

The Sin of Partiality

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Preacher: James Biesiadecki

[0:00] Amen. I want you to turn your Bibles to James chapter 2 and verse 8. We're continuing as we have been studying in the epistle of James. We're going to continue on through that, although from time to time I'll take a break from that to deal with different topics. We're going to keep marching through the epistle verse by verse, word by word, so that we can glean all we can out of this. We want to absorb the truth of God's word and make application of it, and as we have been looking at James, we realize how packed it is and how much great application there is for us.

Now, as we start this morning, I just, I'm reminded, just thinking about some of the songs that we sing and some of the words of those songs. We got to one song there this morning, and you were covering the ears of your children, saying it's talking about punching someone in the face, I think, and knocking someone's teeth out, right? And why in the world would we sing that?

Well, it's because it's directly coming from one of the psalms, and so we're trying to sing through some of the psalms, and at times we're confronted with the reality of how much God hates sin, aren't we? And just the word choice of God in inspiring the scripture for us sometimes is start and created, right? And so when you hear that, you see the contrast. He loves righteousness, and he hates wickedness. He hates it, and so he's communicating to us in very human terms how much he hates sin. And this is important when we come to the epistle of James, because it's talking about some great principles of wisdom from God so that we can see what sin looks like and start eradicating it out of our life. And I thought about that just as, you know, I shared some with you just about the, my front yard and the grass that's growing in my front yard and the weeds that are growing in my front yard.

The two have coexisted harmoniously for a while. And after a while, the grass lost the battle, and the weeds won. And I thought about this because even in talking to Brent about his cattle, what Brent has said that's really stuck in my head is that he's not in the cattle business, he's actually in the grass business. Because without the grass, you don't have the cows. You set the cows loose, they do what they're going to do, but you've got to have grass. And I thought about that a lot. And I was reading a lot about growing grass over the last few weeks because I sprayed for the weeds and it didn't do anything. And so I sprayed again and I tried something else and I sprayed on it twice and it didn't seem to do anything. And then finally, I noticed the weed started to shrivel up and I had absolute victory in my yard. And as a man competing against my neighbors, amen, we feel that, right? And I want my neighbor's grass is like plush green. And now my weeds are gone.

[3:41] And so is my grass. Because I killed it all. And so I've been reading now what I've done to my soil with all this stuff that I sprayed on there. And it's not really even about the grass now because the grass people are telling me, they're not in the grass business, they're in the soil business.

And the reason that the weeds are growing is because the soil conditions are right for weeds, not grass. And if the soil conditions are right for weeds, then the weeds grow and the grass tends to die. But you've got to put stuff on there and start conditioning your soil so that it's right to grow grass and not weeds. Why am I saying this? Well, because James is coming to a poisonous weed in the life of the church that is growing up and killing the testimony of the church.

He's talking about what we began last week, the sin of partiality and how partiality is a sin in the church. And it grows up in the church and it brings death, kills the testimony of the church.

And in fact, it's indicative of a soil that is corrupted. The soil conditions in your life that are right to grow that kind of sin is indicating that there's something wrong with the soil. It's not just the weed.

We get the soil right and the weeds will die. Get our heart right with God and the weeds die. And so what James is doing is he's bringing to the forefront a very practical application as he's talking about the wisdom of God. You're going to be a servant of God. You're going to apply the wisdom of God to your life. You're going to learn to have joy in your suffering and in your trials and in your crisis. Learn to be joyful. How are you going to do that? You've got to ask God for wisdom.

[5:51] You've got to pray. You've got to seek the Lord in prayer and seek the Lord in his word and in the wisdom that he's provided. And as you apply that to the soil, then what happens is it starts changing the pH balance of the soil, so to speak, and starts getting the conditions right for fruit to grow.

James chapter two, beginning in verse eight. Let's stand together. We're going to read this and hear what God's word has to say. James chapter two, beginning in verse eight.

And this is continuation from last week. If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Well, you're doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and act, so speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. Father, may you bless the reading of your word today as you've spoken. May it be so in our lives. We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You may be seated.

