

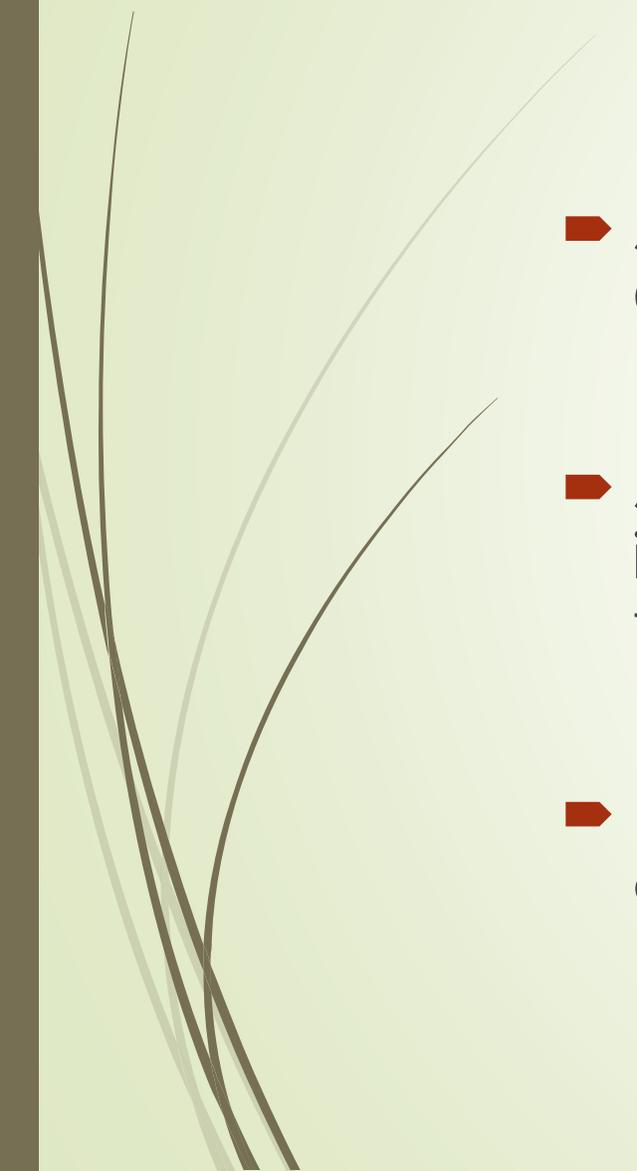


# James

The Epistle of Straw?



# Recap



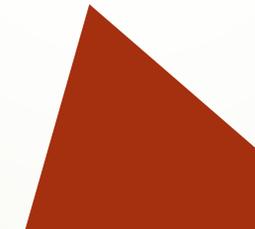
- ▶ James, Jesus' brother, was a leader in the early Christian Church in Jerusalem
- ▶ James' letter is difficult to outline, but has many interrelated themes. Each class will discuss one or two of these themes in detail.
- ▶ Last week, we discussed James warning, "Do not be deceived..."



# Recap: Do not be deceived!

*James 1:1–27*

<sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.



<sup>22</sup> ...Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."



# Partiality

Our topic today



# A Question to start us off...

- ▶ Do I welcome people who come into the church at all?
  - ▶ James assumes that we do.
  - ▶ But many people don't like interacting with others at all, or they interact only with friends and family...
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# Do not be deceived...

*James 2:1–13*

<sup>1</sup> My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.





# No Distinctions!

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>1</sup> My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup> 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, <sup>3</sup> 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,” <sup>4</sup> have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?



# The Poor...

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>5</sup> 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? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man...



# The Poor... And the Rich

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>5</sup> 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? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?



Does this mean we should favor the poor over the rich?

No!

*15 “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.”*

Leviticus 19

The command is more simply stated and more difficult than that:  
“show no partiality....”



# The Royal Law

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.



# Why bring this up?

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup> 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.



# Judged under the Law

## *James 2:1–13*

<sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.



# Why does James connect mercy with faith?

*“<sup>1</sup> My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory...*

*<sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” (James 2)*

➤ James point is this:

- If we have tasted mercy, we cannot rightly deny it to others.
- We should welcome like God welcomed us: regardless of sin, worth, status, or merit.



