The Guilt of Favoritism

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[0:00] If you would, open your Bibles with me to James chapter 2. We'll be continuing our study of James, picking up in verse 8 and going through verse 13 tonight.

And about three months after I got my license, I was on my way home from hanging out with friends.
And I had one friend in my car riding shotgun and then my sister was in the back seat. My friend lived by us and so we're going to drop him off on the way home and then head home ourselves.
And as I'm driving down Mustang Road, I'm headed north. I see these red and blue lights behind me. And I start panicking. I start freaking out.
Like, I hadn't really done anything wrong, I thought, but man, just the panic sets in. And so I pulled over into the boomerang parking lot at, you know, 1130 at night or something. So it was empty.
[1:11] Officer gets out, taps on my window and he says, do you know why I pulled you over tonight? And I said, no, I have no idea. But my voice is like shaking. I'm terrified. And I'm like, he's going to think I'm guilty of something because I'm so scared. And it turns out I had a plate light out.

Okay? So on your license plate, you've got multiple lights. I had two on that car. One of them was working. One of them was out. And so he pulled me over, just gave me a warning.
I was thankful that he let me off. And I got home, told my dad, and was relieved that I didn't get a ticket three months into driving. And my parents had said if I ever got a ticket, I would be grounded from my car one day for every dollar on the ticket.
So I was like, this could be tough. But I got out of it without a ticket. And but then the next morning I woke up and I was kind of frustrated. I was like, why did he pull me?
Like shouldn't you be out fighting crime or something like that? Like I had a plate light out. Like come on. You should be like catching criminals or lawbreakers or something. And my dad was like, well, that is how they catch them. And technically, your vehicle was not in accordance with the law.
[2:18] Like you have to have lights on your car. And so that may seem like a small thing compared to robbing a bank. But that is out of step with the law. That is against the law.

And so he was right to pull you over. And that's kind of a similar line of thinking to how James approaches our topic tonight. He's going to continue talking about favoritism or partiality, which we began looking at last week.
And this church is guilty of showing favoritism. And he shows one brief picture of a rich man coming in and getting special treatment. He's shown favoritism.
And then a poor man coming in and kind of getting disrespected and mistreated because of his poverty. But these Christians seem to think that that sin wasn't that big of a deal.
And even as we talk about it, as we think about it, like, yeah, that's not that big of a deal. Like that's kind of just how the world works. Like if you're rich and influential, people like you and people want you in their circle. If you look poor or you're unimportant, people just kind of ignore you.
[3:21] That's kind of just how the world works. Why is James spending time talking about this at all? And the sin of favoritism is actually not just silly.

It's very sinful and it's sinister. It's evil. He calls it evil. It's treating someone based on your preferences or on their status.
And so last week he tried to show that it was foolish. So we saw the folly of favoritism. It just doesn't make sense. But they didn't think that this sin was that big of a deal.
And so James not only shows the folly of favoritism, but tonight in verses 8 through 13, we'll see the guilt of favoritism. James is going to drive home the point that this sin is a big deal.
This sin is not small in the grand scheme of things. James is going to take aim at their actions and show them why this is such a sinful way to act.

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[4:28] Favoritism breaks God's law and favoritism brings God's judgment. It breaks God's law and it brings God's judgment.

Those will be our two points this evening. So number one, it breaks God's law. It breaks God's law. And we'll see this in verses 8 through 11. So I'll read verses 8 through 11 for us.
James says in verse 8, If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well.
But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.
For he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder. If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
[5:31] I'll go ahead and read 12 and 13 for us. Why not? So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. So our first point is that it breaks God's law in verses 8 through 11. And so he says in verse 8, If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, and then he quotes Leviticus 19, 8, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
Loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills the law. It makes you righteous according to the law's standards.
If you love your neighbor, you will be perfect in terms of the law. Because if you love your neighbor, you will not sin against them.
And this is actually how Paul talks about this commandment. So save your spot there in James and go back with me to the book of Romans. A couple of books to your left. Romans chapter 13. Romans chapter 13. Paul's talking about the importance of loving your neighbor as yourself.
[6:57] And in Romans 13, starting in verse 8, Paul says this to these Roman Christians, Owe no one anything except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

And then he explains, starting in verse 9, For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, shall not steal, shall not covet, and any other commandment. Are summed up in this word.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.
Loving your neighbor fulfills the law. You can go back with me to James chapter 2. And so as we think about the scripture that Kashawn read earlier for us, Matthew 22, someone asks Jesus, What's the most important commandment?
There's, you know, hundreds of commandments given in the Old Testament. Which one is the most important? And Jesus rightly answers, To love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
[8:00] And then Jesus says, And the second is like it. To love your neighbor as yourself. And so as you think about the Ten Commandments, Maybe some of you could list off all Ten Commandments.

