

The Complete Christian Does Not Show Favouritism

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 March 2024

Preacher: John Lowrie

[0 : 00] Gerald for leading our time of worship and for Sandy for leading us in our intercessory prayer and for Lucille for doing the kids talk. She was the best. She did well, very good. Anyway, turn with me please to James chapter 2. Usually for Palm Sunday, I don't always do a theme to do with leading on to Good Friday, and I've done that the same. I've not had a, was continuing a series of studies in the book of James, but I really do want to commend to you the Good Friday communion service. It's a very special time, and of all the things that I do as a pastor, I do it slightly differently, where you'll have opportunities to share and various things. The Lord really blesses that of the one. If you only get to one service a whole year, that is the one to go to, the one on Good Friday, and then we can rejoice on Easter Sunday morning as well. So I commend that to you.

I think that's at 7 o'clock, is it? 7 o'clock. It'll probably last for just over an hour, I would think. The meeting tomorrow, Christian Institute, I really commend that to you as well. That's half past 7, and it'll probably go on to about 9 o'clock. So I commend that to you as well to come to that. But the Good Friday service, I need eight readers. I mentioned this on Wednesday. I got seven women. All women. Not old women. All women. So I need the men to man up in the church, really. If you're visiting this church, and it's only women that read, what does that say about our church? So if you're of the male species, I'm looking for three men. I'll still make it five women, maybe, and three men. That would be good. If I can get three men, honestly, do that. I'll be ashamed of you. If somebody doesn't come up and say, John, count me in. I'm a man. I will read. I will man up, and I will do this thing. So I really commend that to you for this Friday. That would be great. I'm trying to think if there's anything else. Please be in prayer for the holiday club as well. It's good to see 10 of those, very familiar with them. So it's really great that they're here, and you have an opportunity to get books, whether you pay for them today or some other time or whatever. But you can take them, I'm sure. That would be great. Let's read James. James chapter 2. We are looking at a very familiar passage. This is not an easy one to try and get your head around. Easy to understand, difficult to apply. And the one this evening in the life of Jacob, difficult to understand, easier to apply. So the two of them are quite different. Let's read from James 2, verse 1.

[2 : 36] My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. And then he gives this illustration. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, here's a good seat for you. But say to the poor man, you stand there, or sit on the floor by my feet. Have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters, has God not chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into the court? Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong? If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

For whoever keeps a whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said you shall not commit adultery also said you shall not murder. If you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. We'll end our reading there.

Let's come before God. Let's ask for his help. Our loving Father, we just still ourselves in your presence this morning. We thank you for this Lord's Day, Lord, and all that this day means to us, not only our fellowship with each other, but primarily our fellowship with you through the Holy Spirit. We do thank you, Father, for this special day in our church calendar where we remember Palm Sunday. We remember our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and how his weak Lord would turn and those, Lord, who cried Hosanna would cry, crucify him. And Father, we cannot begin to imagine, Lord, his sorrow, his grief. And Father, we do just pray when we gather on Friday that you will help us to try and plumb the depths of his suffering, Lord, on the cross. So, Father, we pray, Lord, we commend that meeting to you. But we're here this morning, and we pray now that you would speak to us from your Word. We thank you for that Word that gave us life. And we pray, Lord, that your Word will come to us in power and will speak to us as individuals and as a congregation. So, Father, we praise and thank you for who you are, that we have a great God and a great Savior and a great gospel. Help us, Father, to live lives worthy of that gospel.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. As I was preparing this sermon, I don't think I've—I may have preached in this a while ago, but it came to me fresh again this week. One word leapt out to me, whether it was because Christian Institute are coming tomorrow, I wasn't too sure. This is the word that leaps out, the word discrimination. It's such an emotive word nowadays, to discriminate.

[6:10] And Christians are accused of discriminating and making value judgments and says, well, we accept them, we don't accept them, and we treat others differently. It's a very sensitive word, and it affects so many people in all walks of life. Everybody at some point discriminates against somebody. All peoples in all areas of society mention this. Even that's not the whole quote, but you can see prejudicial treatment of a person, racial group, minority, based on category and individuals and talk about race, sex, age discrimination. And we'll be touching on this tomorrow, looking at maybe same-sex, gender issues, and so forth, how we are to handle them, how we are viewed in those things. That's what we're looking at this morning in the passage before us, about discriminating. James mentions this. He gives us an example of two people attending church, a very real scenario. One's wealthy, and the other one is poor. And they come in, verse 3, and one person you say, here's a good seat. They're wealthy. They're influential. You're impressed by them.

