

GOD'S IMPARTIALITY: NO FAVORITISM!

Text/s: James 2:1, "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism."

Romans 2:11, "For God does not show favoritism."

Galatians 3:27-28, "for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Eph 2:14, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility..."

The Problem:

Last Sunday, we explored the right attitude in grasping the heart of worship. A reverent heart is necessary when it comes to coming to Christ. Also, we must avoid the trap or trick to compare ourselves to the Pharisee who judged and condemned the Tax Collector. However, this struggle of living a faithful life has been a common dilemma even during those days.

No wonder the authors of the New Testament kept on reminding the believers not to judge centering to what Apostle said in Romans 8:1 that in Christ, there is no condemnation. Yet, reading I in verses, James 4:11-12; Matthew 7:1-2, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

¹³ You, my brothers, and sisters were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[a]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁵ **If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.** (Galatians 5:13-14) This is the problem.

We thought that a little seed of prejudice, hatred, or dislike is okay since it does not hurt others or yourself. But come to think that any seed has the potential to grow bigger and affect the things surrounding it. For example, (illustration) a small plant that was ignored later created a crack on a wall. You think it is not dangerous yet until the plant grows more, and the roots grow bigger which will cause the crack to damage your entire or wall or maybe the entire house. Another common thing that you may have seen is a tree that uprooted a cemented road.

James 1, "¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death." Like King David, when he saw Bathsheba, he lusted her. Then, committed adultery. After, planned for the death of Uriah which is the same as murdering him.

My point here is that your small subtle sin can be a potential for something that will someday destroy you. In today's context of our sermon, we will focus on the sin of partiality. (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Titus 3:10; Prov. 6:16-19; Jude 1:19) Read Romans 16:17-18.

Main Idea:

1. God's Impartiality

When it comes to partiality, God's nature and response are non-conflicting. God both in the Old Testament and New Testament reveals that He has no partiality, meaning no favoritism. In Deut. 10:17-19, reading only verse 17; it states, *"For the Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe."*

Paralleling this in Eph. 2:14-17, *"For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... God through the cross... he put to death their hostility."* All have equal access to the Father by one Spirit.

The problem sometimes is that Christians thought that they are always special in this world. True that we are God's children, and we are to inherit Christ's riches. But when it comes to the graces of God. We still receive the same amount of sunlight for an unbeliever. We still suffer the same risks from this pandemic just as other faith and religion. Why? Reading in Romans 2:11, *"For there is no favoritism with God."* The same judgment is to be set upon us in the consummation of all things.

We think highly of ourselves that since we are already Christians then I should be raising up my chin and looking down on others' beliefs. No! Even the thought of the servants and masters is equal in the sight of God. In Ephesians 6:9, again it is repeated, *"There is no favoritism with him"* (Eph. 6:9).

Access to God's redemption is given to everyone. Jewish or Gentiles, as stated in Acts 10:34-25, Peter at Cornelius' house, realized, *"Now I truly understand that God doesn't show favoritism."* Even Paul reiterated this truth, read Galatians 3:27-28 above.

God's impartiality is both revealed in His nature and work. Remember, Christ deeply exemplified this when He called a Tax Collector to be his disciples, forgiven an adulterer, ate with a liar, healed those who were lepers, a widow, the thief on the cross, and sinners like you and me. Do not be discouraged that God does not show favor in you. We all have the same privilege when it comes to Christ. He shows no partiality. He had broken the wall of hostility that was dividing our world.

2. Church's Impartiality

Speaking about impartiality, since God reveals Himself as someone who shows no partiality, it is only right that the church would represent Christ in this world when it comes to that. In James 2:1-9, read 1 above then, *"But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers"* (v. 9).

The church first and for all must manifest this truth. We must champion this reality that there shall be no favoritism nor partiality when it comes to the body of Christ. How? Remember that we are all

covenanted as a local church. Illustration: *Sanduguan*, when I visited Bohol, I made sure to see this monument. Here, our ancestors deeply valued covenants.

When you became a member of this church, UCBC, you have signed the covenant—spiritually—that you belong to this church. And even in our UCBC Church Covenant No. 1: “We will protect the **unity of our church** by acting in love toward other members; by refusing to gossip; by following the leaders.”

After Christ, our very priority, the next most important thing is the unity of this church. Always remind yourself, I am part of this church. We are the church. No partiality, no favoritism, no this and that. Everything should be in one accord.

The early church in Acts 2 describes this unity and harmony in their actions. To make it more understandable, like a *walis ting-ting* (broom). You cannot use it by just having one “ting.” That is why it is called *ting-ting*, because you need it to be in a group of other “tings” to serve its purpose. The other tings are grasped together and sealed by a rubber or a plastic that ties them as one. All those tings become one identity. The bond is the Holy Spirit, our common ground is Christ.

We ought to function as One with no partiality. Just as what the moderate Puritan Minister noted, “Unity is the best bond of safety in every church and commonwealth.” – Thomas Brooks

Conclusion:

Remedies by Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

1. Dwell more upon one another’s graces than upon one another’s weaknesses and infirmities.
2. Dwell upon those commands of God that do require you to love one another.
3. Dwell upon those things that you agree with than those you differ—especially Christ is our common ground.
4. Dwell upon our union as the body of Christ (Eph. 5:30); fellow soldiers, fellow-sufferers, fellow travelers, fellow-inheritors of the same crown and riches in Christ.
5. Dwell upon the miseries of discord; disunity is corrupting; dissolutions is the daughter of dissension. It extends to stumbling other people especially the unbelievers.
6. Dwell upon the priority of reconciliation over discord. (Ps 34:14; Rm. 14:19)
7. Dwell upon the things that we can work together for Christ, ie. Missions and evangelism, discipleship, and outreach ministries.
8. Dwell upon your self-shortcomings over others’ weaknesses. (Luke 18:9-14; 1 Cor. 11:31)
9. Dwell upon laboring to be clothed in humility (1 Pet. 5:5; Jn 13:5).
10. Dwell in prayer: pray for them, pray with them, and pray like them.

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