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# James 2-Testing through Generosity

## James 2:1-26

*Stevan Vaughan*

### Introduction

Envision two families that may attend the Chapel on any given Sunday morning. One family is comfortably set with ample financial resources, and has been a part of the Clearcreek Chapel community for a number of years. The children in this family have been baptized, are not openly rebellious, participate fully in children's education and youth functions, and have many friends at church. They attend a Christian school, and are involved in many school and community activities; they are known by many and well-liked at church and in the community. Dad is well known in his workplace for being a church member and is not afraid to share his faith with unbelievers. He is often very charitably inclined at church and at work. Mom does not work outside the home, but volunteers at school, is supportive of her husband, and is busily involved in raising the family. Friends of the family enjoy being invited for a visit because this family provides all of the popular amenities and games for everyone's enjoyment. This family is just fun to be around.

The second family is vastly different. This family has just recently become believers, and they have no idea how to conduct themselves in Church. They do not know anyone at the church, and are not a family of financial means. Dad was released from jail nine months ago, and has been unable to find substantial and consistent work, and frankly, they don't have the resources to move to a different city to search for alternative employment opportunities. Mom is working close to 40 hours a week for minimum wage, just to put food on the table for her family. Their house is located in a very old, low income community. It would be difficult to invite visitors due to the smallness of their home and the lack of safety in the neighborhood. They do not have satellite or cable TV, cell phones, or any electronic games. They have one car that is close to 15 years old. When they first arrive at church you notice they have tattoos covering any visible skin, they have two teenage children with multiple piercings, and they are dressed in clothing that some might say is inappropriate for church. You can't help but notice from afar that they are not very clean, and probably don't live in very clean conditions. Their clothes are tattered and worn; and they stick out in our church

community like a sore thumb! They know it, you know it, and everyone begins to feel uncomfortable.

Both families come in the door at the same time as you stand and observe in the church lobby. You begin to see the second family is ignored by most, even though everyone sees them enter. The interactive flow moves away from the new family and towards those who are well known. Youth begin to congregate among themselves and murmur about the new family; others begin to move quickly to their seats or responsibilities of ministry....

While I know that perhaps the illustration is extreme, and certainly no single family in our midst was in mind as the template for either family. But, how well do we or will we accept a family like this at the Chapel? Would they come back? Would we want them to come back?

Let's pray

### **Partiality and love (2:1-13)**

Let's begin at chapter one verse 27:

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep one unstained from the world.*

The word "visit" in this context is defined as, "To look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, have care for, or provide for"<sup>1</sup> So James closes his summary of the first section, or chapter, with the necessity for generosity in the church.

The previous verse made generosity an issue, and so has moved the reader into the first major topic of the letter, the call for generosity and how it tests the reality of faith. James handles this topic in two parts.

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<sup>1</sup>James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996), G1980.

Each is probably the summary of a single sermon, for they both follow the pattern of the types of sermons preached in the synagogue.<sup>2</sup>

These two sermons, the first one titled “Partiality and Love” (2:1-13), and the second one titled, “Generosity and Faith” (2:14-26), follow a basic structure:

1. The Principle
2. An Example
3. Theological Argument
4. Scriptural Argument
5. Concluding Appeal

James concluded his summary (Chapter 1) with an appeal to generosity. Pure religion required action and an outward display of loving others and caring for those less fortunate. Now James addresses his readers with two sermons organized with typical synagogue sermon structure. Let read chapter 2, verse one:

### **The Principle (2:1)**

*My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.*

In the previous chapter, James characterized the need for wisdom in the midst of trials, and that the trials James was addressing related to specific relationships in the churches (particularly when it came to socioeconomic needs), and the temptations surrounding trials caused by selfish desires.

Now James more definitively addresses his concerns over the economic parity displayed in the church. The main principle in the first sermon is short and to the point: Do not show partiality!

The Greek word used here literally means ,respect of persons, “the fault of one who when called on to give judgment has respect of the outward circumstances of man and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high born, or powerful, to another who does not have these qualities.”