The other person, here you sit on the floor by my feet. And James says in verse 4, have you not discriminated? You've made a value judgment, and you've come to a certain conclusion. That's the topic of our service this morning, discrimination, but more particularly showing favoritism to one person, to a group of people, to certain types of people over another. That is very much what this passage is about. We're into chapter 2. Now, we're going to move through fairly quickly in the rest of James. We'll be in a long time in chapter 1. But chapter 1, as you know, sets the backdrop to the whole of this book. James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, the half-brother of Jesus, leader there, he's writing to scattered Christians, and he has a desire that they grow and they become mature. That is the name of the series, the complete Christian, or the mature Christian. He wants them to grow in their faith. Verse 4, that you may be mature, complete, not lacking anything. He doesn't just say this willy-nilly, or just want that because it's what he wants. There's a reason why he says that Christians should grow. And you remember verses 18 of chapter 1 and 21, really are the the main drive for everything that comes. He chose, God chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Spring's coming. Firstfruits are coming.

Things are, wee buds are beginning to grow. God, when he saved you, created spiritual life in you. Sanctification's a process. You're justified all at once. You won't be more justified tomorrow than you are today, but you might be more sanctified. You're in a process where you're growing. And this word that's planted in us, verse 21, can save us. So, God has given us new life. And therefore, because the life of God is in the soul of man, we should act and think differently from what we used to be and from the world. In James, in chapter 1, we have looked at big topics. The mature Christian understands trials and temptations. God is doing a work in us. He's producing. He's perfecting us. He's putting us through the mill, as it were, the treadmill of life. He's growing us. We understand that trials don't happen to us by fate, but God's hand is on them. We seek wisdom. Sometimes we don't make sense of things, so James says. The mature Christian will recognize us and ask for wisdom. We understand poverty riches. This world is riches. We do not strive after them. We will leave them

behind, and we seek another city. Pilgrim's Progress, the celestial city. We're on our way there. We understand temptation.

[10 : 29] We're often led away by our own sinfulness, and we, and the mature Christian, not only listens or reads God's Word, the mature Christian knows the importance of obeying God's Word. Earlier on, last time, James talks about religion. It's a word that you won't find. Many folk are we religious, and he talks about what pure religion is. Once again, we are to resemble God, control of our... You want to know if somebody's a spiritual person? Don't just look at their life. Listen to what they say and why they say it. That would be their spirituality. Controlling their tongue, caring for the needy, secondly, and cleanliness from the world are fundamental, basic things. These are the big things of the Christian life that James, the leader of the church in James. Now he's still on the topic of pure and faultless religion. He continues this now because these three things he now opens up in the rest of the book of James. And one of the things he mentions here, maybe it's care for the needy or whatever, having a heart for those who are different from us. He talks about favoritism in chapter 2, verses 1 to 13.

How we treat those who are not necessarily poor. James talks about poor, but it could be anything. It could be just somebody different from us. And that's what we're looking at. He says it in verse 1 right away. Easy for me to get the heading for this sermon. The mature Christian or the complete Christian must not show favoritism. James is great if you're a preacher. He says it so plainly. You're not wondering what he means. He just tells you. You shouldn't show favoritism. That is really the message this morning. So what does favoritism look like? James illustrates this about the rich and the poor person coming in. One gets one special treatment and the other gets something else. As humans, we like to play favorites. We're wired that way. There's something in us. We have our favorites.

We have attitudes, values, certain people, certain things that we like. And where we see these attitudes and things, we are drawn to them like a magnet. One of the commentators gave an illustration about researchers doing something in New York. They dressed a man in particular clothing. And they sent him out with this remit. He says he would meet people in the street. I have lost my wallet and need money for a taxi to take me to the airport. This is my name and address and phone number.

If you loan me the money, I'll repay you as soon as I get home. They dressed him in two different types of clothing. When he was dressed in a suit in a particular way, he got twice as much money on those days when he was dressed differently. And we are just impressed or more convinced by certain things.

