

The Church Showed Favoritism

James 2:1-13

The early church had many leaders. They taught other believers, encouraged them to keep following Jesus, and corrected them when they sinned. One of these leaders was Jesus' half-brother James, the son of Mary and Joseph.

James was a leader in the Jerusalem church. He wrote a letter to the Jewish believers who had moved to many different places. He told them the way believers should live. People who trust Jesus show that they really believe in Him by doing good and right things.

One important right thing, James taught, is to not show favoritism. That means we should treat everyone the same. No person is more important or less important than any other person.

James said, "Imagine you are meeting together and a man comes in wearing a gold ring and fancy clothes. Then a poor man in old, dirty clothes comes in, too. Is it right to pay attention to the man in fancy clothes and give him a chair to sit in, but say to the poor man 'Stand over there,' or 'Sit on the floor'?" If you do this, you have treated one man better than the other.

James said that God does not show favoritism. He does not treat rich people better than poor people, nor does He treat poor people better than rich people. God has a place in heaven for everyone who loves Him.

God taught us His law: Love your neighbor as yourself. Anyone who treats one person better than another person breaks God's law.

James told the believers to show mercy to others because they had been shown mercy. They were sinners, but God forgave their sins through His Son, Jesus. James insisted, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."

Christ Connection: When believers in the early church treated some people as better than others, James told them they were wrong. He reminded them that Jesus commanded believers to love one another. Because He has shown great mercy to us, we can show mercy to others.