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<sup>2</sup>D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: *The New Bible Commentary*. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Jas 1:19.

Notice how James is clear to point out Christ as being the “Lord of Glory”. Showing partiality has no place in the life of believers as they represent Christ in his glory on earth.

So, how do we tend to show partiality in our church community? How do we show partiality outside the church? Are we in danger of showing partiality or favoritism to certain persons at the Chapel? This is vital to consider as we continue to walk through this chapter.

### **An Example (2:2-4)**

Even though James is following a certain structure in these two sermons, I believe it is easy to piece together the details of trials that James was addressing in the church.

*For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes in-to your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

Some commentators suggest that this is actually a church “court” setting in which James presents his illustration. In other words, two believers have a dispute that is to be judged in the church. This judgment in this illustration has already been decided by giving preference to one of the parties, mainly the rich. I am still inclined to picture this in an actual synagogue or worship assembly. No matter what the specific setting, I think it is clear that James is addressing a real problem in the church, and whether there is a court setting as an example...much for impact or argument, I believe the example reveals the heart of the very real trial the churches were experiencing.

Simply put, those in the church who had wealth and power (probably even recognized as such in the community) were given places of preference in the church. Even if this was a court setting, the two opposing parties were to be on the same level (eye to eye), but judgment had already taken place even before the hearing began.

Note here that James points back to the heart of his listeners. These people are making outward displays of preference, and yet James says, “...have you not become judges with evil thoughts?” This should cause us to think back to chapter one, when James is beginning to reveal his

thoughts about the rich and the poor (or humble), but should also remind us how sin is often caused by our own evil desires and intentions.

As a matter of context, remember that these believers were undergoing increasing economic stress, persecution, and social rejection for the name of Christ. But, evidently not all believers were affected equally. Yet what were the temptations they were experiencing?

What would the temptations be in the church today, if this scenario impacted our community? Would the leadership cater to those who could best meet our needs or wants financially? Would those we needed to care for become a burden because of severe economic stress? Would some of us with resources balk at giving to those in need, while the wealthy were treated with greater honor? Also, keep in mind that the wealthy in James' day were not necessarily what we would consider rich in today's terms. These were merely businessmen, shop/store owners, and those involved in commerce. They may have worked in a trade, or sold goods in a market setting, but don't think in terms of Bill Gates rich...the wealthy would be like many of us here in the Chapel. Therefore we cannot deflect the very real responsibilities this brings into our own lives today.

The issues that James is addressing should cause us to ask heart questions, because our desires individually and collectively could lead us to sin if left unaccountable to one another and to God's Word, which calls us to be generous and to care for those in our community who have needs!

### **Theological Argument (2:5-7)**

James began by providing an example for what is going on, and now he shifts to a theological argument. Let's read beginning at verse 5:

*Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?*

The New Bible Commentary says, "James begins his discussion of such favoritism towards the wealthy by referring to the words of Jesus. God has chosen the poor, he says, to inherit the kingdom. This comes from

the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6:20). God shows a special interest in the poor in the OT (*e.g.* Dt. 15; Ps. 35:10; Pr. 19:17) and Jesus makes them the focus of his gospel proclamation (Lk. 4:18). James makes it clear that the poor he is talking about are the economically poor, for they are poor only *in the eyes of the world*.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus often used the poor as an example and illustration of those who would inherit the kingdom, and often showed the wealthy as ones who would likely face judgment. Does this mean the wealthy were not necessarily going to inherit eternal life and the poor were...No, but the poor were more likely dependent on God, and the wealthy are often dependent on their own strength and means...those opposing heart responses can illustrate a response to the gospel message as well. For only those who are broken and completely willing to be dependent on God and his sovereignty may be most open to receive the gospel message.

The theme in the Old Testament of the rich oppressing the poor is also a backdrop to James' sermon as James furthers his discussion on those with less means in this world. As believers, there should not be favoritism in any context, but in James' illustration of partiality in the church, poor believers were being grossly dishonored. This is not unlike the abuse of the Lord's Table in 1 Corinthians's, or even the implied abuse of spiritual giftedness proclaimed by Paul in Corinthians and Romans, where the tendency was to honor only the visible and more "honorable" spiritual gifts.