God is giving us some great wisdom here through James, the brother of Jesus. In the early church here, he's revealing this sin of partiality. And you might make note that this is partiality no matter which way it goes. In this case, it's talking about chapter two, verse three. If you pay attention to the one wearing fine clothing and say to him, you sit here in a good place and you say to the poor man, you stand there or sit here at my footstool, have you not shown partiality among yourselves? And as he's describing this, as we said last week, he's describing the conduct of the church as those are coming into the assembly. And here's an example of two coming into the assembly and are being treated differently based solely on the assumptions that are made on outward appearance. And then that assumption that's being made on appearance is now finding application. You sit in this good place and you sit over here or stand over there or sit at my footstool. And so this is applying primarily here to economic status. And we can understand that readily. It still goes on in every sphere, which is why God gives it to us in his word. It's a timeless issue. We deal with it in this very room right now. And we have to guard against this. There are people sometimes that are, they come in and you can tell that they are of wealth or have some significance to them based on their economic status. And there are some that are of a lower status. That is always going to be true. And yet in the church, there should be absolutely no distinction in how they're treated in the body of Christ. There ought to be a contrast here like nowhere else in the world, right? I mean, nowhere. There should be an acceptance in here of everybody, no matter their status. And so primarily he's dealing with here in the context, economic status.

But we also know from scripture that racial distinction and national origin kind of distinction is also something that is to be considered by the body of Christ. And even going so far as to address gender as an issue where we should show the same respect toward people, whether they're male or female.

[10:32] And that goes on to Galatians 3.28 where we saw, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And that does not eradicate male and female roles. That does not eradicate the role of a husband in a household, nor of a wife as a mother and her relationship. And that does not eradicate the role of a husband. And yet there is to be a respect and a love and a kindness that's to be shown based on our identity in Christ alone. So if you're in Christ, you're my brother. If you're in Christ, you're my sister.

It doesn't matter if you're black or white. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor. We all come together at the foot of the cross. Amen? And so this is the basis as he's moving into this.

We have to ask ourselves when people attend our church, is this how they're going to be treated? This is the practical application. This is impartiality. And it goes both ways, rich or poor, black or white. Racism can go both ways. It can be racism against white people. It can be racism against African Americans. It can be racism against any group. And it's never condoned. As one person said, he said, love cannot be the victim of our emotions. It must be the servant of our will.

This is what living faith looks like, right? So this is the discussion as James is coming into this. So now as we come to verse 8, God's giving wisdom to be applied to all of our life. And this is one of those places as we deal with partiality, wherever we find it. And what is it going to look like when you have living faith? When your faith is living as opposed to dead? When it's what it's supposed to be? What's it going to look like in the life of the believer? And what we see in verse 8 is the response of living faith is the response of living faith to the wisdom of God and how God's word is at work in this. And how our response to the wisdom of God is to walk in it. God gives wisdom, and we walk. He gives the orders, we march. He tells us what it looks like, this is what we do.

[13:18] And so it's interesting as we look at this passage, how he deals with the wisdom of God and his word. Okay? And so you start noticing this in the passage when you look at verse 8. If you really fulfill the royal law, so you just make note of that phrase, the royal law, according to the scripture. The royal law, scripture. Verse 9, if you show partiality, you're committing sin and are convicted by the law.

The law. As a transgressor. Verse 10, for whoever keeps the whole law but fails at one point becomes guilty of all. He who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder. In the end of verse 11, you become a transgressor of the law. So speak and act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. And over and over again, you keep hearing these references to the law, the word, the scripture, the writings. All of these things over and over again, giving you kind of a, just an application of God's word. And you're seeing it as it's applied to this issue of partiality.

How does God's word function in the issues of sin? And now you're getting to see a case in point of God's word being used in application. We know all scripture is breathed out by God. It's profitable for something. It's profitable for what? Some of you have memorized it, right? Training in righteousness.

Correction. Rebuke. It's given for purpose. It's actually given to us so that God's word can be applied to the issues of our life. And as we apply God's word to the issues of our life, and you have living faith, you respond to this. And you begin to see conviction of sin, and you start being convinced of righteousness because the Holy Spirit of God lives inside of you as a believer. And now you're making application of this. And so what I see is about four things in here as God's word is at work in applying it to this issue of partiality. And I see it just as four aspects of God's word at work, at work in living faith. So four aspects. Number one, how does God's word work?

God's word gives commands. It gives commands. The command here is, is in verse eight, the royal law, he says. And what does he identify as this royal law? You'll notice in your text quotations around a piece of scripture. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. A royal law, a command. It's, it's clear, it's direct, it leaves no room for partiality, for favoritism. It's a law. It's equally applied. And he identifies this as a royal law. It's coming from the Old Testament in passages like Leviticus 19.15, or Deuteronomy 1.7, or Deuteronomy 16.19, which is saying you are to love your neighbor as yourself. This is a law. It's Old Testament law. And yet, it's not eradicated as Old Testament law.

