

Getting Clarity in an Unclear World

A Different Community

James 2:1-13

CONNECT:

Have you ever been the recipient of a bias?

Have you ever found yourself to be biased towards someone (sports fan of your team, etc.)? Explain.

PREPARE

As a review, this is what we have covered the first few weeks in studying James:

- Faith is seen in action, particularly how we respond to trials and temptations.
- We need wisdom to live in the world, especially during times of trial.
- Trials can lead to temptation. Temptations can lead to sin and sin enslaves us.
- We see most clearly when we look into God's Word as in a mirror to see our hearts
- James began a discussion on the rich and the poor during the church at that time - reminding them of their identity in the gospel community.

STUDY AND DISCUSS:

- Read James 2:1-13. As foreign as it sounds to treat the rich and poor differently in the church, that's just the way things were at that time. How does this passage point out aspects that are so antithetical to the gospel?
- According to verse 4, what is the point James is making that seems to be the central problem?
- The way the rich were treating the poor was more the Roman way, not the Jesus way. It's anti-mercy, unjust and therefore, anti-gospel. How do you see people treating others with evil standards that are not in line with our identity as a family under Jesus?

Community Group Discussion Questions

- In verses 9-11, James joins this kind of discrimination and favoritism with adultery and murder. Why is that?
- Psychologists tell us that everyone has biases. Often we're biased about our biases, which is known as bias blind spots. It's easier to see them in others, and yet as Christians we know that biases exist because of the Fall. James is getting to the solution of this problem by focusing on thoughts and motives. How is a reminder of our beliefs the solution to how this community should be different?

RESPONSE:

Here are three beautiful ways the church is supposed to be different:

We have a different source - Our identity, salvation, destiny and blessing through God's forgiveness is in the cross of Jesus.

We have a different makeup - In the church we are different and diverse and still brought together by Jesus.

We have a different purpose - The church is a community that, by its nature, is and should be outwardly focused.

PRAY

Lord, we want to be gloriously different and diverse and yet united by the cross of Jesus. Thank you for making that not only a possibility but an expectation of us, your church. Change our biases where they need to be changed and help us to see our brothers and sisters in Christ as the family that they are!