

Do Not Be Partial

by Annie Poonen

This sermon focuses on the importance of overcoming partiality in our lives, drawing lessons from biblical examples like Jacob and Joseph. It emphasizes the need to follow Jesus in being impartial, forgiving, and loving towards others, especially in our families and communities. The speaker highlights the transformation that can occur when we allow God to work in our hearts, leading us to a new identity and a deeper understanding of His love and grace.

Scripture: Romans 2:11, Job 36:5, Psalms 68:5, James 2:9, Leviticus 19:15, Luke 14:25, Revelation 2:17, Revelation 14:1

Topics: "Overcoming Partiality", "Transformation through God's Love"

Description

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Transcript

Let's have a word of prayer again. Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us together. Thank you, Lord, that you are there for us at all times and all situations.

We ask you to speak to us, Lord. We wait humbly at your feet. Lord, we come to you with great need in our hearts.

We pray that you speak to each one of us. We ask these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

We've been thinking of Proverbs 14.1, where it says, The wisest of women builds her house. And Proverbs 9.1, which says, Wisdom has built her house. She has hewn her seven pillars.

And also, I want to remind you of the verse we meditated on. That's found in James 3, verse 17. It says about godly wisdom.

The wisdom from above is pure. We meditated on that one of our sessions. And it's peaceable and full of mercy.

And it's not partial. So today, I want to talk a little bit about not being partial. Now, when we think of the word partiality, all of us have had something to do with partiality growing up or even now.

Like looking back, we can say that some of us were the victims of partiality. Somebody else in our family, some sibling must have been preferred to us. And we became the victims.

And we didn't know how to handle that. Or some of us may think that we were the favorite in the family. And everybody made much of us.

And we had nothing to do with it. We got a little spoiled maybe. But the others in our family may have had to deal with bitterness and rivalry and unforgiving spirit and all those things which come with partiality.

Or we may think that we, as some of us who have become moms or grandmas, we have that subtle tendency towards partiality, maybe because some child is very obedient and very pleasing. We favor that child. Or another one is always getting into trouble.

And we tend to become a little rough and impartial towards that child. So, in some way or other, all of us have, most of us have had to deal with this problem of partiality. Now, I can say that if we look back at our life and we have a bad attitude to people who were partial towards us, maybe even a teacher in our school or maybe somebody in our workplace, some discrimination, and we keep thinking of it, that's wrong.

We have to get rid of that memory of our past, which haunts us. If we have suffered from partiality in our past life, in whatever way, we have to say we are not responsible for what the other person has done to us. So we have to forgive and leave that in God's hands to deal with us.

We have to deal with it and say, Lord, I don't want to have any bitterness or unforgiving attitude towards that person. I want to forgive and not only forgive, I want to love that person. It may be a parent or whoever it is.

That's the thing which we can do. And we can work in our own lives when we see we have that tendency towards partiality. We should not point the finger at others, but we can say, yes, Lord, show me.

Am I being partial in this area? Please show it to me and help me. So the house that we built is not one with everything is beautiful inside, with a good color scheme and everything is arranged and all that. But we are talking about a godly house where our husbands and our children feel secure and they are happy.

And they grow up and our children grow up in the ways of the Lord and learn to love the Lord. And all these areas which we've been meditating on, our children can see those virtues and value those virtues. And the importance of being pure, being peaceable and being merciful and not being partial.

So that's how a house can become strong because in the world our children are going to face partiality. Somewhere or other they'll meet some teacher or some colleague in their work who's not nice towards them, maybe mean and partial. They may not get the marks they deserve or the promotion they deserve.

And they have to deal with that. And we have to teach them how to deal with that and to be forgiving and to realize that God is in control and he will make up in some other way. Even if we have had some earthly loss, God can make it.

And from eternity's point of view, these things are not so important and our character is important. So all those things. So if we look back at our lives, each one would have some aspect of partiality which we

would have had to deal with.

Maybe some parent spoiled us a lot and we got the benefit of their partiality. Or maybe some other child was preferred and we felt that we suffered because of the partiality. Or we realized that we as parents, we get convicted that we are showing some kind of favoritism towards a child who's always obedient and nice and don't look so happy with a child who's always getting into trouble or doing things we are not happy about.