We all look for a favorite ingredient, perhaps, in somebody, and we will respond appropriately if we encounter this. It might be how somebody's dressed. It might be their job, their education, their speech, their conversation topics, their circle of friends, their leisure activities, their music interests, their holiday destinations. It can be absolutely anything. But where we see these, we are drawn to them. Now, there's nothing wrong in that. I know, having lived in—it's nice to see my brother from down south. I lived in England for 13 years. You can hear a Scottish accent at 100 meters away, and you just home in on them. That's my country, man. And there's nothing wrong in that. Where it's wrong is where we exclude others, where we give that preferential treatment, and others are excluded from that. And that's really what we are looking at here. We are to resemble the Lord. He has given us his life. He's this new life. And therefore, her attitudes and actions are to resemble him.

[14 : 36] In Job 34, 19, it says about God, who shows no partiality to princes, does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands. And therefore, if we profess to be Christians, we should show this. There should be no favoritism between various people or whatever. So, let's look at this three things or four things I want us to look at this morning as James presents them to us here.

We're going to go through this fairly quickly. The first point's the longest, so don't lose hope thinking, wow, that's only a quarter. First point's the longest. But we're going to go through this fairly quickly. Favoritism is discrimination. That's what James tells us. He says, don't show favoritism. And he actually tells us what shown favoritism is. It is discrimination. On its own, favoritism's not a bad word. Some people get favor, and some don't get any. But at least somebody's getting something.

Whereas discrimination is a more emotive word, where we evaluate somebody, and really, they are excluded in some way. We make an evaluation of someone. Here is a dictionary definition of discrimination. The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability. You could add to that list. But it's an unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, or whatever. Now, why is this wrong? James tells us why this is wrong. He uses a word, judging, or judges. Look at verse 4. Have you not discriminated among yourself and become judges? And so, when we discriminate, we evaluate that person, and we pass judgment on them. We make a value judgment. Maybe you're speaking to somebody, and you think, wow, I wish I never started this conversation. I'm not really interested in this, or whatever. You discover they're a hip support or a heart. Doesn't it take much to kind of form a value judgment? And then you think, wow, they're not as impressive as I thought they might be. It doesn't take much. But whenever we do this, we pass value judgments on people all the time.

[17:00] If somebody drove in here with an Aston Martin and come out looking a million dollars, you would think, this person's important. I don't know anything about him, but he's obviously important. He's probably somebody that you don't want to wind up. You want to impress because it would be great if he joined our church. He's obviously got money. He's a smart cookie. He might even be somebody well-known. I remember in East Finchley, we used to get quite a few well-known people would pop into the church, and Charlotte Chapel as well, Lord Mackay of Clashfern. I remember him. I remember preaching, and he'd be there thinking, Lord Mackay is here. There was a wee people. You could look out, and they've still got, and that's the old building. You could see who was in the congregation. Lord Mackay's here, or somebody's here. Somebody you had to impress, and we all do this.

We pass value judgments, and they affect how we respond to people. We pass judgments, and we might think, how will this person benefit me or benefit us, what we like, what we don't like? And in every situation, we tend to do this. And the problem is, when we do this, we cannot evaluate people correctly or rightly. There's something selfish in us, and there's something sometimes sinful in us. And that's what James touches on. He talks about, secondly, judges with evil thoughts. So, he's basically, it's very strong words to say this to a group of believers, because he calls them brothers and sisters in verse 1, with evil thoughts. We'll become judges with evil thoughts. One of the commentators spells out simply, no human being is fully free of prayer. I think if we at least acknowledge that, then we're halfway there, that there are certain people we like, certain groups, churches that we don't really get alongside, we don't chat to, they make us feel awkward, they're different from us, and so forth. And if they're our own kind, whatever that might represent to us. I was talking about the Scots, FI. We are drawn to people like us, and to our community, London was especially, as I said, there's no way you might have a Russian community, Chinese community, Jewish community, and you would have placed very, nothing wrong in this. It's where we discriminate against somebody who's not like us, draw to people that are very much like us. And without realizing it, we're guilty of discrimination, and so forth. And that's what James is basically pointing out here. This must have been a problem in this community.