The irony in the dishonoring of the poor is that with all of the preference the church showed to the rich, it was actually the rich (presumably those outside the church) who were dragging the Christians into court, because they knew the Jewish and Roman courts would be favorable to slandering Christians. This was happening to the church with regularity, and yet the church was deciding to treat one another the same way as the world was treating them.

So, from a theological viewpoint James tells us that God has chosen all of us as believers to be "poor in this world" and to have our treasure in another place, namely with the Lord. How can we dishonor ourselves,

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<sup>3</sup>D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: *The New Bible Commentary*. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Jas 2:5.

because the whole church is to lay up treasures in heaven...not in this world? The very people they were honoring over their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ were those who were polar opposites of the life that God desires for his body.

Now James makes a scriptural argument:

### **Scriptural Argument (2:8-11)**

Look at verse 8:

*If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.*

If there is any partiality shown in the church, is the royal law of "loving your neighbor as yourself" being kept? The term "royal law" is possibly used here because Jesus summed up our duty to the Old Testament Law before he died as loving God with all of one's heart, and loving your neighbor as yourself. If we consider this in light of the New Covenant as a minimum guideline, or a shadow from the Old Covenant, showing partiality is destroying even a minimum standard, and absolutely and completely breaking God's command.

I wonder if James' original audience, having the Law in the back of their minds, considered loving their neighbor as themselves as fulfillment of Jesus' command to love one another, and yet in the shadow of their thoughts, they should have seen a broken man hanging on a tree, taking all of the full fury and wrath of their sin, setting a new standard of love and care for one another. Did they remember Jesus words of "laying down one's life for his friends"? And yet, they were failing to love one another at the very basic level.

Do you think the listeners deflected the thought of Christ's sacrifice for their sins while making judgments on their brothers and sisters based on a purely worldly standard of socio-economic status?

James clearly writes; if you show partiality, you are committing sin. Like all sin, any sin we commit offends the whole Law, and we are fully

guilty of sin. Perhaps the leadership didn't think what they were doing was really a big deal. After all, partiality is not like murder or adultery. Yet, the sin we commit does not happen in a vacuum. James is addressing our tendency to categorize the sin in our lives and believe that some sins are not as dangerous as others, or that some sins are (to borrow Jerry Bridges category for sins we are comfortable with) "respectable sins". I believe that is what James is pointing to here.

Even sin in our heart which no one sees breaks the whole law of Christ, and we should have no less response to casual sin than gross sin, but to fall on our knees in utter repentance and dependence on God. We can be like those James addresses - making judgments in our hearts about others, and yet failing to recognize our own transgression against Christ. When we sin, such as showing partiality in the church, it is the same as committing murder or adultery in the eyes of the Law.

As we mature in the Lord, we have to recognize how all of our sin separates from God, and sin is not something to brush under the rug of our lives to hide from anyone who might be looking. We have to allow God to reveal our sin to us through his word, and repent and change, fully dependent on the fact that Christ died for our sin on the cross.

So, from a scriptural argument, even the shadow of the Old Testament law judges completely our respectable sins such as partiality against our brother or sister.

James concludes this sermon by summarizing his point clearly (verses 12-13):

### **Concluding Appeal (2:12-13)**

*So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

Therefore (implied), how much more should we show mercy to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, for we are all judged from the same Lord and Savior. There is no reason for partiality if we focus on our future rewards and judgments.

I find that I make silly judgments on others over every kind of issue. My chief love and concern is myself when I do this. I merely want to worship myself, and bring others down in my own mind, in order to raise myself high! You and I can make such judgments against one another even while we are carrying on a loving conversation with that person. Brothers and sisters, this cannot be! To ignore and fail to deal with our sinful desires will only give way to outward sin in our church community, and will not bring glory and honor to our Savior Jesus Christ. Outward sin in the church will dishonor the name of Christ. This goes beyond merely failing to care for the physical needs of those in our community.