[16:58] In fact, Jesus uses this very phrase in Matthew 22.37, when he said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And then he says, on these two commandments depend all of the law and the prophets. A royal law. To be royal, he uses the word in this text to say, it's the word basilicos. You might think of a basilica in Italy, one of those, one of those castle-like structures that belongs to churches there. It actually means castle. It's a place where a king lives. A basilica. A basilicos means something is royal. It's the character of something. It means it's kingly. It's sovereign. It emphasizes something that's noble or excellent, preeminent in nature. I mean, it's something

big. It's royal. And this royal law, he says, is according to the scriptures. So he tacks on that phrase here. This is a command of God, and it's according to the scriptures. You see it. Here's the command of God, the revelation of God made known, an expectation of a king. It's a royal law. These are my words. Jesus said, Luke 24, he said, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled. And then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And so what you see there is just Jesus identifying that his own words are authoritative and his own words are in line with the prophets of the Old Testament, the law of

Moses, the prophets, the Psalms, and these he considered as the scriptures. And so the scriptures being the sum of all of the writings. And even in the New Testament, we see over and over these epistles now are being referred to as the writings. So when he says the writings and the scripture, which he says here, scripture, it's the word *graphae* in original, like where you get graph, graphite, pencil, writing.

It's according to the scriptures. A command, a royal command according to the scriptures, which means the scriptures are containing written things with the expectation of God that you and I are going to obey these things. It's a command. This is how God's word is functioning in this issue of partiality.

Why is partiality a sin? Because God said it's a sin, right? He doesn't ask your opinion on it. He doesn't ask for your ideas. He's told you what is sin in this. And why is it sin? Because he said so. When you're in your home and your kids question why you're doing something, parents, sometimes you don't even know why you're doing it. You just know something needs to be done. And your final answer is what? Because I said so. That's right. Because I said, I don't know why we're doing it, but I said to do it, we're doing it. Okay. In God's case, he's not limited like we are.

[20:43] It's not like God doesn't know why he said it. He always knows why he said it. He always has a purpose. He always has clear meaning and clear purpose at the same time. John MacArthur said that this royal carries the idea of supreme and sovereign, indicating the absolute binding authority of the law.

When a sovereign king gives an edict, the law is in essence the sum and substance of the complete word of God. Command. God's word gives the command for us to follow. I mean, I think of commands as people are firing fireworks this past week. And you've seen the videos, I'm sure, of the minivan in the driveway, the family and their lawn chairs spread around. Dad goes to light the firework and something goes amiss, right? And all of a sudden, a big spark flies right over next to the minivan. It's all on their security camera, I guess. The spark goes into the box of fireworks. And then all of a sudden, absolute pandemonium breaks loose as this box of fireworks starts going off. And I mean, it is exploding. The big ones are exploding in the box and now stuff spreading all over the yard. People are jumping over lawn chairs, getting out of the way. They're running for cover. People are falling down, dropping babies. It's crazy. And then, I mean, it's seemingly like the minivan in the right part of the screen just explodes with all these fireworks. And you just think, man, if only they had a label on the stuff. If only it said something like, do not light these within 50 feet of, you know, some more. I don't know. I don't know what it says on them, but I can only imagine that if you look closely at every one of those fireworks, it gives some kind of command. And when that command is ignored, then all kinds of crazy things happen. John Piper wrote a book called *What Jesus Demands from the World*. I love this, this,

I love the book, but I love the idea of it because what he did is he went through the four gospels and he accumulated out of the gospels all of the commands of Christ, every imperative. And when he concluded, he said there are 500 imperatives in the four gospels. And those 500 imperatives are kind of boiled down into about 50. And those are the chapters of the book. And so he goes through and he describes the commands of Christ. But I love what he said about it in the beginning of it. He said, I'm aware that the word demand is jarring to many modern ears. It feels harsh, harsh, severe, strict, stark, austere, abrasive. But the reason I chose that word is to confront some of the underlying causes for why it would feel offensive to portray Jesus as demanding.

My conviction is, is that if we rightly understood Jesus' commands, and if we're willing to find in him our supreme joy, his demands will not feel severe, but they will feel sweet.

He makes a command out of love. And as a disciple, my response is to obey and to observe. That is the great commission. For us to be a disciple of Jesus means that we are going into all the nations, according to Matthew 28, 19, to make disciples, teaching them to do what?

