

The Law of Liberty

[Jas 2:8-13 ESV] 8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. 11 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. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

I. Intro

- A. Partiality has no place
- B. We have a high standard of expectation: The Law of Liberty
- C. Our situation:
 1. We are all guilty of breaking the law
 2. We may try to qualify the lawbreaking as better, worse, or justified, but to break one part of the law is to break all of it...guilty
 3. We have a problem, but God brought a solution in himself.
- D. WE are the recipients of Mercy!

II. Text

- A. Verse 8-9
 1. Royal Law: basilikos nomos
 2. Literally: law belonging to the king: God himself established the law
 3. What law is James specifically mentioning: The summary statement of the law of Moses referring to how to interact with other humans. (The law referring to how to relate to God is also royal law)
- B. Verse 10-11
 1. Jesus references these laws specifically in the sermon on the mount: (Matthew 5:21-30)
 2. James reiterates the challenge for purity among God's people that is taught in the law, and fulfilled in Christ, and possible today only due to Christ's Spirit at work in us by Faith.
 3. We are transgressors of the law, and this clearly needed a messianic solution.
- C. Verse 12:
 1. Live your life as one to be judged by the Law of Liberty
 2. God is the highest authority and sets the standard for life and godliness
- D. Verse 13
 1. This is how serious God takes the standard He has set for His followers:
 2. Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.
 3. This is a statement of the test of genuine faith:
 4. If you have received mercy, you will practice mercy, If you have not received mercy, you will not practice mercy.
 5. Mercy triumphs over judgment:
 - a) Mercy is: compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm.
 - b) Showing forgiveness is a fruit of the spirit filled life.
 6. This is a battle:
 - a) We fail to show mercy because we seek our own JUSTICE
 - b) We fail to show mercy because our flesh cries against it
 - c) We fail to show mercy because we are self centered and have yet to die to self
 - d) We desire vindication (proving we are right) and expect others to have our some convictions.
 - e) We sometimes do not tolerate "different"

III. Points

A. The Law of the Old Covenant

1. [Gal 3:23-27 ESV] 23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
2. The law of the old covenant was much about things to do, and things not to do:
 - a) Obedience was required, though perfect obedience was shown to be impossible other than in Christ
 - b) Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets, He is the only one who could.
 - c) One of the lessons learned from the OT Law was that we needed a savior, because the law showed the impossible nature of righteousness through obedience alone.
3. The practitioners of the law would magnify the laws they deemed possible, and explain away, or divert attention from the laws they struggled with.
4. Law of note for today: do not build a fire on the sabbath:
 - a) They will leave lights in the house on so they aren't "starting a fire"
 - b) The elevators stop on every floor, so you don't push a button and engage a light...starting a fire
 - c) My refrigerator has a sabbath setting that keeps the light from coming on on Saturday.
5. Take away: This was not what God intended in the law!
 - a) His desire was for His people to rest on the sabbath
 - b) He desired them to honor him with willful obedience regarding rest.
6. The LAW was never the point, but was pointing to Jesus!

B. The Law of the New Covenant

1. [Col 2:13-17, 23 ESV] 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. 16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ... 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.
2. Jesus gave us the new covenant through HIS BLOOD.
3. Yield:
 - a) Your control
 - b) Your will
 - c) Your disobedience/obedience
 - d) Your self righteousness
 - e) Your preconceived notions
 - f) Your traditions
4. If you yield to Christ, you begin to experience the joy of the new covenant
5. If you refuse to yield and continue to try to prove yourself to God by your hard work...you will not find peace or joy
6. What we are talking about is an overflow of the Spirit at work in you!

C. The Believers Heart for God

1. The old covenant law was not mighty to save.
2. The plan from God was rescue in Christ

3. The believers heart desires to fulfill the ROYAL LAW OF LIBERTY and honor the Lord
 - a) This is possible through transformation in Christ
 - b) This is evidence of genuine faith
4. The Evidence of the genuine faith in Christ that saves us is seen in our fruit:
5. [Gal 5:22-25 ESV] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

IV. Close