You can divide those up into two groups. There's a group of loving God. So commands like not breaking the Sabbath, not taking his name in vain, not worshiping false gods. And then there are commands toward your neighbor.
So that's going to be things like murder, adultery, stealing, lying. And so Jesus says we can sum up the entire law by saying, Love God and love others. If you love God, you will not sin against him.
If you love your neighbor, you will not sin against people around you. And so when James quotes this commandment, it certainly refers to more than just favoritism.
But that's how James is applying it here. He's saying, If you show favoritism, you're not being loving. You're not being kind to either the rich person or the poor person.
[8:58] If you pay attention, it says, Love your neighbor as yourself. Now there's a popular way to teach this commandment today that goes something like this.

The Bible tells us to love our neighbor as ourself. Therefore, you need to love yourself before you can love others. That's how they'll teach this commandment.
And that's completely wrong. That's not what this commandment means. Jesus teaches this. The Old Testament teaches this. And James is applying it here as well.
Love your neighbor as yourself. Now, you need to love yourself as opposed to hating yourself. Hating yourself isn't good. But all this commandment means is it is natural for you to think about

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yourself.
It's natural for you to keep yourself safe. It's natural for you when you're hungry to eat a sandwich. You naturally take care of yourself. And so what this commandment is saying is treat your neighbor as if he were yourself.
[10:02] Think about what his needs are and meet those needs. Think about what he might want and try to fulfill those desires. Be proactive in your service to him.

That's what this commandment means is looking out for your neighbor. Looking out for what he might want. What might be good for someone in your life. And so really, this is the golden rule. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7 that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And he says, for in this is all of the law and the prophets.
If you just do to others what you would like them to do to you, you will fulfill the law. You will be righteous in God's sight. And now the question is, who is our neighbor?
Is this just referring to the people that live next door to us? Is this referring to people in our neighborhood? Really, this just means anyone you come in contact with. Anyone you come in contact with at school, anyone in your family, any of your friends, you are commanded to love them because God has placed them in your path.
[11:07] And Jesus teaches that in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. Someone asks him a question and says, who is my neighbor? And he tells the story of this Gentile taking care of this man who was robbed and beaten and left for dead.

And then Jesus basically says, this guy that took care of him was a neighbor to him. He fulfilled the obligations of a friend to him. And so if you do these things perfectly, if you love God and love your neighbor, James says, you are doing well at the end of verse eight.
Excellently done. Well done. Because you won't sin against God and you won't sin against others. Verse nine, but if you show partiality or if you show favoritism, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
Why is favoritism a sin? Why is partiality a sin? Because it's a failure to love your neighbor. It's a failure to love people in your church.
It's a failure to love people you come in contact with through friends or family. And he says, it's a sin and you're convicted by the law as transgressors.
[12:22] That word to transgress means to cross a line. And so if you think about sin, what is sin? Well, sin and transgression are synonyms. They refer to similar realities, but we can think of sin as falling short of a standard.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We can think of transgression as going beyond, crossing the line. And so you can sin by not doing something that God's commanded you to do, or you can sin by doing something that God told you not to do.
Sin and transgression, both referring to different aspects of sin. But if you show favoritism, you've crossed the line. You're convicted by the law.
And this church is guilty of sinning in this way. James is spending 13 verses talking about this sin that this church is regularly committing. But I want you to remember the scenario with me that James talked about.
What did he talk about? He talked about a rich guy coming in and a poor guy coming in and both of them getting different treatment based on their appearance. But where did they show up to?
[13:30] They showed up to church. They were guests that Sunday morning for their worship service. That's James' example. And we have guests with us every Sunday morning.

We have guests with us here tonight. I've met a couple of them. We have guests every week. And so if you've been here on a Sunday, someone stands up every single week and is like, if you're a guest here with us, please find the guest card and fill it out and drop it in the offering box.
Why do we say that? Because we have guests every single week. And you may think that's not important to show hospitality to guests. But every single member we have in our church was a guest at some point in our church.
Everyone here who comes to Elevate regularly, there was one time you walked in here for the first time. You were a guest here. Maybe that was in sixth grade. Maybe that was in 10th grade.
But at one point, you had a first time attendance here at Elevate. How did you feel that first night you walked into this room full of people? How did you feel when you walked in and didn't really know anyone?

