

Mercy Triumphs
James 2:1-13

Sept. 15, 2024

INVOCATION: Merciful Lord, we thank You again for gathering us in Your presence. Hear our songs and our prayers to You, and remove any barriers to our true and faithful worship of You today. May everything done here today be for Your honor and glory. In the name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.

WELCOME: Be sure to welcome visitors.

HYMN # 559 Rescue the Perishing
HYMN # 569 Make Me a Blessing

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

MISSIONARY PRAYER CALENDAR

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OFFERTORY HYMN # 572 I Love to Tell the Story

SERMON FOCUS: I must show mercy instead of judgment.

SERMON FUNCTION: The hearer will recognize judgmental behaviors in his life.

BACKGROUND: We are spending a few weeks in the epistle of James, the brother of Jesus who was a leader in the early church. This book was written between 48-52 A. D. to Jewish Christians scattered about.

SCRIPTURE READING: James 2:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever felt judged? I can remember a time when I was in middle school and we were broke. Our house was a dump. The family car was old. All my clothes came from the thrift store and were at least ten years old. Not just ugly, but obnoxiously ugly. And I was called ungrateful because I didn't like them. I was picked on a lot. It was obvious to everyone at school that I didn't belong there, and I was treated that way. However, I did not experience that at church. But I know people who have experienced that at church. And apparently, it was common enough in the first century for the brother of Jesus to write about it.

MESSAGE:

1. I MUST NOT JUDGE ON APPEARANCE

- a. James gives the example of the obviously well-dressed man vs. the poorly dressed man.
 - i. The first was probably known in the community.
 - ii. The second was a working stiff.
 - iii. The sin was not in treating the wealthy man well--it was in treating the poor man as "less than."
- b. How might we judge based on appearance?
 - i. Is that the best he could find to wear to church?
 - ii. Does she not realize how that dress makes her look?
 - iii. He needs a haircut!
 - iv. What was she thinking with that haircut?
 - v. He/she doesn't look like they belong here!
- c. No one of us is any more valuable than any other of us.
- d. When James says, "My brothers and sisters" in v. 1, he is reminding us that we are all equal.
- e. This means that in God's economy, none of us has more worth than anyone else. God values everyone regardless of if they are like us or not.

2. I MUST NOT JUDGE ON WHETHER PEOPLE ARE "LIKE ME"

- a. We tend to try to sort people around us into boxes to try to see who is like us and who is different from us. When we do this, we tend to see those "like us" as worth more than those unlike us.
- b. When we judge people, it is easy to group them into categories of "friend" and "foe."

- c. When we do this, we ascribe evil thoughts and motives to those who disagree with us and make enemies out of them.
- d. This is the business model of both political parties in the United States now.
 - i. “This person disagrees on one point, so they’re not a real_____”
 - ii. “This person disagrees with me on a political point, so he is not a real Christian like me!”
- e. The more we divide, especially within the body of Christ, the thinner our platform becomes until we are not capable of balancing on it.
 - i. We can and must still reject heresy and apostasy.
 - ii. We cannot, however, make things that are not scriptural matters of orthodoxy!
 - iii. We have long forgotten the maxim of, “In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.” (Rupertus Meldenius)
- f. The simple command of our Lord here is that we are not in a position to judge, but instead, we must show love and mercy to all.

3. I MUST SHOW LOVE AND MERCY TO ALL

- a. When we judge, based on what we see, we stand in direct contrast to Jesus who said, “I have not come to judge the world but to save the world.” (John 12:47)
- b. When we judge, we break the law of Christ to “love our neighbor as ourself.”
- c. When we judge others, we put ourselves on the throne instead of Jesus.
- d. When we judge others, we forget that, like them, we stand imperfectly in front of a perfect Savior, needing His rescue.
- e. (13) “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has not shown mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”
 - i. I would submit that mercy is the harder thing.
 - ii. Judgment comes so naturally.
 - iii. Mercy requires us to be the embodiment of Christ to those who may be hostile or ambivalent to us.
- f. Mercy requires us to share Christ with others.

4. THE GOSPEL IN SIMPLE FORM (adapted from Dr. James Merritt).

- a. Bad News: We are all sinners separated from God.
- b. Worst News: There is nothing we can do about our sin problem.
- c. Good News: Christ did for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
- d. Best News: Salvation and eternal life are a free gift, but you must receive it.

INVITATION HYMN # 317 Only Trust Him