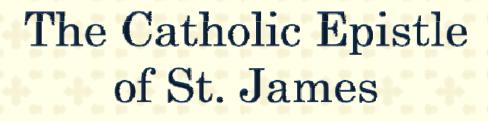


Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



Chapter 2

Bishop Youssef

Introduction



- ➢ In this chapter we find a call to avoid partiality.
- Partiality made one a judge with evil thoughts.
- St. James provides several reasons why such prejudice was unbecoming of the believers (1-13)
- St. James then addresses the relationship between faith and works.
- Using several examples including those of Abraham and Rahab, St. James declares three times that faith without works is dead (14-26).



- The faith of our Lord: the Christian profession
- Partiality: God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34)
- God respects godliness and holiness, not the wealth, or the race, or the earthly rank
- Assembly: church or place of worship
- Gold ring: An indication of wealth in that age, especially in connection with the fine clothing
- > A poor man, as shown by his filthy clothing



- If you show respect to the clothes, by giving one a welcome and a good seat, while the other is treated scornfully, allowed to stand or to sit in a very uncomfortable place
- Here you show partiality from outward appearance and judge under the influence of evil thoughts
- You choose out the rich for favor, but God has chosen in most part the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the eternal inheritance



- God promised to give His kingdom to those who love Him and accept Him to be their Savior
- But those whom God accepts you reject
- > The oppressors of the poor are usually the rich
- They are the money lenders, those who bring suit for debt, and hence draw the poor before the judgment seats
- Perhaps also there is an allusion to the fact that they were the persecutors



- They blaspheme name of Christ
- There is an allusion either to the fact that they were already called Christians
- If you fulfill the law of love for one's neighbor (Lev 19:8), which is the fulfillment of the law, you do well but that to every man, poor as well as rich
- Partiality would break this law, and hence would be a sin, and the sinner would be convicted as a transgressor



- ➢ If the law is broken by partiality, the whole law is broken
- He who willfully breaks one command is a law breaker and is guilty of all
- He who gave one commandment, gave the other commandments
- If you break any one of them, you sin against the Divine Lawgiver
- The law of liberty is the Gospel



- The gospel is not a law of outward compulsion, but of a new and willing spirit
- > We must show mercy if we expect mercy
- The mercy of God in Christ towards them, producing mercy on their part towards their fellow men
- This makes them to triumph over judgment, which all in themselves otherwise deserve



- Professions are nothing unless their fruit is deeds
- Even faith is of no avail unless it demonstrates its life by works
- A practical application of the royal law
- Naked: insufficiently clothed
- If you express to the needy only kind wishes
- Such good wishes are worthless unless followed up by active help to the sufferer



- Faith that has no power to bring works is as worthless as good wishes which end in words
- Faith cannot stand alone (dead)
- One may claim works, another faith, they must go hand in hand.
- The life lived is the proof of the faith held
- If a man lives in obedience to Christ, that is proof that he has faith in Christ



- You believe that there is one God. That is very well, but can that alone save you?
- Even the demons believe that also. See Mt 8:29
- Evil spirits confessed Christ, but this confession of faith did not save them
- I will show by proof that the faith that justifies should have works by the case of Abraham
- Faith has no power to be alive unless it has power over the life by works



- Abraham the father of the Jewish race; also the father of all his children by faith Gal 3:7-9
- He was justified by a faith which showed itself in works when he offered his son Isaac
- > Abraham's faith was a working faith
- > The element of works is essential to make the faith perfect
- ➢ Without works it is an imperfect, a dead faith (Jam 2:20)



- The scripture quoted in Gen 15:6
- The case of the offering of Isaac was a complete outward demonstration that Abraham believed God, as the Scripture said
- Justification and righteousness comes from faith working in love
- He was honored as no other human being had been honored to be called friend of God



- The case of Abraham proves that the justifying faith is a working faith
- Rahab is also one of the long roll of examples of faith shown by works given by St. Paul
- Her faith was a working faith
- The body is a lifeless, dead thing, without the spirit, so faith without works is lifeless and dead
- St. Paul is saying works without faith is dead and St. James is saying faith without works is dead

Conclusion



- > What is the royal law?
- > What are some examples of partiality mentioned in the epistle?
- > What are the dangers of having partiality between people?
- Give an example of the dead faith.
- How did the apostle show the importance of the relationship between faith and work so it can be alive?

Conclusion



- > What is the fate of who keeps the whole law but breaks one?
- Which group of people did St. James mention will be judged with no mercy?
- How did God deal with poor people?
- Why did St. James call our Lord Jesus Christ with "the Lord of Glory" when he was talking about partiality?