successful.

Maybe for you it's not those three things, maybe it's those who are

4) Connected

or

5) Good-looking

or

6) Well-known

Or those who are . . .

7) In certain professions

I'm talking about professions that you respect and admire

Like, "**Oh you're an attorney, that sound interesting, I'll talk to you.**"

Or, "**You're a doctor, WOW!!**"

"Maybe you can help me with this. . ."

"Hey doc, every time I press here . . . it hurts"

"Can you tell me what's wrong with me?"

"Sure, you've got a broken finger."

But some of us are drawn to others in certain professions.

Or maybe for you it's people who are

8) Funny

Or . . .

9) Well Educated

Or . . .

10) Younger

Or . . .

11) Older

Or just . . .

12) "Cool"

You know, in High School the cool kids never let you hang out with them, but you figure that in church they have to, so you're kind of drawn toward them.

Maybe you show favoritism toward those who are . . .

Ethnically like – or unlike - me

Or the . . .

Poor

Or **maybe your item didn't make the list**, so I've left you a . . .

Other

And then take the quiz again, only time time: "**If I'm honest, I sometimes think LESS of people who are . . ."**

"Sometimes I look down on the WEALTHY because if they're wealthy they must have ripped somebody off to get that way."

Or . . . "**Sometimes I think less of people who are GOOD LOOKING**"

"Do you think it's possible to look down on people who are GOOD LOOKING?"

I can't tell you how many times that's happened to me!

The reason I can't tell you is cuz it hasn't, but I digress.

Go through the list and check yourself on this because if we're honest all of us have an area where we can grow.

In the first century the focus of the prejudice that James addressed was wealth. In the twenty-first century, more often than not the issue is race.

In talking about this subject let me begin by saying that **this is a subject that makes me uncomfortable.**

And the **reason it makes me uncomfortable** is that when I stand before you and speak I like to feel like I know something about the subject that I'm talking about.

And with racism I have to admit that **I don't understand it.**

I continue to seek to learn more about this, but I have to confess that **no matter how much I learn, I still won't understand it,** because **I will never have experienced it.**

But I can't cop out and say I'm not going to talk about it because, I believe that this is at the heart of what James is writing about.

But I feel like I have to talk about it because our text talks about it.

When it comes to the subject of racism, I think what Denis Leary said is really important - - He said,

Racism isn't born folks, it's taught."

It's not born . . .

It's not inherited. . .

There is no racist gene.

It's not born, it's taught.

He says, ***"I have a two-year-old son, you know what he hates? Naps."***

If you got a two-year-old, you know that.

A two-year-old doesn't hate somebody else because of the color of their skin.

This is something that's taught, it's not something that is inherited.

Why is it that people become racist over time?

Let me suggest three reasons.

One is, maybe we were a **victim of hatred.**

Someone mistreats us because of the color of our skin.

Someone mistreats someone that we love because of the color of their skin, and so we feel like, ***"We can't trust them. Therefore, I don't like them and they don't like me."***

So our experiences . . .

Second thing, (as I said) **it's taught.**

"Our family, we don't hang around those people. We don't trust them because they are all like this."

It's taught and handed down from generation to generation.

The third thing is just **ignorance.**

It's a lack of perspective, it's a lack of exposure.

"They are different, and so I must not like them."

No matter what the reason, we have to recognize this.

If you are taking notes and this is so important

It's that . . .

Racism is not a SKIN issue

Racism is a SIN issue

Let me say it again.

This is so important.

We need to recognize that racism is not a skin issue

In fact, James 2:9 says it this way,

He says . . .

"But if you favor some people over others,

What are you doing???

you are committing a sin.

He says . . .

You are guilty of breaking the law." James 2:9

We think

Okay, maybe . . .

But **it's not a BIG sin.**

As sins go, it's not a **SERIOUS** sin.

I think that he anticipated that some of us might think that way, that's why he added the next verse.

James 2:10 says . . .

"For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws." James 2:10

You ever go into one of those antique stores, or fine China stores that has a sign posted that says

. . .

"You Break It . . ."

And do you know what the rest of the signs says?

"You Bought It . . ."

That expression is called the "**Pottery Barn Rule**" which is a little unfair, because that's not actually their policy

But **stores that do post signs like that** are doing so in order to **encourage customers to more be careful when handling property** that isn't theirs.

Now **imagine** you are in one of those stores and you are handling something, and you're not being careful, and **you drop it, and it breaks.**

But as you go to pick it up, you notice it **only broke into six pieces** as **opposed to sixty pieces.**

You're honest, and you take the pieces up to the merchant.

And he thanks you for your honesty.

But let me ask you, **do you think he's be impressed that you only broke it into six pieces** instead of sixty?

No, because **if it's broken it's broken.**

And **he can't sell it as new.**

if it's broken, it's broken

It's the same way with God's law.

So **favoritism, prejudice, racism**, is a big deal, **even if** it's the only sin you struggle with.

That raises the big question, for us as Jesus followers,

For us, what ought to be the

What's the Solution?

Let me suggest to you **three things we can do.**

And if you're taking notes this **first one is more difficult** than it sounds. . .

1. Recognize our Prejudices

We have to get this right,

We need, with God's help, to be honest, to be transparent, to be sincere, and number one, **recognize our prejudices.**

This is really difficult to do because prejudices are **so difficult to see in the mirror** and the reason is because so often we feel justified in how we might feel against someone else.

