


JAMES 2:1-13

PARDON ME, YOUR BIAS IS SHOWING!

“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 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. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”¹

 God does not show partiality [see **ROMANS 2:11**]. Each one who receives Jesus as Master of life, each one who believes in Him, is accepted as children of God. In the same way, believers who bear the Name of His Son are taught that they must show no partiality, especially as they fulfil the mandates God has given to His churches. As Christians, we are charged with declaring the Gospel to all alike, offering life through faith in the Son of God. We are responsible to show compassion toward all who hurt and those who are truly in need, revealing the mercy of God that we ourselves have received. We must speak the truth in love to all mankind, demonstrating the courage to be truthful and forthright in all our dealings. There is no excuse for those who bear the Name of Christ to show favouritism.

Nevertheless, it is almost impossible that we will not find expressions of bias or favouritism among the churches of our Lord. At any given time, we will disappoint others and dishonour the Name of the Master. The message for this day is not an excuse for behaviour that dishonours the Lord, but it is an attempt to confront our natural tendencies so that God can work through us as He transforms us into His image, especially teaching us to set aside our prejudices.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR CHURCH? Christians are commissioned by the Risen Son of God. Individually, and corporately, we are responsible to make disciples, to integrate those coming into the Faith into our fellowships, and to instruct all in the truths that Jesus has delivered. This outline of responsibilities is provided in what has come to be known as **The Great Commission**: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” [**MATTHEW 28:19, 20**]. All this is to be done in an impartial manner.

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When we review the conduct of the apostolic church following the descent of the Spirit, we can see that there are yet other activities that should be witnessed in a New Testament church. “[Those baptised and added to the church] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” [ACTS 2:42]. In addition to winning the lost, integrating them into the fellowship and introducing them to obedience, this verse reminds us of the vital importance of providing instruction, but adds that part of the discipleship process includes worship and fellowship. Thus, we can say on the authority of the Word of God that a New Testament church is responsible to evangelise, incorporate new believers, instruct in righteousness, worship together and develop fellowship within the Body.

All these activities are to be conducted in an impartial manner. Prejudice must not dictate how we fulfil responsibilities as a church. Both corporately and individually, the people of God must execute the commands of the Saviour without favouritism or bias. We might well ask what these activities will look like when we apply them as they were delivered by Jesus our Master. Look at these activities one-by-one, so that we can learn how to be a church.

A New Testament Church will be evangelistic. A congregation that is not evangelistic cannot lay claim to being a church in the New Testament sense. It goes without saying that failure to reproduce spiritually is an indication that a religious organisation has grown spiritually senescent. Tragically, most churches in North America appear to grow—if they grow at all—through biological additions. That is, they add to congregational numbers through including the children of those already in attendance, which is ultimately a recipe for death as a church.

Multiple studies have indicated that the vast majority of Christians not only have never knowingly brought another person to faith in the Son of God, but the average Christian does not even make the effort to introduce others to life in Jesus Christ. This should not be! Each Christian should make every effort to bring others to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are undoubtedly various reasons for the persistence of this dreadful condition. We are trained in our culture to depend upon specialists for every task, and few of us claim to be specialists at telling others of Christ. However, it does not require a specialist to witness; all that is required is that an individual be able to tell truthfully what has happened in his or her own life. The blind man who had formerly sat near the Pool of Siloam was certainly not an expert when hailed before the Pharisees. However, he was able to say with confidence, “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see” [JOHN 9:25]. His testimony was confined to what he knew to be true, and he delivered that statement with conviction and to good effect.

The Samaritan woman whom Jesus encountered at Jacob’s Well returned to the village of Sychar, telling everyone that she met, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ” [JOHN 4:29]? Her question was sufficient to ensure that “many Samaritans from that town believed in [Jesus] because of the woman’s testimony” [JOHN 4:39].

We are not always called to be evangelists, but we are called to be always evangelistic [ACTS 1:8], witnessing about what we know about the Lord. We are called to be witnesses to the grace we have received [LUKE 24:48]. We are witnesses that Jesus lives, since as Christians, we have met the Risen, Living Lord of glory. Perhaps I cannot speak to crowds of thousands, but I can speak to one friend, telling that friend I know Jesus lives. Perhaps I cannot marshal the rhetorical powers of a great orator and sway masses of people, but I can speak with conviction to one someone, telling that one what I have discovered to be true concerning Jesus, the Risen Lord of Glory. I can tell one friend that my sins are forgiven and that I am free of guilt and fear. I can tell one friend that God has given me life and that I now have freedom to come into His presence at any time. I can tell one friend that the Risen Lord has never deserted me.

