

Sunday, September 5, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – James 2:10, (11-13), 14-17
“Making Distinctions”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants share when they have witnessed or were part of an act of favoritism.

James 2:1-17. Context. In this passage, James stresses that true faith is revealed in our deeds: in the first part, "he shows how preference for the rich rather than the poor is a betrayal of the law of love," and in the concluding verses, "he shows how the refusal of help to those in need is an empty faith" (Luke Timothy Johnson, in *The New Interpreters Bible*, 12.192).

Read James 2:1-17

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read James 2:1-17 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Have participants who are willing share their stories of where they have witnessed or were part of an act of favoritism.
- How do acts of favoritism reveal our belief in Jesus (2:1)?
- Why do you think there is the temptation to separate faith and works? [
- James points out the distinction that was evident in the churches he was in ministry with – the distinction between the rich and the poor. What distinctions do you think James might point out that are evident in today's churches? [Rich and poor, educated and uneducated, old and young, among the races, and so on.]
- Respond to the statements: "Faith that doesn't act doesn't live out its core belief. It is faith that isn't faith." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What is the distinction between being saved by works and what James is articulating?
- What might God be calling you to do as a response to this passage?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

God of steadfast love, we confess our tendency to make distinctions when we should instead see people in need of grace. Empower us to be your servants who look to serve all and display your love that seeks for each person to be made whole in your grace. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.