

# Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

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BY Guest Writer

## **Scripture Reading: James 2:1-13, Zechariah 7:9-10, Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 13:8-10**

With the precision of a surgeon's knife, the Holy Spirit sliced into my heart, convicting me. It caught me off guard—my sin of favoritism.

Hours before, I'd watched a video on discrimination alongside my ministry team. The clip highlighted how easily we can fall into judging and favoring others. To further illustrate the point, we were divided into two different groups based on one aspect of our lives, something we had no control over: our eye color. People with blue eyes were to be treated differently than those with brown eyes.

Soon comments and accusations were flying back and forth. The responses of those discriminated against felt strangely satisfying to me. One woman in particular spoke with such disdain; her condescending attitude only proved her lack of awareness of those who live in the margins every day. I confess I was happy to have her sit in the back of the room as a member of the "discriminated" group, so she could experience a lack of equity.

The next day, our group entered into a time of prayer, confession, and lament. That's when God opened my eyes in a new way to Galatians chapter five, where Paul lists the works of the flesh: enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy. The very things our team had sought to address and combat head-on were now being revealed in my own heart. I had judged that woman, and in thinking less of her, I showed partiality toward others who appeared more self-aware and further along in their faith journey.

*"My brothers and sisters, do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ... haven't you made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"*

*– James 2:1,4*

This sin—*my sin* of judging some and favoring others—is cautioned against throughout Scripture. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus couldn't be more clear when He says, "Do not judge, so that you won't be judged. For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use" (Matthew 7:1-2).

The Lord is the only one worthy of being the Judge. He's the only one capable of judging fairly. "For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). **It's not our job to do the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting others of their sin, but we are called to respond to the Spirit's conviction in our own hearts.**

When we try to take God's place as judge and jury, perhaps it's because we've lost sight of just how great a debt Jesus died to pay on our behalf. Now, God's "mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13); His justice has been satisfied once and for all who love Jesus (Romans 3:25-26).

We're all on a journey, learning to honor the Lord through loving one another well. Daily, as we walk in step with the Spirit, may we speak the gospel into our waking moments. As sin is exposed, let us draw near to our Savior. Mercy triumphed over judgment when Christ died for us, sinners, and rescued us from deserved condemnation. And mercy triumphs still, as a holy God looks at us and sees the spotless image of His Son.

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