# How do we avoid partiality???

- **Do not judge others** (v. 4). Allow Christ the role of Judge.
  - **Humble yourself** (v. 5). God has chosen the poor.
  - **Love** (v. 8). Your God and your neighbor.
  - **Recognize your sinfulness** (v. 9). We deserve no mercy.
  - **Show mercy** (v. 13). Christ showed mercy to you.
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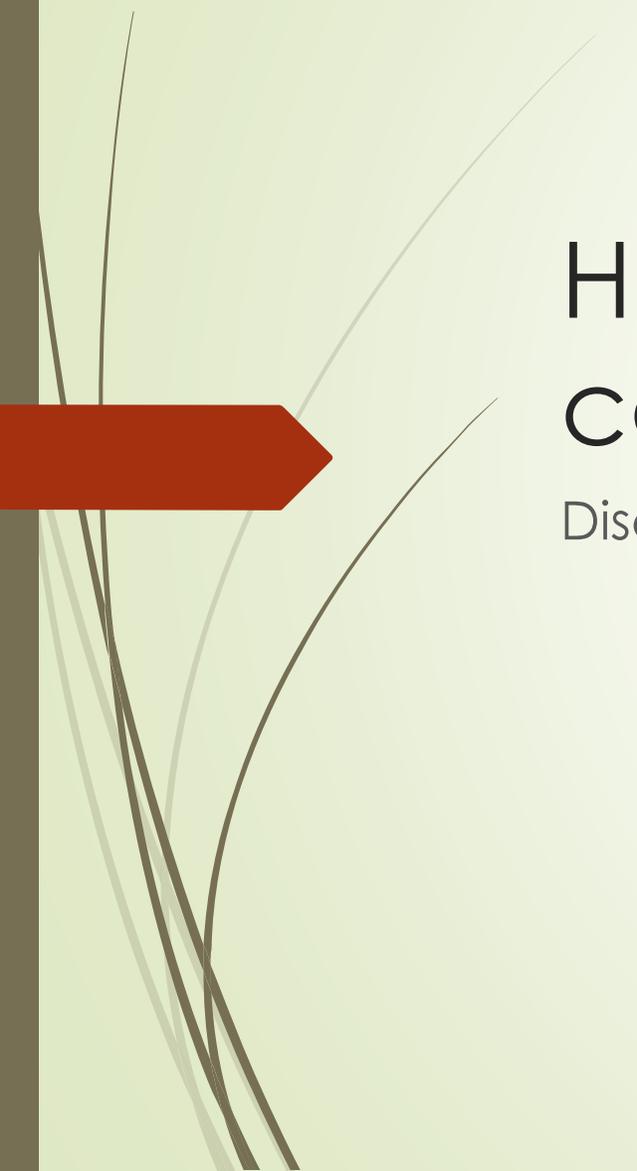
# Discussion Questions

For journaling, calling a friend, discussing with family, and prayer



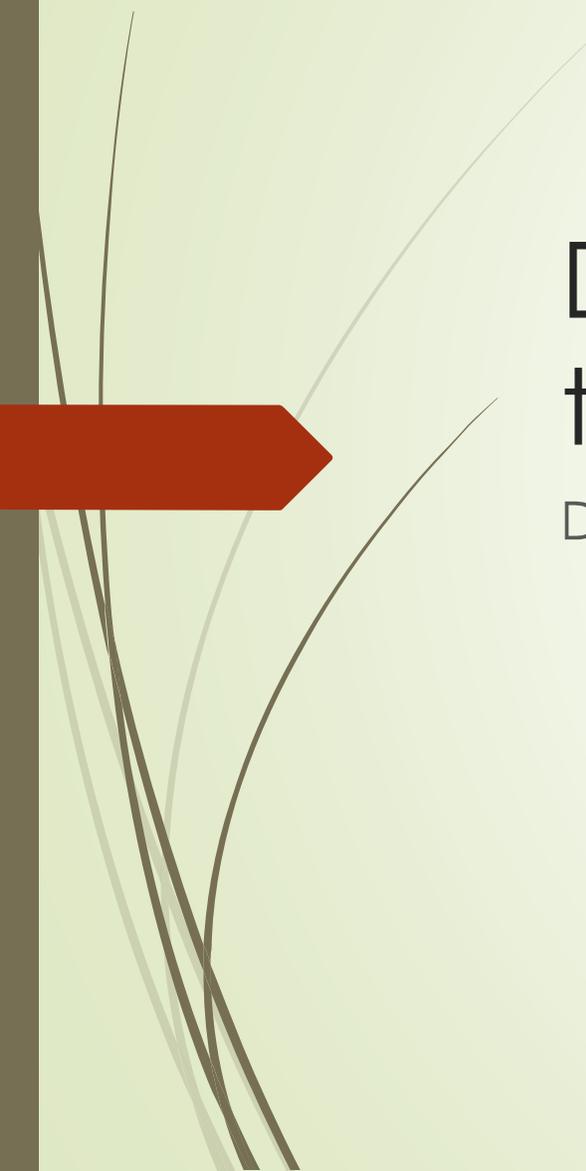
# How do we make people feel welcome when they visit church?

Discussion Questions



# How would I welcome a friend who came to visit church?

Discussion Questions



# Do I welcome visitors to Calvary the same way?

Discussion Questions



When you go to church, do you  
have a guest or host mindset?

Discussion Questions



# Additional Scripture Passages

For more study



# To judge or not to judge?

## *1 Corinthians 5*

<sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— <sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”



Am I more likely to welcome a person...

...my age?

...my gender?

...who dresses like me?

...with a family situation like mine?

...who looks happy?

Concluding Questions



If Jesus were in our churches today,  
would he approve of our fellowship?

Concluding Questions



# Faith and Works

Next Week...