So when we deal with this aspect of partiality, there are areas we have to work on. And we have to ask the Lord, Lord show me hidden areas of partiality in my life and help me to be open to it, to your word. Because God's word is a light to our path.

It's like the Lord shining a flashlight into our lives and things which we were not aware of, God suddenly shows and says, yeah, you wanted to know more about me. Look, here's an area where you become partial or here's an area where you're taking it out on your children or not able to forgive or love your dad or mom who was partial towards you. So the Lord always, we are walking in the light, the Lord always speaks to us and he shows us things not to condemn us but to tell us things can get better.

I'll help you that these things can get better in your life. So a lot of people come and ask us, even our children when they go to school, people may ask them, how can God be like this? He's letting so many people suffer. How can God be partial and he looks like he's partial.

So many people are suffering and things don't look fair. There's so many babies who are suffering, who are born with deformities and they can question God. But there's one truth which we have to remember about God that there's no partiality with God.

There's a verse in Romans 2 verse 11 says God shows no partiality. We cannot understand God's ways, we cannot explain it because we are human and we are his creatures. We don't understand about our creator but God's word is our foundation and we know that God shows no partiality.

Even if it doesn't look fair in our eyes, we can have this pillar, this truth like a backbone in our life that God shows no partiality. There's another verse which says in Job chapter 36 verse 5 says God is mighty and does not despise anybody. So there's nobody whom he despises and he's partial to.

And Psalm 68 verse 5 says he's the God of the fatherless and protector of the widows. So he cares for his children especially those who are helpless, the fatherless and widows and strangers and those who are put down by others, he has a special care for them. That's like the spinal cord on which we can rest on and we can depend on.

And then this verse which I just spoke about earlier, it's something to do with us. James 2 verse 9 says if you show partiality you're committing sin. So we realize that partiality is not just a weakness.

You cannot just excuse it and say oh I'm a bit partial, I was a bit partial but it's okay. But we have to see it as God sees it. It's a grievous sin.

It says it's committed by the law of transgressors. So even in the Old Testament partiality God takes it very seriously. In Leviticus 19 verse 15 it says don't be partial to the poor.

You know sometimes we see poor people and we say okay the rich they have everything. But the poor people they need and we can become partial to poor people. It says don't be partial to the poor or defer to the great but judge in righteousness.

Like God was telling about judging people. And in the New Testament there are lots of examples in James 2 itself. In the earlier verses it says not to show partiality.

If a poor brother comes in and you just give him a seat which is not good and a rich person comes and you give him a better seat that shows that you're partial. And we read in Acts 10 the story of Cornelius. Now Cornelius he didn't know, he was not a Jew and he didn't know anything about Jesus.

But he feared God and so God shows no partiality. And he looked at Cornelius who feared him and did what was right. So God's ways are very different from our ways.

And we have to ask God, say Lord give me light on this aspect of partiality. Help me, it's so subtle, that help me that I won't make mistakes and my children don't grow up in the wrong way suffering from partiality. Now there are some examples in the Bible about partiality.

We know children who were like Joseph when he grew up. As he was growing up Jacob his father showed a lot of favoritism to him. And we know that story and how he was given a coat of many colors and he was made much of and that made his brothers so jealous of him and brought him in a lot of trouble.

But Joseph, by God's grace, Joseph overcame that partiality. He was able to forgive his brothers. But he suffered a lot, maybe because of this tendency he could have become proud.

God put him through a grueling process, Portico's wife and being put in jail and most of his youth he was spent in prison. So God put him through that training so he got over the effect of that partiality and he was able to forgive his brothers. And the example of Jesus growing up in a home where his brother, his siblings, earthly siblings didn't understand him.

He must have been put through a lot of partiality and that's why I think James, his brother who grew up in the same house wrote about partiality. In the book of James we read a lot about partiality, not to be partial. But I wanted to think of one particular person in the Bible who was a victim of partiality and who inherited this vice of partiality and that is Jacob.