[24:47] To observe whatsoever he has commanded. Now you can teach a parrot all the commands. You can teach a parrot and he could quote every one of the commands, all 500, I suppose, of all of the imperatives of the gospels. But what you can't do is make him obey those commands. And the great commission is not just for us to teach the content of it, but it's to teach people to observe whatsoever he has commanded, meaning that we're teaching obedience to the commands. We're teaching people to observe with the idea that we're learning the commands of Christ so that we can apply these things to our life and be changed. We need to be changed. We are naturally racist. We are naturally discriminating.

We naturally gravitate to people that can benefit us. But what we don't do naturally is to turn that away and actually do something for somebody that can't do anything in return, which is why this is following the issue of dealing with widows and orphans who can't do anything for you. They can't necessarily provide for you. They're going to be a burden on you or a drain on you in some way. And yet you are to love them like you love a king that comes into your presence. Why is it a royal law? Because it's given by a king.

God the Father has given us this law through the Old Testament. God the Son has affirmed this by giving us that in John 13, 34, saying, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you. You are to love one another indiscriminately. You know he said that with Judas in the room? Holy Spirit fills believers hearts with love and enables them to share it.

It's given by a king. And it's a rule that's above all other laws. It is the law of love that is governing all the other commandments, which is why he narrows it down as royal law. It's you're to love your neighbor as yourself. Who is your neighbor? It's the Samaritan that falls sick on the road.

[27:16] The man that you despise. It empowers believers. Obeying the royal law frees believers from selfishness. It enables them to live like kings, to live like you're part of the kingdom. And if Christ is reigning in my heart, what was impossible with men now becomes possible because I've got the Holy Spirit of God living inside of me. I can show love like no other. It's a command. And so now you see the word of God being applied in this issue of partiality because it's a command to be followed.

Number two, the word is at work in bringing conviction. Notice he says that in verse nine, that to show partiality, you are convicted by the law as a transgressor. And so now it's showing the inconsistency in our life.

He's addressing the sin of partiality. And this is where he's identifying it clearly. The word for conviction here in the original language means to reveal hidden things, to expose, and in turn to rebuke. Leading one to admit error. I'm convicted. Something's being revealed to me.

The conviction is I am actually a transgressor. There's a problem in the soil, just as he said in the verses before. You can't control your tongue. You can't speak words of love. There's a problem with the soil. There's a problem with your heart. The things that come out of your mouth proceed from the heart. Want your religion to be seen as something that's right before God? True religion? Expression?

Of praise and worship to God? Conviction. Something's being revealed and it's a conviction of sin. It's showing me the sinfulness of this circumstance. Partiality is a sin. And he's identifying it specifically. He used the word hamartia. When we talk about the doctrine of sin, it's hamartiology.

[29:37] It's the doctrine of sin. What does the Bible teach us about sin? And when that word is used, it's literally a word that means to miss the mark. It's a word that would be used in archery.

Bow and arrow. Something falls short of a target. That's the meaning here. But later, this word became known as missing a goal or a standard. The glory of God, according to Romans 3.23, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We've missed the target. We've fallen short.

Word, as one dictionary, Greek dictionary defined it, it said, it signifies a departure from God's holy perfect standard of what is right in word or deed. What is righteous. It pictures the idea of missing his appointed goal, his good and acceptable and perfect will even, which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the triune God himself. As Martin Luther put it, sin is essentially a departure from God. And so he says, this is sin. When you do this, it brings conviction. It's a revelation of the wrongness of this and how you are departing from the glory of God and the character of God.

And it makes you, as the scripture says here, transgressors, willfully going beyond the limits. So now you get the picture that in on one aspect of this, you're falling short of the glory of God.

[31:27] And in another aspect, it's because you're going too far. So you're going across the boundaries or you're missing the target altogether. Just like the dog I used to have. Everybody knows my love for that dog. Well, not everybody. Some of you are new, but it was the worst dog I ever had. Anyway, long story. But the dog was just not right.

And, and we, I tried to train it. We've done this with other dogs. It's work, but this dog would not get it ever. And so we had to get one of those little electric fence things that go, a little wire that goes around and underground and put a collar on it. And, and the idea was, and it was going to be a beautiful thing. I couldn't wait to see this work because the idea was when the dog gets in close proximity to that line, this thing beeps and it's Pavlov's dog, I guess. It's teaching him to respond based on this noise. You're getting too close to the boundary. And then when you cross the boundary or you get over that wire, then it sets off the electric charge. Isn't that awesome?