Let's look at James' second sermon structured the same way as his first:

### **Generosity and Faith (2:14-26)**

#### **The Principle (2:14)**

Let's read verse 14.

*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?*

The implication and direction James leads us is clearly rhetorical.

### **An Example (2:15-17)**

James has just finished explaining how the sin of preferring one over another, especially the rich over the poor, will lead to judgment. Now James uses sermon structure to further clarify and probe the hearts of his listeners. Once again the example he begins with is not by coincidence. It is intentional that this example takes his argument for loving one another one step closer to the heart. If the first sermon was focused on behavior, this sermon concentrates on the question of true and practical faith from the heart demonstrated with action.

Verse 15:

*If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

James obviously uses sarcasm to try to get the attention of his readers in his opening example, but if there was partiality displayed in the churches this was actually happening in a real life! Remember James' first example of comparing persons in the assembly: one had clothes that were in shambles, one had fine clothes (and financial means) in the same assembly. The poor were being openly neglected and the rich treated with preference, but how could the leadership in the church actually turn away those in physical need, and still somehow try to wrap their response in such a thin religious veneer, denying those with material needs the very real and practical love of Christ?

James is saying that not providing for your brother or sister in need is not true religion, but true religion, or faith, is demonstrated by action based in faith in Christ and love for one another. It takes care of the widows and orphans who are in need. True faith not only cares for the soul, but it cares for the needs of the body as well. You cannot simply depend on theological assent and religion for the mind, even when the teaching appears to be without error.

What good is a faith that denies the physical needs of those being ministered to? Listen to what the writers of the New Bible Commentary say about the response to those who had physical needs in the church: "It is very religious, and on some level, it is theologically correct. What it lacks is the going to the person responding to the request for needs, own wardrobe and pantry and getting out their own clothing and food and sharing it with their unfortunate brother or sister. Because of this James says that such a prayer is totally useless. And, he concludes, so are all forms of faith which are not accompanied by action. We may believe that Jesus is Lord, but if we

do not obey him that belief is just empty words. We may believe that God loves the poor, but if we do not care for them our faith is dead.”<sup>4</sup>

These people were lacking daily food, and they were being sent away with an exhortation to “go in peace, be warmed and filled”, without giving them what they needed for their body!

### **Theological Argument (2:18-19)**

James begins with a theological argument against this response; let’s look at verse 18...

*But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*

It seems apparent that orthodoxy was being taught in the churches, but true faith lived out through love was missing, to the point of judging and showing partiality towards one another, and even failing to meet the basic needs of those neediest in the church. And yet, there still seems to be an appearance of religion. Some even tried to separate faith and works, arguing that one person may have faith (belief in Christ), and another person may only have works!

James says that true faith is demonstrated through works. Works and faith are not separate spiritual gifts. Again, merely believing the fact that God is one is not enough...even the demons believe that truth. Demons know the truth, but they have not fallen on their knees crying out for salvation or mercy to God!

True salvation is more than merely believing the story of Christ is true. It takes repentance, mercy, forgiveness and change through the transforming work of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. If we try to keep works separate from faith, our faith is suspect. We are saved through faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone, but as we grow in Christ, good works will be produced through true God-given love. We will, by God’s grace, be given the power to give up what we have for someone else, to go beyond loving our neighbor as ourselves, and truly lay down our own life for our friends.

Do not merely know the truth like the demons, believe and live the truth, and live your faith in action! Focus solely on Christ and his work for us as we allow God’s grace to empower us to care for and love one another in our church community.

### **Scriptural Argument (2:20-25)**

So here is the scriptural argument in verses 20-25:

*Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works*

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<sup>4</sup>D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, Rev. Ed. of: *The New Bible Commentary*. 3rd Ed. / Edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Jas 2:15.