You know when Isaac and Rebekah were having, when Rebekah was expecting the babies, God told her, you're going to have two children, two sons. And the younger one will be the one whom I've chosen and he'll be the one, he'll be the leader. So Rebekah had that from God, she heard that.

But as Jacob and Esau were growing up, Rebekah started having her favorite son Jacob always with her, made much of him and because he must have been pleasing to her. And Isaac, he liked good food and he saw that Esau was outgoing and outdoor type of boy and he liked hunting and he liked the things, Isaac liked the things which Esau brought home. And he would make a good dinner for Isaac and he got Esau as his favorite.

So these two children were growing up in that home where there was partiality. That shows that it was a home with bad parenting. Father and mother, they made a mistake.

So Jacob grew up being a victim of that vice of partiality. And I think as later on when we see Jacob's experience with Laban, who also had the same tendency as her brother Rebekah, that must have been a family trait. Laban and Rebekah, father and sister, having this partiality problem and Jacob also inherited that.

And we see how that whole, there was a lot of suffering because of that. Esau loved good food and he knew, Jacob knew that Esau being the older, he had the birthright. But if he had heard correctly from his mother, he would have known God had already chosen him.

He did not bargain for that birthright, but there he was cunning enough to bargain and get the birthright. Then Rebekah helped Jacob to deceive Isaac to get the birthright. When the time for the blessing came, Rebekah had this plan.

And we know all about what Rebekah did. She put the hair of the animal on Jacob's arm and pretended that he was Esau and got the blessing from his dad. And all that deception was not at all necessary.

When Rebekah knew that Isaac was going to bless the children, she could have talked to Isaac and said, Look Isaac, God already told us that Jacob is the one who's chosen. And if she was a prayerful lady, she could have handled it in a different way. Instead of doing this pathway of deception.

And that speaks to us. Sometimes, you know, Esau is seeking a godly way. We can choose the path of deception and try to do things behind people's back and cover it up.

And then that brings trouble not only to ourselves, but to our family members also. So that was a mistake Rebekah did. She could have told Isaac, let's pray about it.

Let's talk about it. And you know, God has chosen Jacob. Don't forget.

And she could have dealt with it, but she devised all this plan, which brought a lot of trouble to Jacob. She taught Jacob to deceive. She sowed the seed of deception in Jacob's spirit also.

And then, you know what happened? Esau became so angry. And as a result of this partiality, so many things happened. Rebekah asked Jacob to leave.

So she lost both her sons. Jacob had to leave. And probably he never saw his mother because we don't read of Jacob, of Rebekah after that.

We read that Rebekah's nurse Deborah died, but not about Rebekah's death or Jacob ever seeing his mom again. So Rebekah lost both her sons. Her son Esau became so bitter.

He had nothing to do. He went and married girls whom his parents didn't approve of. So he became estranged with the family.

Jacob had to run away for his life. There was division in the family. And she taught, as I said, she taught Jacob to deceive.

And he had to deal with that deception for a very long time. For many years, he had to deal with that deception. But God was so merciful.

Wherever Jacob went, God was following him. We know the story how God met Jacob in Bethel that night. And he gave him that vision of the ladder going up to heaven and angels ascending and descending.

And God met with him and spoke to him and said that he will bless him. And then when he went to Laban's house, even though he tried that deception trick with Laban also, Laban was smarter than him. Finally, with two wives and lots of children, he had to leave Laban in the night.

I mean, without Laban's knowledge, Jacob had to leave with his whole family. But God was so good with him and dealt with him. God helped him to reconcile with his brother Esau.

They could have been enemies for the rest of their lives, but God helped them to be reconciled. And he went on and God continued to meet with him. He met with him in Penuel in a place where an angel wrestled with Jacob.

And though he was crippled, God blessed him. And then he continued to be with him and met him again in Bethel one more time. And then when God was speaking to him, Jacob was convicted.

That we read in Genesis 25. He was convicted. He told his family, put away all the idols.

So until then, there must have been idolatry. He must have remembered Jehovah, but the family still had idols. So he told his family, put away the idols because God wants to speak to me.