With this dog, I, I, I really got a little too much joy out of that, but, but the dog would hear the beep and he wouldn't stop. And then he would get shocked by the little collar and it would be shocking him. And he would just shake his head as he continued on through the line, would get to the other side. And then when it was time to come back, he couldn't come back in.

So now he's, for whatever reason, he felt the liberty to go beyond it. And now when he's trying to come back in, he feels the sting of it. And it's too much that he can't cross to come back in.

I mean, isn't that just like sin? Like it gets you to go too far. You, you're transgressing the law, the standard that God said. He said, boundaries so that you'll know what's good and right and wholesome.

[33:31] And there's food in here. There's love and there's care inside this boundary. And when you step outside this boundary, there's no telling what happens. There's cars out there that could run over you. There's, there's dangerous animals out there that could attack you, but, but you cross this line.

Sometimes there's a sense in which you can't come back. Sin takes you farther than you want to go. It makes you stay longer than you want to stay.

It makes you pay more than you want to pay. Thank God when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus.

He'll step over the line and rescue us. Take us back in. Number three, it's comprehensive. The word is comprehensive.

It applies to every area of our life. As he says in verse nine, he says, but if you show partiality or committing sin or convicted by the law as transgressors, for whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point has become guilty of all.

[35:01] Comprehensive. Fail in one point, become guilty of all. He's talking about the sinfulness of our character. It's, it, your goal is, is obedience.

The goal is not perfection. Perfectionism is not the standard that he's calling for here. He's not saying that we're to be sin, we're going to be sinless in this. We're, we're not going to be sin, sinless.

We're going to fail. You're going to fail often. You're going to, you're going to make mistakes. Aren't you glad we have an advocate with the father? Whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point becomes guilty of all.

We can't even do this apart from Christ. What, what James is revealing here is that the word is a command. And it's something that God actually expects us to follow.

It's to bring conviction so that we'll love the thing that God loves and hate the thing that God hates. And it's comprehensive. It's, it's applying to every area of our life in totality.

[36:07] And our goal is total obedience, even though we'll fail. And I keep in mind this, as he says, he says, for whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point has become guilty of all.

He's just saying that your, your focus cannot be a picking and choosing of what you're going to obey. You don't get to decide. If you're identifying yourself as being a lawful citizen of the kingdom of God, then there ought to be a characteristic obedience in your life.

And when you decide that one command is more important than another, or I'm going to obey one and not obey another, like the sin of partiality. I'm going to be, I'm going to be, I'm going to do this here and I'm going to be faithful everywhere else, but I just can't do this one thing because you don't know what that African, what an African American did to me.

And therefore I bear this hatred toward them, or you don't know what that white man did to me. And therefore I'm going to harbor this bitterness.

I'm going to harbor this hatred. And, and it, this one thing is going to be acceptable. And James is saying, no, that's not how this works. You don't get to hold onto that sin.

[37:30] No matter where you find it. If you break the law in one area, you're guilty of all. For he who said, do not commit adultery also said, do not murder.

If you do not commit adultery, but do not murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. A lawbreaker.

A.T. Robertson says to be a lawbreaker, one does not have to violate all the laws. He must keep all the law to be a law abiding citizen. Even laws that one does not like.

The Talmud, the Jewish teaching, intertestament time, even had a quote along those lines where the rabbis of Jesus' time heard this. They understood this. It said, if a man do all but omit one, he's guilty of all and each.

Don't stumble in this. He who stumbles at one point. To stumble means to lose one's footing and so to fall. To stumble and be tripped up.

[38:40] It's not even necessarily that it's intentional stumbling. It's even the careless stumbling. I've gotten too close. I've been too careless. And so I stub my toe.

And when I stub my toe, man, it hurts the whole body. Right? It's just a toe. I mean, cut it off. Right? If it hurts, just, no, you can't.

It's part of the body. One part of me hurts. Man, I'm focused on that. I get a toothache. And all of a sudden, I can't think of anything else. And it's got my attention just because it's one tooth.

Man, there's so many things right in my body, though. Right? I mean, I've got everything else.

Everything else is working. It's functioning. Except there's one tooth. I've got a keyboard for my computer.

And I decided to clean it this week. Because you know how it gets. You know, it gets kind of grimy. Your fingers are all over these things. And I thought, you know, I really need to clean this thing off. So I cleaned it off. I sprayed some spray on it.

[39:39] I wiped it down. Now the E doesn't work. So I'm trying to type out, you know, notes. And trying to type out emails and whatever. And the E now brings up a command prompt.