The evangelism we are to perform is to be carried out without prejudice. We are to speak to rich as well as poor. We are commanded to carry the message of life to natives as well as to whites. We are to speak to those who are great, just as we are to speak to those who are small. There must be no discrimination against those we imagine to be inferior to our station in life, just as there must be no discrimination in favour of those we imagine to enjoy higher social stature than we do. All alike are to be recipients of the message of life.

Can you imagine what would happen in this community if even one-tenth of all who profess to be Christians spoke to friends and family members, urging them to believe on the Lord Jesus? Can you imagine the impact even ten people could have on our community if they actually took seriously the command of Christ to be witnesses, and did so without prejudice? I am convinced that there are seated before me individuals who are far more effective at bringing others to faith in the Saviour than I am, because I am convinced that God has worked in our midst equipping such individuals. However, I am also convinced that each of us is responsible to tell everyone of the Saviour, using every opportunity and employing every possible means.

This is my challenge to each one who is appointed by God to this Community of Faith. Keep a prayer list of individuals you know are not believers, or friends and loved ones who are not active in the Faith. Ask God to give you opportunity to speak to each one about your Faith. Then, when opportunity is given (as will be given by God who answers prayer), speak boldly, inviting that individual to faith in Jesus the Lord. This is nothing less than a practical application of the apostolic admonition to “honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks for the reason for the hope that is in you” [1 PETER 3:15].

A New Testament Church will integrate new believers into the Faith. Those who profess Christ as Lord are to embrace openly the responsibility that attends the proclamation of faith through receiving baptism as one who believes. Baptism is to be administered to all without prejudice. Peter was as prejudiced against Samaritans as any good Jewish boy could be. When Philip evangelised among the Samaritans and baptised those who believed, Peter and John travelled to Samaria to witness for themselves what God was doing. There, the two apostles certified the work that Philip had accomplished through praying that the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit [see ACTS 8:4-17]. However, Peter did not then set aside his prejudice. Before he could fulfil the Great Commission by carrying the message of life to Gentiles, it was necessary for God to intervene through sending him a vision [see ACTS 10:9-17]. When messengers from Cornelius arrived at the house of Simon the Tanner looking for Peter, the Apostle journeyed with them to Caesarea. There, he delivered one of the great evangelistic messages recorded in Luke’s account of the advance of the apostolic church.

“Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” [ACTS 10:34-43].

If we will honour God, all whom God sends us must be welcome among us. We must not receive them provisionally, as is the custom among so many churches; but we must accept each one without reservation. Having received them into fellowship, we must hold them accountable, just as we are accountable to them to do all that Christ has commanded. I caution you that the model adopted by many modern churches is unbiblical. People are received provisionally, because they are joining a political entity; they are spoken of as “new Christians” for years by those who have been present longer. However, the New Testament model is that God appoints whom He wills to a church, and each one so appointed is received as God’s divine gift. However, each member of the Body must be held accountable for faith and practise. Each one is to be taught and in humility each one is responsible to reflect the doctrine of the New Testament.

A New Testament Church will instruct all in the will of God. One of the grievously neglected marks of a New Testament Church is instruction in the Word of God. The pulpit is not an adjunct to “worship,” it is the centre of worship! The pastor bears awesome responsibility to “preach the Word.” Those who are appointed to holy office must “be ready in season and out of season” to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” [2 TIMOTHY 4:2]. This command was given to Timothy precisely because there was coming a time “when people [would] not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they [would] accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and [would] turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” [2 TIMOTHY 4:3, 4]. What Paul foresaw at a distance is now upon us.

The sheep are not to instruct the shepherd what they want to hear; but today, the flock is quite prepared to instruct the shepherd in what he is to say. In the sweep of history, church members bleating their sad cry for milk instead of meat and turning the Word on its head, is novel. Throughout the march of the Faith, believers sought to grow strong instead of finding innovative ways to remain flaccid and pitiful. The plaintive cry for the preacher to make people feel good about themselves, though of recent origin, is but a fulfilment of Paul’s warning to Timothy. If the church will honour God by being what He appointed her to be, she must ensure that the Word is taught to all without bias and without favouritism. Moreover, those who hear the Word that is taught must be held accountable to fulfil what is presented without prejudice.

