

What do you
call a judge with
no thumbs?



Just His
(Justice)
Fingers





JAMES

“... the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him”



James

- Generally considered to be author: James (Yacob / Jacob): the half-brother of Jesus & leader of the council of Jerusalem
- full of instruction and command – much of which is inspired by the teaching of Jesus (notably the sermon on the mount) and by the wisdom of the book of Proverbs
- A ‘general letter’ written to the ‘12 Tribes’ – to all believers or at least, as some would argue, all Jewish Christians

So Far...

- James 1

- Perseverance Through Trials

- Cross borne, crown worn



- Right Choiceness in Temptation

- Deal with it!



- Lies Deceiving or Light Receiving

- Father of Lights > the father of lies



- Bad Stuff Out, Good Stuff In

- Rubbish out and paid for, gift of Gods Word in



- Reflection Reaction

- Our Bible reflection means nothing without action



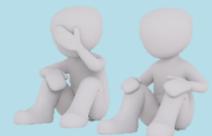
- Twisted Tongues or Faultless Faith

- Loose tongues = death, Loving needy and purity = life



- Oh Sit Down Next to Me

- No favouritism, see everyone through God's eyes



Royal Lawbreakers or Mercy Makers

James 2:8-13



James 2

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. ¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.



The Royal Law

- James has just talked about the Kingdom in the previous passage
 - ‘Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom?’
- Now he mentions the King’s law as he echoes Jesus
 - ³⁷“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matt 22)



The Royal Law

- “The law that is to guide us. As the scripture teaches us to love all our neighbours, be they rich or poor.... This is a royal law, it comes from the King of kings” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary)
- ‘Love people’ – is akin to Loving God and is given to us as the King of kings’ top priority



The Royal Law

- ‘As found in scripture’
 - Interestingly not in the ‘scripture’ they had at the time... unless the gospels were already being understood in this way
 - Most likely to be a reference to Christ’s suggestion that ‘love the Lord your God’ and ‘love your neighbour’ constituted a summation of the scripture...
- ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matt 22)



Are You a Lawbreaker?

- If you break any law at any time you are subject to punishment
 - For example... I may have perfectly kept the laws of the road 99.99% of the time, but if I go over the speed limit just one time, I could justifiably be punished – no matter how unfair it is or how much better I am than other drivers!
- It is the same with God's law – fail to keep it perfectly and we have undermined the whole and can justifiably be punished.
 - James' point is that even a hint of favouritism or any other deviation and you have undermined the law



Are You a Mercy Maker?

- ‘¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.’
- Serious implications! And another echo of Jesus’ words
 - **Matthew 7** ‘Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.’
- The parable of the unmerciful servant tells us all we need to know!



Are You a Mercy Maker?

- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy (Matt 5:7)
- “Speaking and acting cover all of a person’s behaviour. No aspect of life will be exempt from judgement. The standard will be the law of the kingdom, which is the OT as interpreted by Jesus... This is not a burdensome standard but a law that sets us free to serve God.” (IVP, New Bible Commentary)



The Law That Gives Freedom

- There are two ways to understand a law...
 - As a rule intended to bring restriction
 - Or as a regulation intended to protect freedom
 - For example... are speed limits in place to spoil our fun or to keep us safe?
- Laws can be misused, misunderstood and misinterpreted – The Church has done so with God's Word (law) countless times
- There can be 'good' laws and 'bad' ones but God's law understood and applied correctly is perfect and brings freedom



Perfect Law

- Imagine a world where the royal law was being applied – where we all loved our neighbour
- Its what a Kingdom People looks like as we studied last year (Acts 2)
- **Galatians 5** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.
- ¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. (Matt 5)



Perfect Law

- God's mercy does not mean His law is undervalued or ignored
- It does not mean an 'anything goes' attitude where His forgiveness is taken for granted... *"Precisely because God is the God of mercy, then He must act in judgement... Mercy isn't a 'shoulder shrugging' tolerance... If God was merciful to [arrogance, corruption, blasphemy, favouritism etc.], he would be deeply unmerciful to the poor, the helpless, the innocent and the victims... In precisely these cases his mercy shines out most particularly. So must ours."* (Tom Wright: James)
- This is law that is healthy and brings freedom



Perfect Law

- Jesus perfectly fulfilled the perfect law through His perfect sacrifice
- “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)
- The perfect expression of the Father’s mercy - the perfect judge paid our debt and took our punishment
- Mercy has triumphed over judgement



