Sermon Discussion Guide

May 18, 2025 | James 2:1-13 | Jim Kramer

SUMMARY

Big Idea: The Mercy of God Sets Us Free to Live Mercifully Toward Others

In James 2:1-13, James expands on his "faith-that-works" test that he started at the end of chapter 1 with specific attention to how our faith works in relation to the poor (see 1:27), as he zooms in on how and when we are susceptible to show partiality or favoritism. In calling us out and up through this test, James gives a command against showing partiality, he illustrates his point and then concludes by giving the gospel antidote. That gospel way of life is to be fully immersed in and transformed by the mercy that God has shown to us. Though this command was given externally in the Old Testament, because of what Christ has accomplished, this law is now written on our hearts, to free us for good works.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Intro

1. What is the difference between mercy and grace?
   a. Recall and share a time you received mercy and/or grace from another person.

READ James 2:1-7

2. What does it mean to show partiality? (2:1-3)
   a. In what ways are you tempted to move toward or away from someone based on external, worldly, and temporal factors?
   b. For James, why is this a problem? (see 2:4-7) What reasons does he give?
      i. Have you experienced any of these?

READ James 2:8-13

3. Do you see partiality more as bad manners, socially inappropriate, or as sinful? What difference does that make?
4. How does showing partiality relate to the gospel?
   a. Does God choose to save based on our merit and accomplishments or His mercy?
   b. How should this truth affect your understanding and ability to truly live free?
5. When have you seen a desire to want mercy for yourself, but judgment for others?
   a. Do you want God to apply the same measuring stick of mercy to you, that you apply to others? Why or why not?

6. *Faith that Works.* In light of this passage, what steps can you take this week to put your faith to work? How can this group encourage you and hold you accountable?