

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

## A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 5, 2021

### Teaching as Impartial

By Daniel H. Wilcox

James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17

2:1 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ?

2:2 For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in,

2:3 and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet,"

2:4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

2:5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?

2:6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court?

2:7 Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

2:8 You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

2:9 But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

2:14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?

2:15 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food,

2:16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

2:17 So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

September is Christian Education month throughout much of Christendom; and, we celebrate the blessing of teachers and instruction as God's gifts to us. Teachers should be imparters of impartiality, sharing the valued truth of learning with all inspiring achievement and any willing student without regard to social status, gender, or ethnicity. The impartial role of teaching encourages effective education and development among seekers of insight at any station of life. Impartiality is an essential virtue of teaching.

Apostle James challenges the Jerusalem church impartially to engage with others. He encourages abandonment of preferred placement due to socio-economic status, where the wealthy would sit while the poor would stand in gatherings. He contends that this behavior sins against God and neighbor, failing to protect the vulnerable and disrespecting the will of God and commitment to impartiality. It profanes fellowship among humanity, creating dichotomy and imbalanced relationships that hinder harmonious, equal treatment. God blesses the poor in spirit and resources, encouraging hope and faith that will lead to salvation of souls and restoring balance among humanity. Acts of kindness to the poor such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked indicate active, strong faith, honoring God and God's creation and advocating impartiality. Faith blossoms in a willingness impartially to serve others without any conditions.

Let us celebrate God by imitating the impartiality of Christ and instituting acts of care and kindness.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—Reflecting on the scripture, share a time/instance when you have trusted impartiality as a guiding principle? How did this experience make you feel or direct you?

**PRAY:**

Almighty God, grant us to trust you with all our heart; seeing that, as you do always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you do not forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Ghost, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*Adaption from The Book of Common Prayer*

**ACT:** During the Kingdومتide season, create a small group engagement where left-handedness is valued over right-handedness, and then reverse value preference. Discuss the interactions. Journal your experience and reflect on your spiritual journey. Do what you can to protect the

health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prayerfully considering getting the vaccine when it is available—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

**Song:**

Open My Eyes That I May See  
AMEC Hymnal, #285

1. Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free.

*Refrain*

*Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready my God, Thy will to see,  
Open my eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

2. Open my ears, that I may hear  
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,  
Everything false will disappear.

*Refrain*

*Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready my God, Thy will to see,  
Open my ears, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

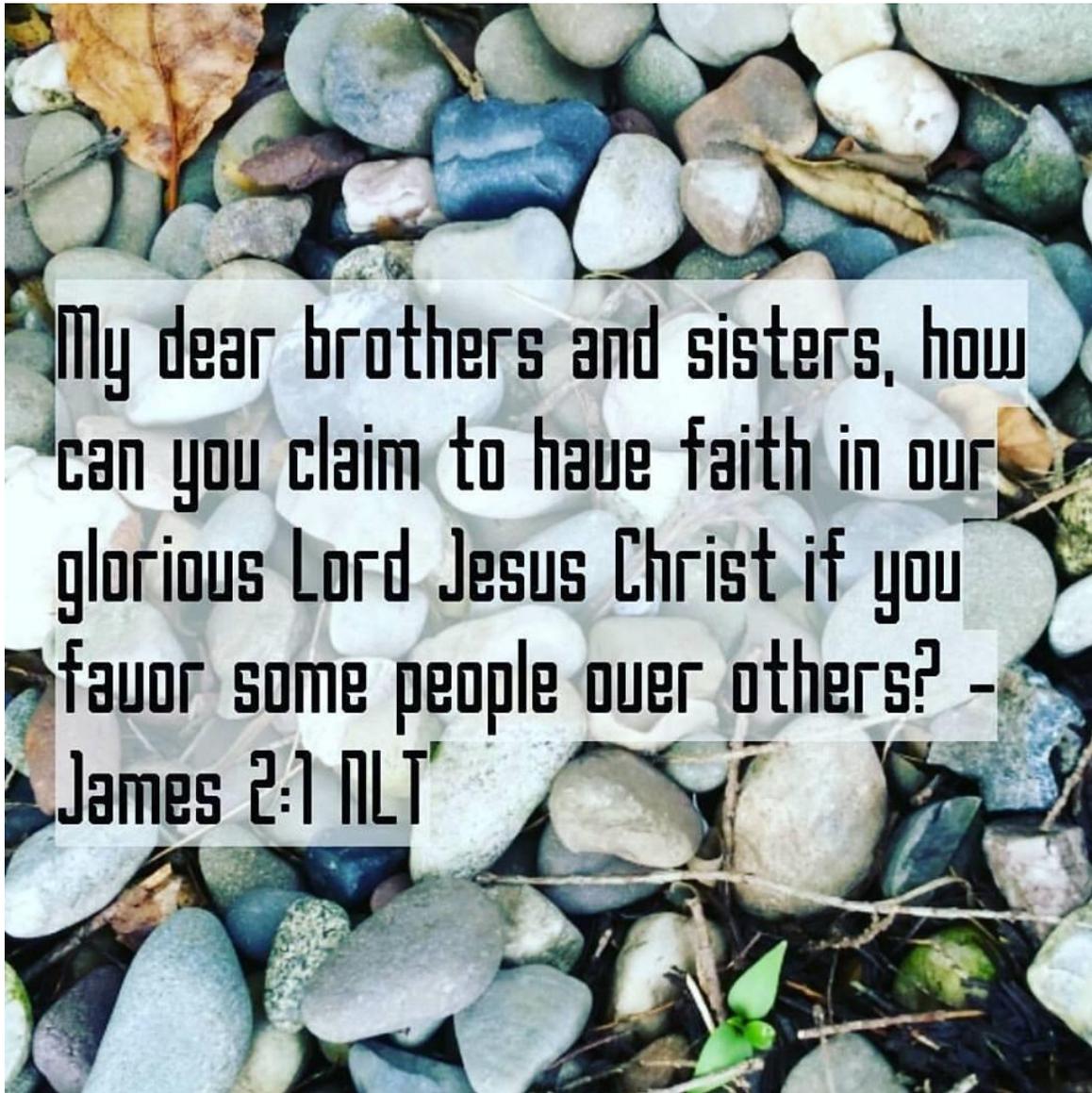
3. Open my mouth, and let me bear,  
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open my heart and let me prepare  
Love with Thy children thus to share.

*Refrain*

*Silently now I wait for Thee,  
Ready my God, Thy will to see,  
Open my heart, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



*The Christian Education Department will develop one more such resource that can be used during a time of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.*