And God met with him again in Bethel. And this was a marvelous meeting place. God met with him and he said, look Jacob, until now you've been a deceiver, but I'll change you.

I'll change your name to Israel. I'll make you a new person. You'll be a completely new person hereafter.

And that Israel, that name has continued for centuries. Even the whole nation is called Israel. And the children, his descendants are called children of Israel.

He's no more, God didn't refer to him as Jacob anymore. He made him a new person. And that really spoke to me.

I said, Lord, how you can change us? All of us, we've been so marred and scarred because of partiality or other things in our lives. Especially today when you think of partiality, victims of partiality of our parents, maybe. Or we've been partial to people.

And we've been scarred, but you can still change us and give us a new name and make us a new person. And I was thinking of a beautiful, beautiful verse in Revelation 2, verse 17. It says, those who conquer, that means those who overcome, I, Jesus, will give us some of that hidden manna.

And he will give them a white stone with a new name written on that stone that no one knows except the one who receives it. I read that verse over and over again. He said, Lord, what's so great about a white stone with my name written on it? It must be something really valuable that you want to give me, but don't let me take it.

Yes, hidden manna, I know that I won't be hungry and you'll feed me with that bread of life and I won't lack and I'll be nourished. But what's so special about that white stone with my name written on it? Help me to value it. And I said, Lord, speak to me more about it.

And I thought of this. Suppose we're engaged and our beloved bridegroom is leaving us and he comes to us and says, I'll come back very soon. But until then, I have this thing for you which I kept for you.

It's a precious stone, maybe like a diamond. And I have written your name on it. And it's a special name by which I'm going to call you.

Nobody else will know that name, but it's a name. It's a love name which I have given you specially for you. And I'll call you by that name.

It's so wonderful when the Lord has a special name for each one of us. It's like so many of us, but individually for each one of us, there's a special name he's going to give us and he's going to call us by that name. And no one knows it except we who are going to get that, the person who's going to get that name.

And I thought, I wonder what my name will be. And then I thought, maybe the Lord is going to call me by the name in the area in which I have struggled and overcome. Maybe it's like I'm struggling in the area of being partial and being partial to someone.

And God has given me a name, something like my impartial one or the one who's overcome partiality. Or some beautiful name, I don't know how it is. Something which we have struggled in.

The one who overcame loneliness. The one who overcame anger. The one who is merciful.

Or who's been always seeking after peace. Whatever area we have struggled with and we have overcome, maybe the Lord will choose that name for us. Or maybe it's something more wonderful, more surpassing than that.

But it's something, something so glorious that we can look forward to. And the Lord will give that stone in our hand. And with that name, you look at it and, ah, that's the name the Lord, my beloved, is going to call me by that name.

And maybe we'll hang it around our neck, that shining stone or wherever, hold it in our hand. And there's another beautiful verse in Revelation 14, 1, which says, the name of Jesus and the Father may be written on the forehead of those who overcome. Those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Now, I used to think follow the Lamb is such a great thing. In which way can I follow the Lamb? Not that I have to go to the Holy Land and walk in those areas, the River Jordan and Galilee and the shores of Galilee or Nazareth or wherever it is. It's not following the Lord there.

Only people may think, oh, my dream is to go to the Holy Land and walk where Jesus walked. It's not that. We know, those of us who've heard the teachings, we know what's the meaning of that.

To follow the Lamb wherever He goes is what Jesus said. If you want to follow me, take up the cross every day and follow me. Luke 14, verses 25 to 27.

If anyone wishes to follow me, let him take up his cross, give up all his soulish attachments to father, mother, any relatives, anyone, friend. That's the cost of discipleship. We have to pay that price.

And if we want to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, we can do it now on earth. Praise God. We don't have to wait.

But today, right now, every day of our lives, we can follow the Lamb wherever He goes. That is in taking up the cross and following Him. And the areas He shows us, die to those areas, areas of impartiality or whatever, self-pity.

So many things there are, which the Lord shows us, which are very specific to women who go through, you know. The Lord says, just take up the cross, die to yourself. And if you follow me, you will walk with me.