But we need to understand that **even if our prejudice mindset** or our **racist attitude isn't intentional** is **still real** and is **still sinful.**

What does the word **prejudice** mean?

It means **prejudging.**

It's a preconceived opinion

And **one that is very often not based on reason or experience.**

I bet most of you if you had the courage to be really honest, **you would admit that you were raised most likely with some type of prejudice**, why?

Because we are sinful people and we are predisposed to making wrong judgments about people.

Maybe you grew up in a household that kind of talked about **rich people were kind of greedy**, rich people were this and that.

That may be what you grew up being taught to wrongly believe.

Maybe you grew up thinking, **"Heavy people are really lazy.**

The younger generation they simply won't work

Old people they are useless; they can't teach you anything.

They just need to get out of the way.

Or white men can't jump.

I don't know what it is.

You grew up thinking certain things about certain people.

We have to have the courage to acknowledge it, to admit it, to say, ***"Maybe I'm prejudiced about such and such."***

If you've ever found yourself saying, ***"I'm not racist but. . ."***

There is nothing good that comes after a "but" in that sentence, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.

"I'm not racist but."

You **ARE** a racist and you have to call it that, at some degree, some level.

We have to **ACKNOWLEDGE** it.

And then second . . .

2. Seek to Understand others

Like I said earlier, I have a very limited perspective and I have to know that.

I don't understand how others have been abused, mistreated, unfairly rejected on and on.

It helps me whenever there is an opportunity to enter into dialogue with those who've experienced things far different than I have.

And . . .

And this is one of the next steps on your notes and cc

I can **ask God to help me to see others through the eyes of Jesus.**

Why is this so important?

It's so important because Jesus ought to be our model in all things.

And that includes this area.

What do we know about Jesus as it relates to Favoritism?

What we know is that even His enemies said . . .

"Teacher. . . You are impartial and don't play favorites." Matthew 22:16

Jesus saw the potential in everyone.

When it came to the disciple Simon Peter who is best known for putting his foot in his mouth every time he opened it, **Jesus saw a leader of the church that He was going to build.**

When it came to the sleeping-around woman at the well, Jesus saw **a missionary who would reach her community for Him.**

He **looked at people who were far from God** and maybe gave no clue that they were even interested in the things of God, and He saw in them **the potential to be new creations.**

He did this so much and so often that his enemies thought they were leveling a criticism against Him when they said. . .

"This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them." Luke 15:2

And when it came to the subject of partiality or favoritism, Jesus said . . .

"Don't judge by appearances. Judge by what is right. John 7:24

James, in the letter he wrote said, our problem is Christians who don't live like Christ.

So **Recognize** our Prejudices

Seek to **Understand** Others

And then third . . .

3. Love those (who are) different from you

Love those different from you, love them deeply from the heart.

This is what God calls us to do.

I love what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said about this.

He said . . .

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."

What is racism?

There are a lot of definitions you can come up with.

I've given you a really short one in your notes, and it's up on the screen.

Racism isn't just the presence of hatred

It's the absence of love

It's not just the presence of hatred - - I hate you!

It's also the absence of showing "I accept you." "I embrace you." "You're my brother", "You're my sister" "I love you."

It's **not just the presence of hatred**, it's the absence of love,

The **absence of touch**, the **absence of embrace**, the **absence of saying you're welcome**, we are one together and showing love.

How is the world going to know that we're followers of Jesus anyway?

Do you know what the Bible says?

Let me tell you what it doesn't say.

It doesn't say **they'll know we are followers of Jesus by our perfect theology.**

Doesn't say that.

Doesn't say **they'll know we're followers of Jesus by our church attendance.**

"Guess what, I'm a member of such and such church, I've been a member since 1972," doesn't say that.

Doesn't say they'll know we're followers of Jesus **if we've been baptized**, which is important, or **if we give money** or on and on and on.

The Word of God says they'll know that we're followers of Jesus if we what?

If we love one another.

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:35

If we love one another.

Not loving those that look like us, and were born where we were born and at the same color of our skin, but if we love one another.

If we love our neighbor.

Well, how do you love them?

You **love them as you've been loved.**

How did Jesus love me?

Scripture teaches us that that while we were still sinning Christ died for us.

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:8

He didn't die for us because we were good he died for us because God is good.

He loved me when I didn't deserve it

And because I've been freely loved in that way what should I do?

I should reflect that type of love too.

The Apostle Paul wrote. . .

"Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman." Galatians 3:28

Somebody once said, "If I'm not really comfortable around people who are different from me, then I'm probably not going to be very comfortable in heaven, because it's going to be filled with people who **aren't just like me.**"

The Apostle John, in his vision of heaven described it this way.

He wrote. . .

"I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. . . And they were shouting with a great roar, 'Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!'" Revelation 7:9-10

Heaven is going to be filled with people who are not just like us.

And if, we hope to get along with them there, it might be good to do a little bit of preparation while we're here.

If this is something that is hard for you.

Or if you'd have to acknowledge that your heart is a little bit hard when it comes to this area.

Just know that God specializes in transforming even the hardest of hearts.

Let me share with you ONE STORY of how he can do just that.

((Show Video))

Ex Klansman Ordained (5:11)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-ODXZL-1Dc>

Would you pray with me . . .