



Reflection

Twenty-Third Sunday Ordinary Time

September 8, 2024

James 2.1-5

What does favoritism mean? Why is favoritism typically displayed by people? The apostle James forbids us in this chapter from treating others with respect because of external factors. He demonstrates that the law must be obeyed, and that justice and mercy must be administered impartially regardless of skin color, immoral lifestyle, or socioeconomic status. We are called to love everyone with the love of Christ.

People were constantly and permanently classified in the ancient world based on their status as Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free, wealthy or impoverished, Greek or barbarian. Jesus therefore came to dismantle these barriers that separated people and to create a single, new race. Because while humans focus on appearances, the LORD is more interested in hearts (1 Samuel 16:7).

And why does favoritism exist in the modern world? Pride in our own education or degree of knowledge might occasionally lead us to despise those who haven't attained our perceived level of achievement. Additionally, we frequently show favoritism because we put humans before God. Peter encountered this problem when, out of fear for the Jews, he stopped dining with the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11–13). In addition, we seek recognition for our deeds of generosity because we want other people to notice and repay the favor. But, it is God who we should please, not man.

How therefore may we unintentionally commit the sin of bias in the church? Avoiding newcomers, being unhelpful to individuals we don't like, hanging out with the same people and ignoring others, and acting rudely toward someone because we don't believe they are acting with integrity are all examples of this. This week at church, choose a new person you might not usually talk to and start a conversation instead of heading directly to your usual group of friends. Be friendly and extend your reach to them. Offer them lunch or a visit to your home. Christ is our best example, after all. Not just for one set of individuals, but for all of humanity's sins, Jesus was sent to die. God appreciates every human being, regardless of wealth, health, or IQ level, since all people were created in his image. Moreover, Jesus offered His life as a sacrifice for all people.