

## "The Law of Love"

James 2:1-13

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### Background

This Sunday, we return to our study of the Book of James, and into the world of the earliest Christians as they sought to live out their faith! We will hear James' call for Christians to be impartial in their treatment of others. In a world where the rich and the powerful were given preference, how did James exhort believers of Jesus to act instead? How do we, in today's world, commit to the ways of Jesus and his "royal law" of neighborly love? Join us as we explore these questions and more!

### Sermon Text: James 2:1-13 (NIV)

*2 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my*

*feet,”<sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

*5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?<sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?<sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?*

*8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,”<sup>[b]</sup> also said, “You shall not murder.”<sup>[c]</sup> If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.*

*12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

## **Discussion Questions**

### **1. Preparation**

- What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- What is the best thing you heard on Sunday?

### **2. Sunday Questions:**

- 1. Favoritism and Faith** – James links the command to avoid favoritism directly to the essence of Christian faith. How does showing partiality undermine the gospel message, and what might “faith without favoritism” look like in our daily interactions?
- 2. Cultural Norms vs. Kingdom Values** – In the first-century Roman world, favoritism toward the wealthy was the norm. What are some modern “cultural defaults” that subtly encourage partiality today, and how can we resist them in favor of Kingdom values?
- 3. God’s Choice of the Poor** – James says God has chosen the poor to be “rich in faith.” How should this truth shape the way we view and engage with people across economic and social lines?

4. **The Royal Law in Practice** – “Love your neighbor as yourself” is called the royal law. What are some practical, concrete ways we can live out this law in contexts where bias, prejudice, or inequality still exist?
5. **Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment** – James closes with the reminder that mercy wins over judgment. How can we cultivate a posture of mercy in situations where our instinct might be to judge, especially toward those society marginalizes?