

# RICH IN FAITH

## JAMES 2:1-10

Text: James 2:5

### **James 2:5**

<sup>5</sup> Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Introduction:

There is some things to be said here about the matter of prejudice and being a respecter of person.

Note:

## **1. THE PROHIBITION – PREJUDICE**

### **James 2:1**

<sup>1</sup> My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

These words “respect of persons” literally means “don’t lay hold of a person’s face.”

What does that mean?

It means that we are not to judge a person by their appearance.

## **1 Samuel 16:7**

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

There is nothing that can hurt the work of our Lord more than snobbishness in a church.

Where we look on a certain person who, because of his economic status, or the way he is dressed, or the way he looks, we look upon him and judge him to be thus and so of a person, and treat him accordingly.

## **2. THE PROBLEM – PARTIALITY**

### **James 2:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; <sup>3</sup> And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: <sup>4</sup> Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Notice:

### **A. The Appearance**

First of all, there comes in Mr. Goldfingers. Now, he actually—that’s what this word “with a gold ring,” literally means in the Greek a “golden fingered man,” Mr. Goldfingers. He has a gem at every joint. He has a

nugget at every knuckle. He's just very wealthy, and you can just see that he's wearing a costly garment.

You say, "Wow, who is he? Look at that man. I can tell he's somebody important. Move way and make way for the gentlemen, and give him a good seat." And, so he comes in, and he has a seat, and the usher shows a lot of respect to him.

You know, there are a lot of people that think it's so important how you dress and what you look like outwardly, and that's all some people are really cognizant about in church.

A woman asked her husband when they got home, "Say, did you notice the hat Mrs. Jones had on this morning?" He said, "No, I didn't notice that." She said, "Well, did you notice Mrs. Smith's new dress?" He said, "No, I didn't notice that." "Well," she said, "What good does it do you to go to church? You never get anything out of it."

Well, that's just about the wavelength that some people seem to be on. And, they're just so aware of how a person is dressed, or how they appear when they come to church.

And then enters another man.

And, when the usher sees him, the usher says, “Well, obviously, this man is not worth very much,” because he has on what the Bible calls here a vile raiment. Now, this word “vile raiment,” means “dirty clothes.” He has on dirty clothes. Obviously, he’s a laboring man, a working man, and he hasn’t had a chance really to bathe and freshen up. Maybe he’s just come to the assembly, he’s come to church, and maybe he’s got dirt under his fingernails. Maybe his shoes are not shined. But, he’s someone for whom Jesus died—someone for whom Jesus died. Never judge a jewel because it comes in a plain box. He’s a soul whom Jesus loves.

This usher looks at him and says, “Well, that guy’s not worth much, it makes no difference whether he gets a seat, whether she gets a seat. Stand over here, sit down there.” And, that person has a spirit that’s crushed, and a spirit that’s wounded.

Illustration:

Did you know Gandhi, the leader of India, was searching for a philosophy, searching for a way, searching for some way to reach the people of India for whom he had a burden? And, he studied the different faiths, and the different ideologies and religions of the world, and he studied Christianity. And, he said, “I believe that’s it. I believe that Christianity is what the people of India need,” so he went to a church to learn more. And, an usher met him at the church, and when

the usher saw him and saw who he was, the usher said, “I’m sorry, sir, this church is for Europeans only.” And, Gandhi went away and became the Hindu leader of India, a man that could have reached multiplied millions of souls for Jesus Christ. But, someone looked at him, and someone laid hold of his face rather than looking at his heart.

## B. The Attitude

There was, first of all, the appearance of the men and then there was the attitude of the usher in verse 3: “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool” (James 2:3). The usher made the mistake, that so many make in so many churches across America, and it is indulgence of the rich and indifference to the poor.

## C. The Appraisal

Well, after you see the appearance of the men, and the attitude of the usher, I want you to notice the appraisal of the Lord. I want you to see what the Lord said, “Are ye not then partial in yourselves”—verse 4—“and are become judges of evil thoughts?” (James 2:4).

Now, look at that phrase “partial in yourselves.” It literally means, “have you not made distinctions among

yourselves,” that’s what it means. You have made distinctions; you have set one person in one category and another person in another category.

We must remember that all people are precious in the sight of God, and if you haven’t learned that, you have not learned anything, not even the rudiments about Christianity.