And then starts doing haywire things. Anytime I hit the E. So I'm trying to think, can I get around this? Can I spell the word wrong? And maybe spell check will pull it up. And I'll... I couldn't get it to work.

So now I've got to go to my laptop. I can't even use the desktop now. It's just one key. If you mess it up in one point now, what do I do with this keyboard?

What am I going to do with it? I've got to throw it away. There's no helping this keyboard now.

Stumbling one point. He's not teaching perfectionism.

But he's reminding us of the goal of obedience. My goal is to obey the whole law. Because it's comprehensive. It deals with my whole life.

[40:46] It's the law of liberty as he describes it here. And you think to yourself, man, that sounds like opposites, doesn't it? Law and liberty.

It's like, man, that doesn't sound like that goes together.

Law is like rules. And I'm supposed to follow this stuff. And it's rigid. And liberty means I'm free. I'm liberated. I'm almost antinomian. I don't have a law.

It's like liberty means I'm just released. And yet what he does is he puts these words together to say the law of liberty. What does he mean?

What he's saying is, actually, it's the law that gives liberty. It's the law of liberty. You want to be free?

Obey the law. Obey God and you'll be free. Follow God's plan and his principles and you'll actually not be confined. You'll actually be liberated.

[41:40] For whoever is free in Christ is free indeed. You want freedom? That doesn't mean that you're to just do things the way you want to. I've seen this over and over, especially in new believers' lives, as they come out of a life of, you know, just rampant sin.

All of us are sinners, some better than others. Amen? And you look back at your life and you just think, man, I'm thankful I didn't do this or that. I did a lot of things.

But man, some sins have more consequences along the way. And I've seen that in some people's lives where they become a believer and they just have a sense of freedom, I think maybe because all the weed they smoked, I don't know.

But if they think, well, I'm just going to be free in the Lord, you know, I just want to be, it's like this hippie kind of faith, you know, just whatever Jesus says, that's what I'm going to do. Well, have you studied the Bible?

No, I'm just listening for the Spirit speak. Okay, yeah. A little legalism might go a long way because there is actually a law.

[42:43] There are actually standards to follow. Now, I don't follow those standards to earn credit with God. I follow those standards because I love God.

And when I follow the standards out of love for God, what I find is liberty. I'm freed from the burden of sin. I'm released.

It's like somebody getting in trouble and they say, well, man, I got in trouble, but it's not like I'm a criminal or anything, you know. You see people go to jail for this or that and maybe they're reckless driving and they're driving crazy and the police say, look, I got to take you to jail today.

You were driving 120 miles an hour in a school zone. I've got to take you to jail. I know. It's crazy. And you say, well, it's not like I'm a criminal.

I mean, can't you just let me go? It's not like I'm not a criminal. No, actually, you are a criminal. You broke the law. That makes you a criminal. Oh, I've obeyed all these other laws.

[43:54] There's millions of laws and I've followed all these things. Man, that's great, but you just got busted for this thing and now you are labeled a lawbreaker, right?

It's all of your life. It's every area of your life. And the truth of this is revealing is that I need Jesus in every part of my life.

I can't do this. The word is comprehensive. And the word is celebrated.

Judgment and mercy, as he describes it here. As he says in verse 10, For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point becomes guilty of all. For he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder.

If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you've become a transgressor of the law. So speak and act. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

[45:00] Your speaking and your acting are to come together. Why? Because it's comprehensive. It deals with your whole life. All of your activity.

He's the one that said do not commit adultery. He's the one that said do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you become a transgressor.

So speak and act as those who are going to be judged according to the law of liberty. You're going to be judged according to this law. It's going to be the standard that you answer for one day before the judgment seat of Christ.

And what he says here is in the end, mercy is going to triumph over partiality, over the sin.

It's going to triumph. Mercy. And when he says triumph, he means it's going to boast against it. The basic idea is exalting over something.

[46:04] To be able to prevail over something or someone else. It's going to be a bragging point. The grace and the mercy. Well, how is this applied?

Well, he said this issue of partiality is actually the royal law of God. There's a command for you to follow. You're to obey God in this. To follow God.

And when you do, you demonstrate the mercy of God. You're showing mercy in somebody else's life even though you in your own senses don't feel like they deserve it.

And you're overcoming that by the love of God. And God then is showing the mercy that he has. And this coming out of the soil of your heart now is demonstrating that you've been changed.

It's another expression of true religion. As one person said, freedom is not the right to do as we please. Freedom is the power to do as we should.