They were showing favoritism to the rich, and running after them at the exclusion of this. So we judge. We often judge wrongly. We do not know people. We don't really know what they're like. I can't have favorites. Elders can't have favorites. There may be folk we are naturally drawn towards other bits. He's like me, blah, blah, blah. You may have, but you can't have favorites, and you cannot need to do this right across the board. And it's great when you get to know somebody, and you think, what's the expression, still waters run deep. When you get, and you think, they don't seem to be dynamic, but once you get to speak to them, you visit them, you talk to them, it's such a breath of fresh air. It's when you think, wow, that I was so impressed by their godliness, by their prayer life, by the type of person they are. And you come away thinking, Lord, forgive me. I expected that meeting to be like that, and it turned out like this. We cannot judge. And it's just wrong for us to try and pigeonhole people. And yet, we do this. So we judge. And our thoughts are often evil, especially when we discriminate. But it leads to action. And that's what James is saying here.

[20:54] Look at how they treated. Go back to the dictionary definition of discrimination. The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories. It's how you treat them. Our attitude, our values, affects how we respond. How we treat. You sit here. You stand there. I'm avoiding them.

They make me feel awkward. They're hard work. They're hard maintenance for us. And it shouldn't be. And that's James' whole point here. We are to treat everybody equally. Jesus did this. He

ministered to his own people, but he also ministered in the Gentile regions and in Samaria. People were very different from him and his culture and so forth. He even washed the feet of Judas, as you'll be thinking that this week, Judas, who would betray him, he still washed his feet. And so two things I want to mention under this discrimination very quickly. God. If we profess to have the life of God in us, God doesn't have favorites. The character of God is this. Romans 2.11, Paul says very simply, for God does not show favoritism. Ephesians 6.9, and masters, treat your slaves in the same way.

Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. God does not show favoritism. Now, as I was thinking of this, I thought, how do you get round the point where God does choose? The very verse that is a backdrop to this, God chose to give us life. And I think, does God have favorites? Am I a favorite when members of my family haven't been chosen? Am I his favorite? I don't think you can look at it that way.

Remember that when God chose us, if you're familiar with, well, there's right to mention these things, the five points of Calvinism. I wonder when the last time that phrase was ever mentioned in this church, the total depravity of man, that there is nothing in us to commend us to God. We are under the wrath of God. We are sinners by nature. So, when God chose us, it's not because he saw that we, John's a great guy. He's just a good, I see his heart. I was under the wrath of God. I deserve nothing from God. And therefore, if God chooses me, it has to be unconditionally. And that is what the second point of those five points is, tulip tea, total depravity, unconditional election. God chose us. Paul mentions this in 2 Timothy 1.9. And he has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time. That should humble you, but that should thrill you as well, that God chose you. I don't know God's purpose. I don't know why he should choose to remove the scales from my eyes and show. I do not know. It humbles me. It causes me to rejoice. But I know that he chose me unconditionally. It wasn't because I'm his favorite. And I do not know why. There was nothing to commend me to him. So, in that sense, yes, God chooses, but it's not based on favoritism.

[24 : 28] We do not know why he chose and so forth, why he chooses certain people. We do not know. But he doesn't have favorites. So, the Scripture makes this plain. For me, I don't get hung up on why God doesn't choose every single person. I'm blown away by the fact that God chooses anyone. God chooses one person. That should amaze us. How can even one person be saved? Because if one person's to be saved, it would still require the blood of his Son. And therefore, the fact that God could even save one just blows my switches. I think that is the most amazing thing. So, I don't get hung up on why he's not saving the whole world all at once. He's the Savior of the world, but he is the God who doesn't show favoritism, but he chose to give us birth. We do not know fully why this is. But what about Christians? Do we have favorites? Do we discriminate? This is what's often leveled against us. Discrimination covers many things. Race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disabled, unborn child over the mother and so forth, religious beliefs, even membership of golf clubs and so forth. It's just for men, not for women. There's discrimination almost throughout every aspect of life. But going back to our definition, discrimination is the unfair and prejudicial treatment of people. That's the dictionary definition of discrimination. Now, the dictionary definition of prejudicial is this, a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience. I remember having a conversation with some—it was an elder, actually—and a classic example of somebody's opinion, no based on any clear guidance. It was almost embarrassing to mention it. He said, talking about Roman Catholics, he says, do you not think they're different? It's something about their eyes, he said.

And I thought, unbelievable. Really? That was him. There's something about their eyes. So he'd pigeonholed them. And that was a conclusion he came to. Still unbelievable. Anyway, that's what he said.

Or we just dislike people. And you can see why that, your prejudice. But for the Christian, it's not about our opinions. If we say that something is wrong and we speak out against something's wrong, like Monday night, maybe the conversion, are we right to say that this is right and this is wrong to somebody who's living a particular lifestyle, what that is. Is that just our opinion? It is not.

