

Practical Christianity
Respect Of Persons
James 2.1-10

Our text today deals with being a respecer of persons or to put it in more contemporary terms prejudice.

Prejudice is being down on something you're not up on. - - Author Unknown

Prejudice is the child of ignorance. - - William Hazlitt (1778-1830)

One thing is certain, when we harbor prejudice in our heart we demonstrate our ignorance of the Word of God and the founding principles of the United States of America.

The Declaration of Independence states, in part,

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, **that all men are created equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

God has created all people equal,

- **We are all of equal value in the esteem of God.**

***Galatians 3:26–28** - For ye are **all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus**.*

²⁷For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

*²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus**.*

- **We are all granted the same free will by God.** We all are required by God to choose our own way. Whether it be the way of honoring God or the way of rebelling against God and going our own way.

***John 3:16–18** - For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

- **We are all granted the Grace of God** which is able to redeem one's soul and bring one into the glorious family of God.

Ephesians 2:4–10 - But God, who is rich in mercy, **for his great love wherewith he loved us,** ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, **(by grace ye are saved;)** ⁶And hath raised us up **together,** and made us sit **together** in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

There is no one in God's creation that God does not want to repent and be saved.

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Principle – God hates sin, but love People

Christians need to understand the difference between hating sin and loving people who are all sinners.

Someone might think, “I hate homosexuals and yet God tells me I should love all people.” Don't mistake the sin of homosexuality for the person who commits the sin of homosexuality.

God loves ALL people, every person. We as God's born again children are to love all people too. All people are also sinners. We are commanded to Hate the Sin but Love the Sinner.

How do we deal with sin and the sinner. They same way God does. He loves the person and calls sinful people to repent and receive God's forgiveness and cleansing through the Lord Jesus Christ.

One cannot come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation without repenting of their sins.

God's grace is given to all mankind. To every person.

Three things every Christian must know,

- **You will never meet a person that God does not love**
- **You will never meet a person that God does not want to repent and be saved**
- **You will never meet a person that God does not want you to love.**

Matthew 22:36–40 - Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

With these two Great Commandments in mind we come to our text.

A. The Prohibition (vs 1) - *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*

As born again Christians we should never be Respector Of Persons. We should never be prejudice.

A born again Christian should not be prejudice based on,

- One's financial status – How rich or poor a person is. Our text example.
- One's race – Based on the color of one's skin.
- One's nationality - Jew or Greek
- One's family heritage
- One's Sex – Male or Female

A Born Again Christian must deal with their prejudices and learn to live out the Great Commandments given by our Lord.

- To love God first
- . . . *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matt 22.39)*

A Christian can never be fully obedient to God while they harbor prejudice in their heart and mind.

You must not show “Respect of Persons.”

When we have respect of persons we may be **flattering** some people and **gossiping** about other people, simply because of how they appear. Both are wrong.

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A. The Prohibition

- **Flattery** is where we say to someone's face what we won't say behind his or her back.
- **Gossip** is where we say something behind someone's back that we won't say to his or her face.]

When we have respect of persons we are **jumping at conclusions**. Making assumptions about people based on our prejudice rather than based on the character of the person. Here is what we know about conclusions,

"There was a dog named August, Who loved to jump at conclusions. One day he jumped at the conclusion of a mule, That was the last day of August."

James 2:1 - My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

B. The Practice (vs 2-4) - Three Things about Partiality, - The example provided.

1. The Appearance Of Men (vs 2) - For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

- **Mr. Goldfinger** – A man arrives with gold and diamond rings, expensive clothes and an expensive car.
- **Mr. Grunge** – At the same time a man arrives wearing worn blue jeans and a stained shirt in a car his wife and children had to push into the parking lot.

Illustration - Mahatma Ghandi was searching for a religion to teach the people of India. He studied numerous religions. When he studied Christianity he said, "I think that's it." He went to a church and someone looked at him and said, "I'm

sorry sir, this church is for Europeans only." He then became the Hindu leader of India.

2. **The Attitude Of The Disciple (vs 3)** - *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:*

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A. The Prohibition

B. The Practice

1. The Appearance of Men

- The indulgence of the rich.
- The indifference of the poor.

A fox should not be on the jury at a goose's trial. Sir Thomas Fuller (1608-1661)

3. **The Appraisal of the Lord (vs 4)** - *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of **evil thoughts**?*

While people often look very lightly upon their prejudices our Lord calls these **"Evil Thoughts!"**

C. The Promise (vs 5-7)

1. **The Position Of The Poor (vs 5; 1 Cor 1.26-29)** - *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 - *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ²⁷But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

"God must have loved common people, He made so many of them." – Abraham Lincoln

- **The poor are rich in faith.** The rich man has the tendency to trust his money. The poor man has to trust the Lord.

"If you snub a poor man you may be snubbing a spiritual millionaire."

- **The poor are heirs to God's kingdom.** The poor may be your senior in eternity.

"My future is as bright as the promises of God." (Adoniam Judson)

2. The Persecution By The Prosperous (vs 6-7; 2 Tim 3.12; Matt 5.10-12; Acts 19.27; Acts 9.4-5; Matt 25.40; 1 Cor 1.26) - *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? ⁷Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?*

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1. The Appearance of men
2. The Attitude of the Disciple
3. The Appraisal of the Lord

C. The Promise

1. The Position of the Poor

James is speaking about the wealthy ruling class that persecuted the early church

The Bible and Persecution (2 Tim 3.12; Matt 5.10-12)

2 Timothy 3:12 - *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

Matthew 5:10–12 - *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

The rich repudiated the gospel of Christ for three reasons,

- **It hit at their position** - The gospel says everyone is equal.
- **It hit at their pocket book**
- **It hit at their pride** - We want to divide men horizontally, God divides men vertically (sheep and goats, saved and lost, saints and aints).

By persecuting the poor they blaspheme the name of Christ. If you speak against the servant of Christ, you speak against Christ (Acts 9.4-5; Matt 25.40).

James is not trying to put down a rich man. He is saying don't elevate one person over another (1 Cor 1.26).

1 Corinthians 1:26 - *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

D. The Precepts (vs 8-10) - *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: ⁹But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

1. **The Promotion Of Godly Love** - The royal law, love your neighbor as yourself, is the king of all laws. God's love teaches us to view and treat all people as those people that our Lord deeply loves.
2. **The Problem of Godless Love** - The evidence of prejudice in your heart and life is the evidence of sinfulness and is a violation of God law.

Prejudice is a violation of God's law, not so much for the sake of the law, but because it is a violation of God's character.

Prejudice is having the answers without knowing all the facts.

Only a new love can destroy an old prejudice.

"We need to learn that everybody is somebody, because Jesus is Lord."

CrossRoads Baptist Church, August 28, 2022

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D. The Precepts

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