

**Worship Material**  
**Favouritism forbidden**  
**Material from Roots Bible Study**  
**Sunday 8th September**

**Begin with opening prayer**

Coming together,  
let us open our eyes to see Jesus  
in the faces of our sisters and brothers.  
Open your hearts and minds  
that we may respect and value one another.  
All of us gathered here are God's beloved children.  
**Amen.**

**Read James 2:1-10,(11-13),14-17**

**Bible notes**

James continues his moral teaching in the Old Testament wisdom literature tradition. Believing that Jesus is the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord is the central tenet of the Jewish (and Gentile) Christians. It is what sets them free from the guilt of the Law. Yet James is not convinced that their pattern of behaviour, especially their judgement about others, matches their beliefs. Favouritism is a sin. It's neither hospitality, respect nor honour. Preferential treatment sets the culture within the assembly; it treats the unjust and their injustices as acceptable and righteous, while treating the poor, who are rich in faith and custodians of the kingdom, with disrespect and disregard. This is the opposite of Christ's intention.

James' readers understood the problem with the Law – when one element is broken, the whole system falls down. There is credit for obeying the royal law (as expressed in Mark 12:30-31), but since favouritism and prejudice are sins, they undermine the good deed. The corrosiveness and impact of favouritism and bias make them no lesser sins than adultery and murder. Therefore, they must speak and act as being accountable to God.

These verses are a test of genuine faith. James' ambition for the Church is to see tangible evidence of God working through the believer and with the poor. Therefore, he challenges Paul's counsel (Galatians 3:1-9). Faith without works achieves nothing, it is dead. If we believe in Christ, we must show it through our lives.

**Prayer**

Generous God, thank you for the blessings of each day,  
for friends and neighbours, work and leisure, nature and beauty.  
Merciful God, thank you that you set prisoners free and bring  
about justice for the oppressed.  
You watch over strangers and uphold the vulnerable.  
All praise to your glorious name.  
**Amen.**

## **A prayer to conclude**

Let us go and share God's love  
in the care of our neighbours,  
building up community (*place one fist on top of the other*)  
in the words we speak,  
building up new friendships (*swap fists*)  
by showing care,  
building up God's kingdom here on earth. (*move your arms round in a circle*)  
**Amen.**