If it was just our opinion, we would be prejudicial. We would be discriminating in that way. But there's such a thing as truth and error. There's such a thing as right and wrong, as biblical and

unbiblical.

And what matters is God's Word. This is God's rulebook, God's handbook. When we obey this, not just as Christians, but humankind, when we obey this, this is not only the manual where we are blessed, but it is a loving thing to do. Remember, truth does not rejoice in error or wrong. The unloving thing to do is to say nothing. The loving thing to do is to say, this is actually wrong.

[28 : 02] We don't function as God intended when we live in this particular way. That is not our opinion. Others say, that's just your opinion. You're just a bitter Christian, blah, blah, blah. We base it on the Word of God. Unless it's based on God's Word correctly expounded, then we would just be opinionated or prejudicial or discriminatory. But we can't be accused of this when we believe as many others believe in what they believe, but we believe that this is a loving thing to do, and we point certain things out. So, that's all I'll say in that. But the problem is, and one of the commentators says this, many conservative Christians vote against whatever issue without balancing positive actions to show them Christ's love, making the legislation merely judgmental rather than fully scriptural. And what he's basically saying here, sometimes as Christians, we can have this attitude, well, we're again, it's just all negative. It's just kind of, we don't like it, down with it, down with that sort of thing. And that's, we kind of develop that attitude. Well, Christians, we know what you believe. You're just against this.

But in this passage, mercy triumphs over judgment. That's what James says. We need to balance whatever we believe by love, by showing, I might not agree with what you're doing, but I will love you. I will show you love. I will show you mercy. And that is what Christians are not very good at, communicating that. We say we love the sinner, but we don't like their sin in that sense. But we're not always good at showing that. And we need to perhaps work on this as well. So, Christians are to show love and mercy. Mercy triumphs over all.

Somebody said that the foot of the cross is level ground. We all come the same way. We're all sinners saved by grace. Secondly, very quickly, anti-favoritism is not only discriminatory, we are prejudiced, or we can be. It's anti-gospel. And that's what James reminds them of. He reminds them right away in verse 1 of their faith, of what they believe in. Look, look what he says. Brothers and sisters, what do they call them? Believers in our glorious Lord Jesus must not show favoritism. He's speaking about their faith now. They are believers. What do they believe? They believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins. They are saved by grace. This is a complete game changer. This is why they cannot show favoritism. He says this in verses 5 and 6. Has God not chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith?

Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth.

But God chose the foolish things of the world, the weak things, the low things, the despised things, the things that are not to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

[31 : 11] It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. We cannot boast in anything of ourself. We can't say, I'm not associating with them because I'm above that. We cannot say this.

There's a great verse, I think it's in 1 Corinthians 4, 7. I remember it always in the authorized version. Who maketh thee to differ? Or, in a more modern version, who makes you different? Why do you act as if you have grace and love and mercy? And therefore, we have to show this to others. We cannot act as if, who maketh thee to differ? And we have, we know God's mercy. If somebody says, no other attribute of mercy refused. And therefore, instead of evaluating and so forth, we need to show mercy. That is what James wants to remind them of. You were not impressive.

And you have this great passage in Romans. After this, John says, I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every people and language standing before the throne.

That word language struck me this week. I could learn a completely different language that I didn't know, I couldn't understand. And God saved them. Before the throne. And in front of the Lamb, they were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches. This great picture of every tribe and tongue and nation, no one superior, no nation ahead of others, waving palm branches. That's the gospel.

[32 : 47] That is the heart of God. To love all. Favoritism and misjudging and treating people differently is anti-gospel. Thirdly, it's also foolish. That's what James wants to mention. He gives them three questions very quickly. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you in those days? And even today, it's the rich that sometimes look down on us. They're impressed by wealth and so forth. And they think, well, you're just a poor Christian. The other one, are they not the ones dragging you to court? It's the powerful and often the rich that give Christians the hardest time. The government, local government, officials, they are the one that we have to have a meeting on Monday night because of their legislation. They have more power than us. They can say things we have to go along with.