### **3. THE POSITION**

Now, the third thing I want you to notice not only the prohibition of prejudice and not only the problem of partiality, but I want you to notice the position of the poor. What the Lord says about the poor here in verse 5:

#### **James 2:5**

<sup>5</sup>Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

#### **A. They’re Chosen of God**

Illustration:

Abraham Lincoln said, “God must have loved common people, He made so many of them.” You see, God loves the poor. God loves the common. He does indeed, they are chosen of the Lord.

Notice:

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29**

<sup>26</sup> For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* <sup>27</sup> But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: <sup>29</sup> That no flesh should glory in his presence.

God says, “I have ordained and chosen to use ordinary people, so that when it is done, human flesh won’t get the glory, God will get the glory.”

And, so God takes the weak and makes them witnesses.

God takes the base and turns them into believers.

God takes the despised and makes disciples out of them.

And, God takes the nobody’s and makes them nobilities.

That’s God’s plan.

**B. They’re Rich In Faith**

The second thing, they're rich in faith. Go back to James chapter 2 again. You see, a rich man has a tendency to trust his money.

The poor man has to trust the Lord.

Sometimes being poor is not a curse. It may indeed be a blessing. Sometimes riches may be a curse.

### C. They're an Heir of the Kingdom of God

The third thing James says about the position of the poor, not only is he chosen of God, not only is he rich in faith, "he is an heir of the Kingdom which God.

Illustration:

Adoniram Judson was a great missionary. He went to Burma. He labored long. He prayed. He fasted. He witnessed. But, rather than souls coming to Jesus, Adoniram Judson was arrested. He was tortured. He was strung up by his thumbs, and ridiculed. Finally, he was cut down and cast into a vile, filthy, dirty, vermin-infested prison, just a hole, just a cage. And, his tormenters came to Adoniram Judson and said, "What about your plans to win the heathen to Christ? Now, what do you have to say about your future?" Do you know what Adoniram Judson said? "My future is as bright as the promises of God."



## 4. THE PERSECUTION

James is very plain. He speaks of the prohibition of prejudice. He speaks of the perils and the problems of partiality. He speaks of the position of the poor, and then he speaks of the persecution by the prosperous. I want you to notice verses 6 and 7 now:

### **James 2:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? <sup>7</sup> Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

What James is talking about here is the wealthy ruling class that persecuted the early Church, and they did.

#### A. The Gospel Hit at Their Position

The gospel says that everybody is equal.

Everybody likes to feel a little superior to somebody else.

#### B. The Gospel Hit at Their Pocketbook

There were many rich who repudiated the gospel because of economics.

Remember there in Ephesus, where Paul went to Ephesus, and he begin to preach Christ and preach against Diana?

Diana was the great goddess of the city of Ephesus?

**Acts 19:27**

<sup>27</sup> So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

Now, they said, “We’ve got to do something with this preacher, Paul, because our business is in danger.” The same thing is true in Acts chapter 16, where there was a demon-possessed girl who Paul healed and cured, and the wealthy people who were in charge of that demon- possessed girl had Paul and Silas cast into prison.

Many times the wealthy and the rich despise the gospel—the true gospel— because it hits at their position. It hits at their pocketbook, and it also hits at their:

C. The Gospel Hit at Their Pride

The reason that so many people want money is to help them to be elevated above other people, but along comes the gospel and says that, “we’re to boast in nothing but Jesus Christ our Lord.”

For when God looks at you, it is not the blue book of society, not the bankbook of finance, but it's God's book that makes the difference as to what you are.

We say upper class, and then middle class, and then lower class, but God never divides men horizontally, God always divides them vertically: the sheep and the goats, the saved and the lost, the saints and the ain'ts.

And, so the rich began to reject this gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And, they begin to persecute the poor. And, James said when they persecuted the poor, what they were doing was blaspheming God.

## **5. THE PRECEPTS**

There's the persecution by the prosperous and then finally the precepts for proper practice.

### **James 2:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: <sup>9</sup> But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

Why does the Bible call this the royal law? Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Because it's the king of all laws.

Close:

A little fellow left his home and walked for miles to get to a certain church. He walked past many churches. Someone asked him, "Why do you go so far to go to church, to that one particular church?" He said, "Because they love a fellow over there."

Another little boy was talking about a friend that he met. He was telling his mama, "I just think he's such a neat guy." And, his mama said, "What is it that you like so much about him?" And, the little fellow said, "He treats me like I'm a people."

We need to learn that everybody is somebody because Jesus is Lord.