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[14:32] Maybe a friend invited you. Maybe you had a lot of friends here, but your group was new to this room as sixth graders. How did you feel? It's good for you to remember that feeling because you can be helpful to people who walk in here for the first time even now.

You probably wanted people to talk to you. You probably didn't want to sit by yourself. And so remember that and be on the lookout for people that that might be true of. Look for people you don't recognize and go introduce yourself to them.
Treat people how you would have liked to be treated on your first night in this room or your first morning at church. I remember when I was in sixth grade, I didn't yet to go to this church, but I was in sixth grade and my friends were kind of acting fools.
And so they were being super disruptive during service. And so to send a message, I like sat away from them. So I kind of sat by myself just because I didn't want to be associated with them because they were causing disruptions during the service and things like that.
And there was a senior that I knew. His name was Philip Spalding. What a name. And he came up to me and he said, Joey, do you want to come sit with us? And at the time I was a sixth grader and I was like, no, I'm good.
[15:48] That's actually what I told him. And because I was trying to prove a point to my friends, but I'm sure he was like, who's this sixth grader? Just said no. But would that have been cool for him or his friend group? No.

Having a sixth grader sit with him, that wouldn't have been cool in the world's eyes. That was an incredibly loving thing. He noticed me sitting by myself, walked up to me, and invited me to sit with him and his friends.
That was an incredibly kind and caring thing to do. And I just shut him down like a savage. But as I look back, I'm like, that was so kind of him. He was looking out for me.
He had my best interests in mind. He didn't want me to be alone in that way. And so I'm thankful for that. And I think that's the kind of context James is thinking about here. How do you treat guests that come into your church?
How do you treat people that you don't know who come in? Do you treat them based on how they look? Do you treat them based on what they can maybe do for you? Or do you just love them as a human being who's made in God's image?
[16:48] Christianity isn't something that causes us to just keep to ourselves and never talk to anyone. The Bible calls us to love people that we come in contact with. And so if you show favoritism, you aren't being loving.

And so for some of us in this room, some of us are outgoing. Some of us are not outgoing. If you're outgoing, raise your hand. You just naturally like to talk to people and it's fun for you.
Yeah, Rickson, put your hand up. So you're just naturally outgoing. Okay, if you're not outgoing, I'm not gonna ask you to raise your hand so you can calm down. It's okay. That's okay, you know.
So just do what you need to do to be outgoing. Okay? So we as Christians, I think we're called to be outgoing. And so for me, that's not my natural bent.
I would rather, if I just sat alone in a room all day, I would be so happy. But that's not good. That's not good for anyone. And so do what you need to do to be outgoing and to be loving. Notice people who are our guests.
[17:49] Notice people who you don't know and just introduce yourself to them. Ask them how their day was. Ask them what they're interested in. Be loving to them. Love people as yourself. Treat people how you want to be treated.

Now, James says at the end of verse nine that you're convicted by the law as transgressors. That seems like a little harsh. That seems kind of strong for James to say, this is just one sin, James. Like this isn't even actually talked about much in the Ten Commandments. Like we're talking about partiality here. Like this can't be that big of a deal. How can you say that we're violating the law?
Well, look at what he says in verse 10. Whoever keeps the whole law, if you keep all the commandments, but fail in one point, whoever does that has become guilty of all of it.
And so James says, if you break one command that God has given, you are guilty of breaking everything he's ever commanded. If you break one law that he sets in place, you're guilty of breaking the whole law.
[18:54] And if you're like me, you're probably thinking right now, that doesn't make sense. That's not fair. That doesn't really make much sense. If you get a speeding ticket, that doesn't mean you

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are actually guilty of murder.

How can you possibly say that breaking one command, even a lighter command, makes you guilty of even some of the weightier stuff like murder or adultery? How can this be fair?
Well, notice how James reasons here. He's going to talk about, he's going to give an example of breaking two very heavy commands. One's murder, one's adultery, cheating on your spouse.
He's going to compare those two things, but notice how personal he is when he talks about God's commandments. Why is it that if you break one commandment, you're guilty of every commandment?
Verse 11, For he who said. Why is this a big deal? Why is it that if you break one command, you're in violation of all of them?
[20:06] Because this isn't just a random list of commands. This is God's voice. This is God speaking to us. Any command you break is a violation of a relationship with God.

