

## Love Overcomes Prejudice

### Introduction and Review

- We began our journey in James ch. 1 several months ago & saw that James is writing to encourage suffering saints to persevere.
- Then we studied passages where the Apostles Peter & Paul were writing to encourage suffering saints to persevere also.
- After that we looked at the lives of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego as examples of saints who persevered in trials.
- Finally we gained encouragement from the lives of more saints in Hebrews 11-12 who persevered in faith through trials.
- Today we will study more principles to guide us during times of trials for the glory of God. **Prejudice or partiality was & is a problem that needs to be addressed among believers.**

### I. The Sin of Partiality (v. 1-7, 9-11)

#### A. The exhortation (v. 1)

*The word “partiality” means “receiving the face” which is making a judgment about someone based on external appearance. Jesus Christ is referred to as the Lord of glory which means He has all the attributes of God – holy & is not partial (Rom. 2:11). All believers have put their faith in Jesus & must not be partial because Jesus is not partial.*

#### B. The example (v. 2-4)

*Two visitors enter a church gathering – one is wealthy & dressed luxuriously, the other is poor & dressed poorly. The members show special attention to the wealthy person & disdain to the poor person simply because of their outward appearance. These two men were judged solely on the basis of their financial status in life = worldly, evil thinking!*

#### C. The reason (v. 5-7, 9-11)

*They are reminded of Jesus’ teaching – the poor (Lk. 4:18; 6:20; 9:58). Only the poor that love Jesus are rich in faith & blessed. The members had dishonored the poor man & embraced the wealthy, ungodly oppressor – irrational [**sin**]. Partiality is sin because it violates God’s law of love on the basis of outward appearance (v. 9-11).*

### II. The Victory of Love (v. 8, 12-13)

#### A. Victory over partiality (v. 8)

*The royal law is the 2<sup>nd</sup> great commandment given by the King of kings (Mt. 22:39). The 1<sup>st</sup> great commandment is to love God (Mt. 22:37). These two commandments sum of our duties toward God & man (v. 40). Love (ἀγαπάω) means to have a sincere appreciation or high regard for someone & is described in 1Co. 13:4-7. When believers are patient, kind, not envious, arrogant, rude, etc. toward others, then we certainly will not commit the sin of partiality against them! We love because God first loved us when we were unlovely, poor & filthy (1Jn. 4:19; 1Co. 1:26-29).*

#### B. Victory at the Judgment (v. 12-13)

*The HS (thru James) wants believers to be “doers of the word” who obey what they know to do – “So speak and so act”. We are reminded that believers will give an account for the way we treat people at the great Day of Judgment before God (2Co. 5:10). Mercy (ἔλεος) is kindness or concern for someone in need. Believers are to be merciful & loving toward others because we have received mercy & God will be merciful to us (Mt. 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:12).*

## CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brothers & sisters we have been exhorted today never to make judgments about people solely on their outward appearance. Prejudice or partiality is a sin because it violates God's commandment to love & this sin can lead to very irrational actions. Biblical love overcomes partiality because we treat others as God has treated us & as we want to be treated. Loving others gives the believer confidence for the Day of Judgment. Do you remember how filthy & unfit you felt when under conviction before Jesus saved you – the shame, guilt & isolation? Do you remember the joy in your heart when you first knew that your sins were forgiven; that Jesus loved you & accepted you just as you were? God wants us to remember & never forget so that we will treat others with that same love & acceptance when they are unlovely, unfit & unattractive inwardly & outwardly. God wants us to remember also because there are times when sinners have come to Christ & are beautiful inwardly even though their outward appearance is unlovely by the world's standards. God wants us to think biblically & love ALL people without prejudice just as God has loved us.

If you are not a Christian, God extends His unconditional love to you today. He knows your situation, your past & your future. Jesus Christ has come into this world to live the perfect life for you & to die for all the sins that you have ever committed so that you can be in a perfect relationship with God! But you must believe...

SUBJECT: [Love Overcomes Prejudice](#)

TEXT: [Jas. 2:1-13](#)

LOCATION: [Trinity Community Church](#)

DATE: [October 16, 2011](#)

OCASSION: [Sunday Morning Worship Svc](#)

SERMON INDEX NUMBER: [972](#)

FILE LOCATION: [BX4](#)

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