[47:07] And it's going to be celebrated. It's going to be the bragging point at the judgment seat that we, through the power of Christ, were enabled to obey everything that he called us to do.

If there's anything good in me, it'll be because of Jesus. If there's anything bad in me, it's because of me. And at the judgment seat, all those things are going to be separated out and God will get all the glory.

If the son makes you free, you will be free indeed. Warren Wearsby said, our words will be judged. Note that the words spoken to the two visitors in James 2, verse 3 were what they said.

What we say to people and how we say it will come up before God. Even our careless words will be judged. Every idle word that we speak. Of course, the words that we speak come from the heart.

So when God judges the words, he's actually judging the heart. Our deeds will also be judged. So as Colossians 3, 22 says, Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart.

[48:20] Fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work hardly as to the Lord and not to men. Knowing that from the Lord you will receive an inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he does. And there is no partiality. When we show partiality, we're showing something that God doesn't show.

So we're called to obey because it's a command. It brings conviction. And it applies to every area of our life. And if we follow this in the power of Christ, then it will be celebrated.

That's the work of the word. It commands our behavior. It convicts our sin. It's comprehensive to our whole life. It's compelling. It encourages us to keep our eyes on the judgment seat of Christ.

Christ. And in the end, Jesus is exalted. And we're not. That's what we need.

[49:27] May it never be said of us that there is partiality in the body of Christ. May it never be characteristic of our life. I think we too easily fall into this.

Our culture is engulfed with it. It's why we've got these DEI practices in your companies and in your schools. It's why this issue of racism is rampant both ways in our country.

Primarily, these days, it's a reverse racism where now even Caucasian people are seen as minorities.

It doesn't work either way. It doesn't work either way. And it should never be a part of the body of Christ. I think of this passage of scripture and I'm just reminded that the world can learn a lot from the church.

May God help us to that end. Let's pray. Father, we come to you this morning and we praise you. Lord, as we come to these passages of scripture where the standards of our life are just put under the magnifying glass.

[50:43] As we look to the word as a mirror, we are just reminded today that your word is a command and you expect your commands to be followed.

It should develop conviction in our hearts. It should apply to every area of our life comprehensively. And may we celebrate these things for all eternity.

That you made a change in our heart. And so, Lord, this morning, I just pray for each one here today. Lord, we recognize that this is a reflection on the gospel.

Lord, our prayer is that Christ would be exalted through our church as a church where there is no partiality shown. Whether you're rich or poor, whether you're black or white or brown, whether you're male or female, you come to the foot of the cross and you can be changed by Jesus. He can take away your sin. He can take away your sadness. He can take away your sorrow. He can give you hope. If you'll turn from sin and turn to Jesus, Lord, you've told us.

[51:56] We'll be changed. We'll be made new in your presence. And so, Lord, I pray that if there's anyone here that doesn't know you, that they'd surrender their heart and their mind and their life to you today.

That they'd turn from sin and turn to Jesus. And if there's someone here today that's a believer and they're struggling in these areas where they know that they have a tendency to fall one way or another.

I pray, Father, that they would surrender this area of their life to you. That they would grow in maturity and show living faith in their life. We are imperfect, Lord, and we need you.

May your Holy Spirit fill us and do what only you can do. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Let's all stand together as we have this invitation time and respond to God. Maybe the Lord's put something on your heart today.

You just respond to him as he's spoken. Maybe you need to be safe today. I'd love to walk you through that. I'll be down here at the front. Maybe you need prayer. Maybe there's something in your life that's just a burden.

[52:59] You need prayer. I'd love to pray with you through those issues. You come as the Lord leads. But otherwise, let's all do business with God as we sing his praises and surrender our hearts to him.

You come as he leads. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.

We will only ask.

[55:17] For my Savior loves me so. He will hold you there.

Who will not keep me alive? Christ will be alive. Who will still satisfy?

He will hold me there. He will give me the endless time. He will hold me there.

When our faith is turned to die. He will come and pass. He will hold me there.

He will hold me there. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me there.

[56:35] He will hold me there. He will hold me there. For my Savior loves me so.

He will hold me there. Father, thank you for this invitation time.

And as we do business with you. I just pray that our hearts will be right. That the unfinished business of our life, Lord, will be wrapped up in you. That you'll lead us to ways to resolve those issues.

Where there's someone that's lost, I pray that they would not leave without settling that issue in their heart. Where there's sin that's unconfessed, I pray that we'd surrender those things. Where there's repentance needed, I pray that we'd turn and be not just hearers of the word only.

