

Mercy and Judgment

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: James 2:1-13

This lesson is the third in a series on the book of James. In this passage, James discussed mercy and judgment – what they mean in our standing before God and how we are to apply these principles in our dealings with others.

Warning Against Showing Favoritism (v. 1-7)

- James just finished discussing “pure and undefiled religion” (1:27) – helping those in need; this extends to how we treat others we come into contact with; we are to show concern for the poor
- James used one example of how we might show favoritism (v. 2-4) – we have a tendency to make judgments based upon appearances; yet the reality is often quite different from our assumptions (v. 6-7)
- We need to adopt God’s view of others (v. 5) – God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34-35); our faith must not allow us to do that either

Fulfilling the “Royal Law” (v. 8)

- The “royal law” is what Jesus called the “second” great commandment (Matthew 22:39) – it is like the “golden rule” (Matthew 7:12); treat others, not as they deserve, but with the mercy we would desire to be shown to us
- We are to show love to ALL people (1 Thessalonians 3:12) – not just toward a select few; show love like God did (John 3:16)

Transgressing the Law (v. 9-11)

- Back to the point on showing partiality/favoritism – doing this makes us guilty of sin; when we sin, we become transgressors of the law; sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4)
- Committing even one sin makes us a transgressor of the law (v. 10) – there are not different “stages” of sin (some to be punished severely, some overlooked, etc.)
- When we transgress the law (sin), we are worthy of death (Romans 6:23) – this is what we deserve

We Will Be Judged by God (v. 12-13)

- In all that we say and do, we need to remember that we will be judged by God (v. 12; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10) – it will be according to the standard found in His word (John 12:48)
- However, James said we will be judged by “the law of liberty” (v. 12) – this does NOT imply that we are free to do as we please (cf. 1 Peter 2:16); we are free from the

bondage of sin (Romans 6:16-18) and the punishment for it (Romans 6:23); we are free from any obligation to obey the commands of men (Colossians 2:20-23)

- Since we will be judged by God's law, we need to judge others in the same way – we have no right to judge/condemn someone based upon a human standard (Matthew 15:1-9); we will make judgments, but we must do so righteously (John 7:24)
- If we do not show mercy, God will not show mercy to us (v. 13; cf. Matthew 5:7; 6:14-15)

Conclusion

- We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ
- We need to show others the same mercy we would want the Lord to show us
- We also need to conform to His word and not be content with even one sin in our lives