



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Catholic Epistle of St. James

Chapter 2

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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).

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Beware of Personal Favoritism (2:1-13)



- 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

Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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 Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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

Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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

Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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)

Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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

Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-26)



- 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?