A New Testament Church will provide for corporate worship. When I came to faith many years ago, it was a standard among the churches of our Lord that Christians met frequently for instruction and to worship. As a young Christian, I attended Sunday School, which was provided for all ages. Following this invigorating and challenging time of study of the Word, we participated in a service of worship where the preaching of the Word was central. On Sunday evening, we attended Training Union, which was an opportunity to receive instruction in various aspects of ministry or personal discipleship, followed by an evening service of worship, which again had the preaching of the Word central to the activity. It was, after all, the Lord’s Day! On Wednesday evening we attended a prayer service, and during the week we often participated in a Bible study which provided for warm fellowship in addition to insightful study of the Word.

Today, it is all most believers can do to drag themselves to one service; and if the service doesn’t have vigorous and lively entertainment cleverly disguised as “praise music” the professed saints of God will not bother to attend. Regular church attendance is a thing of the past. The members of the Body will be present once on Sunday morning—except when someone drops by for a visit, providing the weather is not too cold or too hot, unless some member of the family is tired from all the work they had to do during the week, and except when there is a good television show on, or if they can’t think of another good excuse to absent themselves from the worship of the Risen Saviour.

You can worship by yourself; but it is doubtful that you will. Certainly, you will not worship regularly by yourself on a continuing basis. Worship requires all of us together, for it is only together that we mutually build one another through exercising our spiritual gifts for the benefit of one another. Paul urged the Corinthians to “pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that [they would] prophesy” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:1]. The reason he emphasised this particular gift, in contradistinction to the gift of speaking in other languages, was because “the one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:4]. Clearly, building up the Body was vitally important in the estimate of the Apostle. In fact, Paul indicates that exercise of the various spiritual gifts should result in “upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:3]. United in worship, the result of the people of God is that they are built up, encouraged and consoled.

A New Testament Church will develop fellowship among the believers. Those who minister to one another will enjoy growth in fellowship. Fellowship is one of those misunderstood words in our day. Tragically, we contemporary Christians think of eating whenever we hear the word “fellowship.” The concept communicated to the first believers was that of shared lives; they were concerned to build one another, encourage one another and console one another. In other words, they shared their lives, and sharing consisted of more than being seated in the same room for an hour on Sunday morning. They wept at the heartache of others and they rejoiced at the good fortune of others, and they prayed for one another, and they served one another in love.

The early saints shared abundantly in Christ’s suffering, and they shared abundantly in His comfort [2 CORINTHIANS 1:5]. In the same way, they shared in each other’s suffering and in one another’s comfort [2 CORINTHIANS 1:7]. They were willing to share with those in need [EPHESIANS 4:28]. They were taught to share with one another [e.g. 1 TIMOTHY 6:18], both spiritually and materially; and we can readily believe that because they often experienced the loss of their social networks in addition to the loss of their properties and goods, they had no one other than the members of the Body to whom they could turn. There were no specialists to whom they could turn in order to build one another, and so they served one another in love and preferred one another and edified one another through administering their gifts to the benefit of one another. They were attacked by the pagans because of their Faith, and they encouraged one another to stand firm in the Faith they had embraced. They were persecuted because they were Christians, and they comforted one another when they grieved.

In this day, professed Christians often treat the church as a political organisation and the powerful high rollers, with the acquiescence of mute assemblies, jettison any who irritate them. There seems to be little true fellowship save for the fellowship of convenience as professed saints use one another for their own purposes. It is far more common to hear professed saints whine that they aren’t being fed instead of witnessing believers who strengthen themselves so that they can build up others. Professed Christians seek to be ministered to rather than seeking opportunity to minister. Brothers and sisters, this is not what the church should be, and we dare not permit ourselves to slip into the spiritual senility associated with such churches. We dare not permit ourselves to become characterised spiritually by languid lassitude or flabby flaccidity.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IS SEEN THROUGH HOW WE LIVE — The activities assigned to the churches include evangelism, incorporation into the life of the assembly, providing instruction in righteousness, worship and fellowship. Each of these activities is to be conducted without bias. Acting in an impartial manner to fulfil the expectations of the Word demonstrates the reality of our profession. In other words, what we believe is evidenced by how we live.

People are sometimes admonished, “Don’t talk the talk unless you walk the walk.” This is a caution against arguing for what you are unwilling to do yourself. If we truly believe God does not show favouritism, it follows that as those who have been born from above and into His Family, we cannot show favouritism. I am not suggesting that we do not have preferences, but I am stating unequivocally that systematic prejudice that dictate our actions cannot long exist within the Body of Christ. The biased individual who fails to exercise godliness in the areas for which a church is responsible invites divine discipline if he or she has been born from above. If such individuals are mere pretenders to grace, it is quite possible that no immediate consequences to their wickedness will result. However, the congregation to which they are attached will be contaminated, and the work of God will be grievously hindered.

