

Sermon Reflections

Freed From Favoritism (James 2:1-13)

Summary: Resist measuring out mercy based on appearances, by remembering God's reason for showing mercy to you, only grace!

Three reasons to reject favoritism:

1. Favoritism Reveals a Shallow Heart (vv. 1-4)

- Why is it important not to treat people differently based on their appearances?
 - If we do react to people differently based on their appearances, how could that affect our effectiveness in welcoming someone into our GBC body?
- In 1 Samuel 16:7 – The Lord says to Samuel that while man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. We cannot see a person's heart by looking at them, so what are some practical things we can do to learn about a person's heart instead of making assumptions based on their appearance?

2. Favoritism Rejects God's Selfless Character (vv. 5-7)

- Favoritism is Inconsistent with Gods Agenda:
 - In this passage we specifically see rich people being given preference. Throughout scripture, God consistently warns the rich. Does this mean that rich people can't go to heaven? OR is God trying to teach them something? If so, what is God trying to teach?
- Favoritism is Incompatible with God's Law:
 - Read v8 and v9. If killing partiality means loving our neighbors as ourselves, how do we love ourselves? How can we love others in that same way? People walk through the doors of GBC to be loved and to be welcomed. When you see a new face, are you loving them as you love yourself?
 - The same God that said not to murder, said not to be partial. It breaks the same law of God's Holiness. Do you consider showing partiality to have the same severity as committing murder? Discuss.

3. Favoritism Received a Strict Condemnation (vv. 12-13)

- Define Mercy.
 - Verses 12 and 13 teach us that the test of a transformed life is mercy. Why do we as Christians understand mercy? How then should we treat others?
- Steve said: The only favoritism allowed in God's body is that we must favor everyone else over ourselves. If this is an area in which you can grow, what is one practical thing you can do this to show favor to someone else this week?