

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

PARTIALITY. "My brothers and sisters, do not claim the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory while showing PARTIALITY." (James 2:1). It is so scandalous when there is hostility to those who are different than US/ME. Rich versus poor. Sexual superiority. Faith elitism. God's supposed chosen verses described sinners. In the CEB version *PARTIALITY* is noted as "*favoritism.*" In some families, some would say that their parents had a favorite child, and that sibling could do no wrong. Often the appearance of a person determines if a person is or is not welcome in certain groups.

The Epistle of James instructs early converts to Christianity how to live a faithful life as followers of Jesus Christ. This instruction manual encourages Christians to live as compassionate, generous, and authentic followers of Jesus Christ. James declares, "*So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.*" (vs. 17). The clamor of political speech today seems that opposition candidates have no ethics, morals, respect, or care for others. Candidates are shouting at each other, rather than trying to find solutions to constituents' problems or needs. The verbiage thrown at the opposition seems so mean and dishonest.

James writes, "*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works?*" (vs. 14). Christians can offer help with compassion, generosity, and love without *PARTIALITY*. Jesus reminds us that we should love God and our neighbors as we would want to be loved. Love embraces and includes all God's children, for love without mercy is ineffective. Our faith reminds us that God loves everyone of us as if we were God's only child, forgives us unconditionally, and blesses us abundantly. Episcopal priest Carl Daw's hymn declares, "*O God in whom all life begins, who births the seed to fruit, bestow your blessing on our lives; here let your love find root. Bring forth in us the spirit's gifts of patience, joy, and peace; deliver us from numbing fear, and grant our faith increase.*" (NCH 401). Thanks be to God. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*