We have seen through the eyes of God as we reviewed Scripture that churches are responsible to evangelise without prejudice. Churches are to baptise without bias those who have professed Christ, instructing them in the truths of the Word without displaying favouritism. Not only are we responsible to endeavour to win all peoples to faith, we are to welcome them into our assemblies, integrating them into the Body of Christ without delay; and here, in the Body of the Lord, instruction in righteousness is to be provided without prejudice. The whole Word is to be declared and applied. Those coming into the fellowship are to be welcomed to worship without bias, and the fellowship extended to the people of God is to be without prejudice. What is important for us to see is that this ready acceptance of one another, and the concomitant trust extended to one another, reflects the character of God Himself. In short, if God is our Father, our practise in the Body of Christ must reflect His character.

The way we behave toward people indicates what we really believe about God! We cannot separate human relationships from divine fellowship. Underscore this truth in your mind! We are what we live; all else is mere talk. We cannot at one point be saying, “Praise the Lord” with our mouth while we are saying “Go to hell” with our actions. James is holding us accountable for living as well as we profess to believe. In particular, in the text he examines our conduct in light of four basic doctrines that are to be taught and held without discrimination.

In **VERSES 1-4**, James examines **the doctrine of Christ**, pointedly exposing hypocrisy among the professed people of God. The admonition is to “show no partiality as you hold the Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory.” Those coming into the fellowship of the Body are to be viewed through the eyes of Christ. If Christ showed no bias toward sinners, then we also are expected to accept those whom God sends to us.

In **VERSES 5-7**, **the grace of God** is presented, the emphasis being upon God’s choosing. “Has not God chosen...?” James uses a word that is a cognate of the word “elect.” God, for reasons of His own, has chosen whomever He pleases. He does not choose or call on the basis of nationality. He does not call or choose on the basis of race. He does not choose or call on the basis of social standing. The doctrine of God’s grace compels us to interact with God’s people as God does and not according to human estimates of worth.

Let me say that this cuts two ways. We receive all into our fellowship, accepting each one as a gift from the hand of a Father who delights to give His children good things. However, those who are placed in the assembly must also accept those with whom God has placed them, understanding that the church wherein they are situated is likewise a gift from God. All is of grace, both those with whom we worship and those whom God has given. We should treasure one another, rejoicing in the goodness of God demonstrated through entrusting us to one another. Through His death, Christ has eliminated every barrier, and we must not permit the erection of barriers after the Master has removed them.

In **VERSES 8-11**, **the Word of God** presented as a test. It is one thing to profess to obey the Word God has given; it is another thing to obey the Word God has given. It does not do to say that we believe God gifts whom He wills for our benefit; we must accept that He is sovereign and that He gifts individuals according to His own purpose. Indeed, we are to defend the Word of God, but the best defence of the Word is to live in obedience to what the Word teaches.

James employs the Old Covenant, pointing in particular to the Royal Law that calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. However, he reminds us that we are not permitted to discriminate against the Word of God; we are bound to obey all that God has commanded. Those who say they must control the church even while professing to believe that the Spirit of God rules among the assembly, through their actions deny what they profess. Consequently, they are convicted as transgressors. Those who fail to love their brothers as themselves are convicted as lawbreakers. Is this not the teaching we have received from John, the Apostle of Love? “If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother” [**1 JOHN 4:20, 21**].

We will do well to remember that Christian love does not mean that I like the person, nor even that I must approve of every action. I may never be intimate friends with that individual, though in time I may come to like him or her if I extend the love of God. It does mean that I seek what is best for the one whom I love and that I will make every effort to build that person. To love another means that I will treat them as God has treated me.

In **VERSES 12, 13** we are reminded of **the Judgement of God** and tested concerning our response to this vital teaching. James is not speaking of an ultimate judgement of believers—that has already been accomplished at the cross. However, he is reminding us that we are even now being judged according to how we live. James writes, “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged.” James says we are judged in three aspects of our life.

We are being judged for what we say and how we speak. James contrasted what was said to the rich and the poor in church [see **JAMES 2:3**]. Jesus cautioned us that “people will give account for every careless word they speak” [**MATTHEW 12:36**]. What we say reflects what is in the heart, just as the Lord has said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” [**MATTHEW 12:34**]. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus cautioned that the words we speak are being examined by God [**MATTHEW 5:21-26, 33-37; 7:1-5; 21-23**].