And so he says, For he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder. Sin is against God. All sin is.
It disobeys God. And so the God who gave one command gave all the others as well. And so when you break one of the commands, you are breaking God's law.
And so James says the law is a unified whole. It's one piece. Because it's got one source. It comes from one person. It comes from God himself.
God spoke every single word. And so to break one law is to break a relationship with him. And he gives an example of two weighty commands here.
[21:06] So the God who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder. He goes on in verse 11. If you do not commit adultery, so if you don't cheat on your spouse, but do murder, you become a transgressor of the law.

Okay, so if you think about our society, our laws here in 21st century United States, how many laws do you have to break to be a lawbreaker?
One, right? You break one law, you're a lawbreaker. How many laws do you have to keep to be a law keeper? Well, all of them, right?
And so just in that one picture, we kind of understand where James is coming from. Like, you just break one command and you break the law. And you have to keep all the commands in order to keep the law.
And so if you view God's commands as just like trail mix, like there's a bunch of just individual things kind of thrown in there, they're kind of disconnected and don't really have much in common. If you view God's commandments like that, this won't make sense to you.
[22:10] But what God commands us isn't just a random list of things to do, this is a revelation of who he is. It's revealing what he's like and what his standard is.

Now, you take any false religion, any works-based religion where they're trying to do good things in order to go to heaven, they're going to look at God's commands as just individual pieces that are disconnected.
So I keep that one, I get points, I break that one, I lose points. If I get enough points, I can go to heaven. As long as I avoid losing points, I can go to heaven at the end.
They're viewing all of the commands as just individual pieces that don't really fit together. But what the Bible teaches is that God's commands are all unified. And so if you break one of God's commands, if you disobey him on one point, the Bible calls you a rebel and a sinner who's rebelled against God and you're worthy of judgment.
And I am too. And there's no coming back from that. You can't undo that. You can't become a non-lawbreaker once you've violated God's law. There's one time I was driving home from Kansas City.
[23:24] So it's like a five-hour drive. It's coming back to Mustang. And when I was about three hours out, I was behind a semi-truck and the semi-truck just like kicked up a little rock, like not big at all, but I kind of saw it tumbling towards my car down the highway.

And I hit it and I was going, you know, like 75. It hits the bottom left corner of my windshield, chips it just a little bit. It made a super loud noise. I'm like, okay, that's fine. It's just a little chip.
By the time I got back home, like half of my windshield had completely cracked. So just as the car's on the road hitting other bumps, the windshield just kind of shakes and it continues to crack.

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My windshield got hit in one spot and the whole thing was broken. That little chip just kind of splintered out from there and the crack went across like half of my windshield.
Because my windshield is one piece. And so if you break it at one spot, the whole thing is broken. Or if you think about a chain, if you're trying to pull something with your truck or pull another truck out or pull up a stump or something, if just one of those links breaks, the whole chain is broken.
[24:31] The whole chain doesn't work anymore. Just one little link in that chain, if it breaks, the whole thing is broken. The chain is ruined. And that's how the Bible presents God's law to us. That's how it presents God's commands to us is a unified whole that if any piece of it is broken, the whole thing is broken.

You're a sinner. I'm a sinner. And we can't do anything to undo that. You can't reverse that in any way. Now why is James, again, spending so many verses talking about this?
Why is he making this point? Well, it seems like this church was like, yeah, I mean, this is probably not right, how we're treating people, but it's just how the world works. It's not that big of a deal. But look at the example James gives us again at the end of verse 11.
If you do not commit adultery, but do murder, you become a transgressor of the law. Can you imagine someone coming into church or anywhere and saying, you know, I didn't cheat on my spouse.
All I did was murder someone. That's all. I mean, chill out, everyone. Like, that was just one command I broke. Like, I stayed faithful to my wife. All I did was take someone's life. James shows you that that's a ridiculous way of thinking.
[25:52] Like, we wouldn't think that way with these heavier commands of God's word. If you break one of them, like, who cares what else you kept? You broke the law. You violated what God said. And you can imagine some of these church members in the church that James is writing to saying, hey, all I did, I just gave a rich guy a better seat.