And I'll give you the reward. The reward is much more than what you ever expected or deserved. Praise God that we can hear these teachings now on earth and we can follow the Lamb wherever He goes and we can be His disciples.

I was thinking of giving a small testimony about this impartiality. You know, it was all of us who worked in offices. We've seen people being partial to us.

And I, working in the medical field, I thought how easy it is for a person working in the medical field to be partial. For instance, if somebody comes to me for treatment and that person knows something about medical things. I feel so happy and I can say, okay, I can relate to that person.

I can tell that person the medical language and medical things and he or she can understand me. And I can relate to that. And then I thought a poor person comes and maybe an illiterate person comes.

And then I feel like, oh, I can't explain. She won't understand. There I saw partiality coming up.

The person who needs help and who needs love and attention is that poor person who didn't understand. And I needed to be open and loving and caring to that person. And God taught me that in a very special way.

You know, after I finished my medical training, the Lord put it on my heart for me to go to work in an area where nobody, very few people could. And that is to work among leprosy patients in India. You know, leprosy is a dreaded disease with a lot of deformities and people who had leprosy, they are cast out of their homes.

And they're sent to some colony where leprosy patients live together and they find some job. And missionaries have started homes for such. And I chose to, the Lord led me to go to work in that leprosy hospital.

And there I saw, I saw that every person whom I saw was afflicted with leprosy. And everyone had need in their hearts. And at first I didn't know the language of that area.

So the Lord helped me to learn that language and I could understand. And He poured that love in my heart for them. That when I saw them, I saw them as people, dear children of God.

Many of them had accepted the Lord. Dear children of God who needed the love of God and who needed my love. Who needed somebody to listen to them, to comfort them, to give them encouragement and to give them hope.

Like they have an incurable disease with multiple deformities, blindness maybe. They could not use their hands, they could not walk properly. To such people, to give them a hope that God is our Father.

This world is not everything. Eternity is there where the Lord is going to give us perfect bodies and He is going to reward us. Your sickness is not a curse.

Because people used to think that leprosy is a curse. Your sickness is not a curse. But it is the means by which God used to bring you to Himself.

So there the Lord taught me the great big secret of God being an impartial God. And how He wanted me also to get that virtue of not being partial. To love people the same and not to despise anyone as I shared in that verse in Job.

And that was such a transforming work in my life. I still remember the day when the Lord poured that love and I felt like weeping. And I said, there were tears in my eyes.

And I said, Lord, thank you for revealing that to me and putting your love in my heart. After that when I came back and got married and then I started helping poor people. All along when I met poor people, I felt like these are my sisters.

Those who have come to trust the Lord. They are my sisters and I am going to spend eternity with them. Right now they are illiterate.

They may be poor. They may have poor clothes and maybe not so refined. And things which the worldly people may despise.

But they are my sisters with whom I am going to spend eternity. So I praise and thank God that God chose to reveal that to me. And I want to live in that attitude all the days of my life.

So to summarize, I just wrote down a few things which we can learn about, which we can implement in our lives about partiality. We must long to overcome and get victory over partiality in our lives. We must say, Lord, I want to follow you wherever you go.

And even in this area of partiality, I want you to show me areas in which I am partial to. Maybe some sister in the church who is little different from me and whose behavior is not what I like. Accent is not so good, from a different race, not so educated, not so cultured.

Lord, help me to follow the Lamb wherever you go. Help me to love that person and not have an atom or a speck of partiality in my life. And help me to take up the cross daily and die to myself, Lord.

Especially in the area of partiality in my home, towards my children, the ones who are weak, the ones who are slow to learn, the ones who are a little disobedient, to be patient and help them. And help me to work in those areas. And we cannot do it by our own strength.

It's only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we can overcome this and everything that the Lord shows us, which he doesn't like in our lives. And ask the Lord to show us the hidden areas and give us grace not to cover it up or to excuse ourselves, not to acknowledge it and lay it open and ask him to help us to get rid of it. And also we can ask the Lord, Lord, help us to teach our children to overcome partiality.