Not just speakers of the word. That we'd be doers. So, Father, bless us to that end. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

[57:45] You may be seated. We close this morning. Just a couple of announcements. Obviously, Wednesday nights, we've got our summer family fellowships. Fellowships, invite you to be a part of those.

We've had great fellowship in that. Although, there have been times that we've had little games in there and people have beat me. Whatever. We had our fellowship this past Wednesday night.

Where we did, you know, just some competitive things. And some cornhole. And I'm not going to call Jacob up this week.

Even though he beat me in rock, paper, scissors at my house. Now, on my own cornhole, he beat me. And so, I've been humbled. And so, we're going to work through that.

But we had great fellowship Wednesday night. But this Wednesday night, we're going to be back in the homes. If you're looking for a place to go, let me know. We also have this week, Falls Creek.

And it's going to be big.

[58:43] Are there other announcements up there that I need? July 8th, Gen Mom. That's... Is that tomorrow? Yep. Man. Okay. Gen Mom tomorrow. It says Sooner Park.

And I'm not going to dispute that. Last week, I think we had to figure all that out. And it was awesome. But we're going to go with that. Okay? If you need to know where it's at. And if it's not that, don't blame me. Okay? But talk to Chelsea Wagner about that. Family fellowships. But lastly, I want to say, I want to ask Chandler to come on up. Chandler Baisadeki. My baby boy. He is going to be helping in this Falls Creek adventure this week. And so, he's got a few things to say about that.

An opportunity for you to participate in that. Let me borrow your mic here. Sweet. I want to tell everybody just about what's going on this week and how we can pray.

[59:39] It's like I get a mic. Well, before I do that, I want to clear up some things about that dog. If there's anybody in our family that loved that dog, it was my dad.

Nobody spent more time with them. Nobody fed him more. Don't be fooled by this rough demeanor, all right? All that aside, we are going to Falls Creek this year.

Yeah. We may not have a church building, but we have a group of people that have gotten together and made that possible. We've got some sponsors that have put in a lot of effort behind the scenes. We don't have a youth budget. We don't have a youth pastor. We have a great God. Yeah. We have a great group of people that are excited to take kids from Bartlesville, Oklahoma to Davis and hear the gospel over and over and over and over again.

What a great thing to be a part of. If you know somebody that's going to Falls Creek or if you are going to Falls Creek or if your kids are going to Falls Creek, I do have some things that might be helpful to know.

[60:55] For starters, we are meeting here tomorrow morning at 8.20 a.m. We're meeting here tomorrow at 8.20 a.m.

What time? In case you missed that, 8.20 a.m. Repetition is key. From there, we're going to make a stop.

So there's a couple things that your kids will need for you. You'll need some pocket change. We're going to be making a stop at an area with some restaurants. So that's how lunch is going to be handled that day.

After that, it's all taken care of. We're not stopping on the way back. So very important if you are a lady or you know a lady that's going to Falls Creek, dress code is a real thing.

And it is held very highly by Dustin and Danielle in the years we've gone before. So let me just warn you, if you're not in dress code, you will be in dress code.

[61:57] So if you don't know what that is, I think the general standard was I think shirts need to be covering everything.

And shorts need to be below the hands. Is that right? Is that typically what it was? Okay, I have confirmation. That's it. Let's see. Anything else I'm missing? Yeah, a couple things.

That's why I write notes down. If you have not yet paid for Falls Creek and you're here going, we can collect that in the offering plate.

And if you don't have it with you today, we can also collect that tomorrow. If at 820. At 820. We also have put together some cards with names for everybody that's attending, sponsors, and students. So that's one way that you guys can be a part of that. The word of God says that the prayer of a righteous person avails much. If you would collect a name on your way out and pray for them throughout the week, pray that God will move in the hearts of that person.

[63:08] If they know the Lord, that he would encourage them to make decisions that will change their life. If they don't know the Lord, pray that the Lord will reveal himself to them and that they will become a new creation.

And if it's a sponsor, pray that the Lord will speak through us and give us wisdom. We don't have a youth budget. We don't have a youth pastor. But we have people that love God and we have a great God.

So pray for us. And if you're going to Falls Creek today, would you stand up? If you're going to Falls Creek tomorrow. That's a trick question.

That's great. We're going to pray for you guys as we close out. You identify these that are going and there are some that are not here that are going. These workers, these students, they're going to have a great week.

And we're going to pray that God moves and that this week is a great blessing for them. Okay. So as we close out, glad you're all here. Remember, grab one of those on your way. We're going to pray for you.