*when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?*

Notice how James refers to the work (s), plural of Abraham. James knew that to the Jewish listener, Abraham's life was marked by faith and obedience, and it was not one experience that set Abraham apart, but in fact, it was a life of belief and obedience. Abraham acted out his trust and faith in God through his whole life. His faith in God enabled Abraham to offer Isaac to God as the needed sacrifice. Abraham lived each day with his faith in action as he increasingly learned what it was to serve the almighty God.

Turn in your Bible's to Genesis 22: 1-19:

*After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here am I, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together.*

*When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and beholds, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So*

*Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."*

*And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."*

The listeners would have immediately been called, as we are, to go back to the story of Abraham and recall the faith that James is clarifying to his listeners from an Old Testament story many of them presumably knew well. James is now interpreting the story of Abraham through the lens of the cross, explaining the mixture and cooperation of Abraham's actions through the vital necessity of faith!

What about the faith of Rahab recorded in Joshua 2? Let's read the summary in Hebrews: (Heb 11:31) *It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given (she acted) a friendly welcome to the spies.*

Have you ever considered the "faith in action" of Rahab? She merely heard the story of the Israelites, and was filled with the fear of the Lord, but she acted on her faith in order to be saved from destruction. She acted in worship to the Lord by saving the Israelite spies and then in faith tied a scarlet chord in her window so her family could be saved. She believed the word of the Lord, and acted on her faith. Rahab heard of God's deeds and believed them in her heart, and thus God provided her grace that saved her and her family from destruction as a beautiful illustration of God saving gentiles in the midst of the Jewish community.

God gives faith and grace to believe in him. But true salvation also mirrors the lives of Abraham and Rahab, and lives out true faith in Christ. If we suspect we are failing to live out our faith in community we need to repent and ask God to change our desires for our good, the good of the church and His glory.

### **Concluding Appeal (2:26)**

For James concluding appeal let's read verse 26:

*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

Matthew Henry in his commentary on the Whole Bible writes, "The most plausible profession of faith, without works, is dead: as the root is dead when it produces nothing green, nothing of fruit. Faith is the root, good works are the fruits, and we must see to it that we have both. We must not think that either, without the other, will jus-

tify and save us. This is the grace of God wherein we stand, and we should stand to it.”<sup>5</sup>

Remember back to the two families that will quite possibly be a part of our church community both now and in the future. How will you love those who are unlovely? Who will you move toward in ministry, only those with whom you are comfortable? Who did Christ gravitate toward in his ministry here on earth?

## Conclusion

The Elders at Clearcreek are very serious about expanding the gospel into outside communities and inviting the non-churched inside into our community. Consider the possibility of partiality in your heart and how it can affect both your personal growth and change and our maturity as a community here at The Chapel.

Do not judge, partiality is a sin. We have no external grounds to judge or make judgments about others. We struggle to understand our own hearts let alone understanding someone else’s heart.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. There is no mercy in partiality, only judgment. With Christ’s death on the cross, and his sovereignty in our salvation, we would all be without mercy and only have judgment.

Faith apart from works is useless. Be generous. You have brothers and sisters with real needs right now in our community. Be in tune to the physical needs of your brothers and sisters in our community. Do not send them away unfed, or unclothed when you have the means to supply their need.

*For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*<sup>6</sup>

Pray that God will allow us to live our faith out on this earth through the most thorough and complete emptying of ourselves for the cause of Christ. You cannot separate true faith and the works that are naturally produced from true faith. This work has to be done in the mundane day to day activities of life. You do not have to look beyond those whom you have opportunity to share with every day.

Ultimately we can cling to verse 2:1 *My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, c1991), Jas 2:14.

<sup>6</sup>*The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Jas 2:26.

<sup>7</sup>*The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Jas 2:1.

How do we have the grace to “show no partiality”...by holding to our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? He alone will give us the strength to live a generous life, just like how he will provide wisdom when we are in trials of various kinds.

In contrast to the churches to which James is writing, consider the early church in Acts 2:42-47:

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup>*The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ac 2:42-47.



**Title**

**Text**

**Speaker**

The Chapel Pulpit • <date> Sunday Morning

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## **Introduction**

## **Heading**

➤ **Heading**

**Heading**

## **Conclusion**