And he's basically saying this, we need to recognize this. Are they not the ones who blaspheme, the noble name, the educated, the wealthy? I'm amazed at the number of people that sometimes, whenever you get folk going through university, they often come out the other end in their mind, convinced there is no God. They might have been open to God before, but the universities and the teaching and their friends have explained them all away, and there is no God. The educated, the wealthy, the powerful are often those that are so anti-church and anti-what we believe. And that's what James is basically saying. Beware of who you run after and who you try to please. Those are often the ones that give us grief. Fourthly, and with this, I'll finish. Favoritism is sinful, and that is very serious. James mentions this. He doesn't mince his word. Tells us right at the start, do not show favoritism. And he tells us why. Because it is sinful. We're lawbreakers.

God created us. He created everyone equal. And in Christ, humanity is fully restored. It's one of the greatest things when you become a Christian. Galatians 3, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male and female. You're all one in Christ. Colossians 3, there is no Jew, Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free. Christ is all and is in all.

In other words, God created us equal. The gospel restores us as equal. But if we show favoritism, we sin. Look at verse 9. If you show favoritism, you sin. Well, we're not just doing something that's not as good as others. We're not just being unloving, we're sinning. And he mentions this. It's very strong words. He says, you sin and are convicted by the law as a lawbreaker. What law have we broken?

We've broken the royal law, which you will find in Leviticus 19, 18. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge among your own people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. And James tells us, if we break that, we are guilty of breaking all the law. It is that serious. We can't say, well, it doesn't matter. He says, if you break one, you're broken. Paul says the same thing in Galatians 5. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command. Love your neighbor as yourself. It is as serious as that. When we show favoritism, we break the law. We break the royal law.

[36 : 24] And it's very serious. And he says to us, therefore, don't do it. It's sinful. And also, don't do it because you're going to be judged. Act, he says, and think and speak as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. And he says, if you don't show mercy and love and grace to others, you won't be shown this. You won't lose your salvation, but we will be judged by the same.

Jesus said the same thing. Matthew 7, 2. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. So, James here highlights a problem in this community. They were showing favoritism to some and discriminating against others. When we do this, when we judge with evil thoughts, we are discriminating. When there's no ground for this, it is anti-gospel. We forget that we are not impressive to God. There's nothing to commend us.

We are no better than anyone else. We were shown love and mercy. We should show this to all. It's foolish as well when we show favoritism to some and not to others. But more importantly, perhaps, it is sinful. It breaks the royal law. If we keep this one, we would do well. So, the mature Christian recognizes this and shuns favoritism. I've gone through that fairly quickly this morning.

But may it not be said of us that we do this. Yes, we can be people that we might prefer, but we cannot treat others differently. I, as a pastor, have to show grace, along with the other elders, to everybody equally. And it's your duty as well to do the same. Maybe there's people in the church that you've never really invited socially or spoken to. Maybe it's worth doing that. Get to know people.

Get to chat to them. Get to realize that everybody's impressive in their own way. But show mercy, show love, show grace to one and all. May that be the case. Let's stand and we'll sing, His mercy is

more.

[38 : 33] Thank you.

Praise the Lord.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

His mercy is more Praise the Lord His mercy is more Stronger than darkness You every morn Our sins they are many His mercy is more What riches of kindness He lavished on us His blood was a payment His life was the cost We stood in a debt We could never afford Our sins they are many His mercy is more Praise the Lord His mercy is more Stronger than darkness You every morn Our sins they are many His mercy is more Praise the Lord His mercy is more Stronger than darkness You every morn Our sins they are many His mercy is more Our sins they are many His mercy is more You sang that very well You sang that like you really meant it And that really We praise the Lord for His grace And His mercy Just as we were singing that I remember that the dove Have their service at half past one Here on Thursday Is that open to all?

[41 : 49] Is that? So if you can make that as well That's a great encouragement So if you can make it Thursday Half past one In here That would be great as well We've got a busy week May the Lord help us Lead us, guide us Let me close in prayer Our loving Heavenly Father Lord That was our closing worship This morning His mercy is more Despite our many sins And Father We praise and thank you Lord That this will occupy your mind Lord during this coming week We pray that you will lead us And guide us On this holy week Father bless our thoughts Bless our meditations Bless our prayers Bless our readings Lord That Christ will become More and more precious to us As we consider again What His death means To each one of us So Father Just part us now With your blessing And we ask these things In Jesus' name Amen Amen Please feel free to grab the books And if you're a man Of the male of the species Please feel free to make my day And come and see me Okay Thank you.