

The Truth Behind Barbie's Smile

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Captain Chuck Fowler

INTRODUCTION

- Barbie is the introduction to the sermon.
 - Beautiful, well dressed.....perfect
 - Today, her secret is revealed...
 - She's plastic, can't talk, hollow in the middle, no substance
- What does it take to get to know someone?
 - Is it enough to see the clothes they wear or the car they drive?
 - Is it enough to know what job they have or where they live?
 - Maybe these are indicators, but they don't do much beyond "indicate"
 - Takes time, conversation, seeing the person in action
 - What are you looking for? Answer: things of the heart
- We often make judgments about people based on external traits
- This is dangerous, however, because external traits can be manipulated or faked
- Even a godly person can make this mistake
- See 1 Samuel 16
 - v. 1 – God has rejected Saul as the king of Israel
 - 1 of Jesse's sons will be king...Samuel sent to figure out who
 - v. 6 – Samuel impressed by appearance of Eliab
 - v. 7 – Key verse
- Appearances can be deceiving
- Need to see beyond external appearances of people.
- James has something to say about this to us this morning.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – 2:1-7

- What we read here, reminds me of some the reason for our denomination's existence
- Booth had no intention of starting a church
- Plan was to bring people to salvation and send back to established churches
- Problem: treated like 3rd class citizens, not accepted
- People returned to Booth and looked to him for further discipleship
- We believe that the teachings of the Bible are contemporary though...
- Have to ask, "What is this saying to us today?"
- Wealth seen as = to Importance (often w/out consideration of where \$ came from)
- In the church...in Christ, we are all one (Gal 3:28) The Message: "we are all in a common relationship with Christ")
- Wealth has no importance w/ God, it should have no preference in His church.

James goes on to give us 3 reasons why this is so?

ALL MEN WERE CHOSEN – 2:5-7

- When Jesus came, He came for all men, including the poor
- The poor are often singled out in the Bible because they were so abused by the rich.
- Although rich have equal access to God, the message of Christ was more accepted by the poor, because they did not need \$\$\$ to be rich in God's kingdom
- Finally, they would not have to fight to be seen

FAVORITISM IS SIN – 2:8-11

- The very notion that people in relationship w/ God would show favoritism is ludicrous.
- We can never have a claim on the power to choose who God will save or not save.
- One law says, “Love your neighbor as yourself”
 - There is no partiality here, no room for negotiation.
- Sin is Sin is Sin: this is the point of v. 10-11
- In the church it seems there are some sins that are hush, hush and some that aren't
- Marshall Islands: pregnancy outside of marriage
- In God's eyes, all sins are still sins and all sin has the potential of spiritual separation

OBEDIENCE TO THE LAWS OF GOD OVERRIDES ALL – 2:12-13

- God's law is the standard by which we will be judged... all of them
- But God's law is one of freedom and liberty, not of persecution and liberty
- Obedience to God's law comes as a result of already being saved.
- Living under God's law protects us and guides us to be good citizens of earth & heaven
- By discriminating against the poor, or for any other reason, we are not treating people with mercy
- The greatest law given was to “Love the Lord your God”
- The 2nd greatest law given was to “Love your neighbor as yourself”
- To discriminate again anyone for any reason is to violate both of these laws.
- James warns that to treat others badly will result in no mercy shown for us.

CONCLUSION

- Passage refers primarily to judging people who come to the church in terms of their wealth and giving preferential treatment on the same basis.
- I've tried to expand it some.
- Favoritism is an easy trap to fall into.
- Its easy to ignore people who are not like you (not like you in many ways)
- Its easy to pass off people who don't fit the mold of whatever “normal” is to you.
- What I'm hoping for our church is that we will live out Jesus command to “love others as you would love yourself”.
- I'm hopeful this will be true of our corps, but I'm also hopeful it will be true of our social services.
- Mostly importantly, I'm hopeful it will be true of you as individuals.
- I don't think the command is to become friends with everyone, but to be friendly with everyone... to love everyone with the love Christ has loved us.