Maybe they are victims of partiality in their school or among their friends. Some child, other child may be despising them or they have their own group. Other children may have their own group and our child are not in that group.

They exclude us, exclude our child. And they are partial in that way. And our child comes to us crying and says, They are not letting me play with them and they are talking.

They don't want me to be in that group. Then we have to help our children and say, Lord, ask God for grace and give them and help them to understand life is like that. Sometimes people are partial, but we should learn to forgive.

We should not, don't try to barge into that group which doesn't group, doesn't want you. Okay, let them be, belong to that group. If they exclude you, they exclude Christ also.

Jesus is with you and he'll help you to overcome and not to have any bad attitude to those children and to forgive them and maybe love them. Maybe at some time one of them will feel convicted and may come to you for help and you can help them. Maybe you can, they can ask you, how is it that you are so good? Even though we've been mean to you, what's the secret? And maybe you can tell them it's because of Jesus.

He has put his love. So we have to help our children to deal with partiality. Or if our teacher, their teacher is partial towards them or partial to some other child and you see that child suffering, children can go and encourage them.

It's okay. The teacher is doing that for our good. She wants us to improve.

That's why she's being hard on us. Take it in a good way. Don't have any bad attitude towards the teacher or anyone.

So those ways we can be, if we are alert to that, then we can help our children also. And the Lord can help us to show every day in our life to not to show favoritism to any child or anyone in the world who comes across us and help our children how important it is to overcome partiality in their lives. They shouldn't be picky about friends or dislike people, especially in the schools, you know.

Nowadays, a lot of talk is there about other races and other people who are a little different from us. And our children hear about it in school. And they come home and they tell us and we can say, you don't listen to all that.

Even if you listen to it, don't be influenced by it. You keep your mind free and ask the Lord to make you like Jesus. Ask the Lord to help you to treat everybody as Jesus treated others.

The Samaritans, the leprosy people, the blind, the outcasts, everyone how Jesus treated them. Ask the Lord to teach us to and our children to treat others like that. And as they grow up, they're going to face partiality in the world and they're going to see more and more of it.

And we have to prepare our children to face that. And we as parents, we have to be very careful that we don't talk those things at home. You know, sometimes we are not aware of it and we talk with our people at home and adults when somebody comes to visit.

We say some comments and our children pick it up and there's a root and a seed of partiality sown in their hearts. So we have to be very alert that we don't think partial things and we don't speak partial things. And all those kind of things we have to put away and only the Lord will show us and the Holy Spirit will help us to overcome in those areas.

And we have to, as I said earlier, we have to walk in the light. God's word always shines in our lives and in our hearts and shows us this thing is wrong in our life. There's an element of partiality coming up and you're talking more with this person and not with that person or you're favoring this person.

And the Lord, when he shows us, then we say, Lord, I don't want to put it away. I want to correct it. Not that we have to go and tell the person, oh, I was partial and I was this.

We don't have to tell anyone, but we can, between the Lord and us, we can correct it. And we can grow and help our children also to grow in a home where there's freedom and they grow up in an atmosphere where there's no partiality. And they are ready to face the world in the coming days.

Whatever happens, they are ready to face because they had that upbringing in their home and that godly atmosphere in the home. And that's what, as wise women, we can do to build a godly home. May the Lord help each one of us.

So shall we just close in prayer? Heavenly Father, we thank you for this precious time you've given us. And thank you, Lord, there are so many things you want to teach us. And we are slow in learning, Lord.

But we thank you that you are coming to our pace and you are teaching us little by little. Help us, Lord. Give us grace in all our areas where we are lacking.

Help us, Lord, especially in this area of partiality. Help us to be like you, Lord, to be impartial and to grow more and more into your likeness, Lord Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Your grace is sufficient. Thank you for the Holy Spirit's power given to us daily. Help us daily to take up the cross and follow you.

Bless our children, Lord, in the coming days as they grow up. Help them to be prepared to face whatever lies in this world. Even if we are not around with them, we thank you that you are going to be with them.

And so we trust you and we thank you in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen.

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