Our actions are also being judged, and for this reason James includes the reminder “so act as those who are to be judged.” It is true that God does not hold our sins against us when we are saved, but we must know that we cannot sin lightly and serve faithfully. Sin always has consequences; and as surely as smoke flies upward from the fire, so sin brings sorrow. Writing to the Colossian Christians, Paul reminded the people of the consequences of sin for believers. Although the immediate teaching is directed toward slaves, the application is for all Christians. “Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality” [**COLOSSIANS 3:22-25**].

Know also that ***our attitudes are being judged***. In **VERSE 13**, James contrast two attitudes—showing mercy to others and refusing to show mercy. Merciful people receive mercy from the Lord; unmerciful people will not receive mercy. This does not mean that we earn mercy, but it does caution that as we live, so we are judged.

Those are indeed sobering words that the Lord spoke as commentary for the Model Prayer. “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” [MATTHEW 6:14, 15]. Likewise, as Jesus concluded the parable of the unforgiving servant [MATTHEW 18:23 ff.], He appended this awesome warning, “So also My heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” [MATTHEW 18:35].

MORAL GUIDANCE FOR HONOURING GOD — “Speak and act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement.” This passage concludes with a reminder that we will be judged under “the Law of Liberty.” In other words, the very Word that gives us life also gives us liberty, and it is that same Word that is the standard by which we are judged.

We Christians do not live by rules and regulations, though rules are given in the Word. Because we are the people of God, we are being changed into the image of God’s dear Son. Consequently, we are driven by an inner compulsion to do what honours God. Rather than slavishly adhering to a meticulous set of laws, we act as those who are free to do what we ought. Our belief should dictate our conduct. If we truly believe God is merciful, we will be merciful. If we believe God is righteous, we will seek His righteousness in the way we live and think. If we believe God is gracious, we will make every effort to be gracious. Our convictions reveal what we believe.

The message is nothing less than a plea for the people of God to commit themselves to obeying the Word of God. We are called to test our faith through comparing how we live by the Word that judges us. We have seen that God’s Word presents four tests to determine the reality of our faith. We saw that we are judged on our belief concerning the doctrine of Christ, and the judgement is less concerned with what we say we believe than it is with how we live in light of our belief. We saw that we are judged on how we apply the grace of God in our lives and in our interactions with others. We also saw that we are judged on how accurately we integrate the Word of God into our daily life. Finally, according to James, we are tested with respect to how we understand the judgement of God, which is intimately tied to the other three tests.

These tests in turn determine the effectiveness of our ministry as a church. Whether we fulfil the expectations of the Word or whether we degenerate into just another religious organisation is determined in great measure by whether we adhere to the standard of God’s Word. In particular, we must constantly assess our commitment to impartiality in our ministry.

Ultimately, the tests of the reality of our faith are related to our treatment of other people, and especially to our treatment of the people of God. Can we pass the test? For a moment longer I want to iterate to the people of God the tests that we face each day. What do you think of Christ the Lord? How is your belief reflected in your daily life? What practical impact does your faith in Jesus as Master have in your interaction with the people of God, and with outsiders?

Do you understand the grace you have received? Has that grace transformed you and is it even now changing the way you treat others? Do you accurately reflect the grace you have received? Is that grace apparent in your interaction with the people of God? Do you actually fellowship with God’s people, or do you have only an acquaintance renewed intermittently?

Does the Word of God guide your life? Or is it an occasional reference without significant impact in directing your decisions? Do you seek to honour Him who gave this Word through obedience to what He has written? Or has the Word become a silent backdrop for your life—a silent backdrop that is recognised during a church service and ignored otherwise?

Do you live in the knowledge that you are being judged? That you shall be judged? That the judgement you shall receive is ultimately a reflection of the judgement you yourself have pronounced? Can you honestly say that your treatment of others is characterised as merciful? Do those who know you see you as a merciful person?

These are necessary questions for the people of God, if they will honour the Risen Lord of Glory. These are pertinent questions to guide our lives so that we can reveal the reign of the Lord Jesus in each life and His rule over us as a congregation. However, there is no possibility that His reign will be witnessed in your life if somehow you have never received Jesus as Master of your life. This is the call of God to each one willing to receive it.

The Word of God invites you to life, saying, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” That same Word, reaching back to quote ancient Hebrew prophets of God promises, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [**ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13**].

And that is our invitation to you who have never believed. Believe this message of life; receive this Saviour appointed by God to deliver you from guilt and condemnation. Be saved. Do it now. Do it today. Amen.