All I did was just mistreat someone who's poor. He doesn't matter anyway. That's all I did. That's not that big of a deal. And James is saying, you might think that favoritism isn't a big deal, but you're breaking the second greatest commandment to love your neighbor as yourself.
You think you can do that and get away with it? Do you think God's going to let you get off the hook for that? It's really what we see is there's really not such a thing as a small sin.
There are sins we can compare to others and say, that one's really bad, but one sin, you violate God's law, you're separated from God because of your sin. There's no such thing as an unpunishable sin.
God will judge everything with perfect justice. He will not show favoritism and the way he judges. Even if this seemingly small sin was the only wrong thing you ever did, you would deserve to go to hell because you violated God's law.
[27:15] You broke his word. And so that leads us secondly to it brings God's judgment. So favoritism breaks God's law.

Number two, it brings God's judgment. And we see this in verses 12 and 13. And James just kind of brings this home in verse 12 and says, so speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.
You will be judged. I will be judged. We will all stand before God one day. You will stand before Christ one day.
Even if you don't believe him, even if you don't take him that seriously, you will stand in front of him one day very soon. And he will judge you based on how you've lived this life. He will assess me on how I've lived my life.
Everyone in this room will be judged. Everyone in our church will be judged. Everyone in this world will be judged without favoritism, without any partiality.
[28:24] God is going to examine your life and he's going to examine it based on how you lived. And notice what James says.

He says, so speak and act. This applies both to speech and our actions. So be careful before you send a text. Be careful before you post.
Be careful before you say something on the phone. Be careful before you think a certain way. God keeps the receipts. God won't forget anything.
And everything's going to be brought to light. And so live in light of that judgment. Live in light of that assessment that God is going to give us on the last day.

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And he says that we'll be judged under the law of liberty at the end of verse 12. Back in chapter 1, verse 25, this is how James refers to the Bible. He calls it the law of liberty.
[29:20] He refers to all of Scripture that way. And so what he says is, Scripture's going to be your judge. You're going to be judged by every word that's written in this book. How are you living?

How are you talking? How are you treating people? All of it will be brought to light by Christ. And so live in light of that.
Speak and act as those who are to be judged. And James says in verse 13, For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.
If you never show mercy to anyone, if you never love your neighbor, how do you think God will judge you? If you never love anyone, if you never show mercy to anyone, do you expect to receive mercy from God?
Do you expect to receive love from God? You'll receive no mercy. You'll receive no love. Not because mercy is something you do in order to gain mercy from God.
[30:33] Not because mercy is a good work you do so that God accepts you, so that you get out of judgment free. But because the people who show mercy are the people who have received mercy.

If you show mercy, if you show love, that's proof that you have received mercy, that you have received love. You can't earn God's mercy.
It's called mercy. It's unearned. It's undeserved. And so if you earned mercy, it wouldn't be mercy. It'd be a paycheck. But you can observe who's been saved by looking at how they live, by how they treat other people.
God's mercy in you should flow out from you to others if you're saved. If you're a Christian, it should be observable based on how you treat other people and how you live your life.
God has forgiven you and so you should forgive. God has been patient with you and so you should be patient. God has shown you mercy and so you should be merciful.
[31:45] And he concludes with this. He says, mercy triumphs over judgment. I think this is both a theological statement in general and I think this is also a personal statement applying to each individual Christian.

If you're a Christian, mercy has triumphed over judgment. God has given you mercy and has showed you mercy that will be stronger than any judgment. But I think this is also speaking personally too.
If you show mercy to others, if you show true neighbor-like love to others, the mercy you show will triumph over judgment, will triumph in the face of judgment because merciful and loving attitudes toward others are evidence that that person has received mercy, that person has received love from God.
Jesus told a story in Matthew 18 about an unforgiving servant. And so there was a man who owed his life as a debt.
He could have never worked all his life to pay off the debt that he owed and he appeared before his master and said, please forgive me, I can't pay this back. And the master forgave him the debt.
[33:11] And that guy that had been forgiven, that guy that had had his debt paid, you'd expect him to be merciful towards others, but then he finds someone that owes him lunch money and he beats him up.

And when the master hears about it, he throws him in jail. He says, I forgave you all this debt and you couldn't forgive someone a much smaller debt.
And then Jesus says, he will not get out until he's paid the last penny. If you've received forgiveness of your sins, if you destined for hell as a sinner like I was, if we've received mercy, we can forgive people when they offend us.
We can forgive people when they sin against us. That's not a big deal compared to what we did to God, how we had sinned against the Lord. And so will we live in light of the judgment? Will we live in light of the gospel and the forgiveness that we've received?
We will stand before Christ one day soon. What will you say to him about how you've lived your life? And much, much more importantly, what will he say to you about how you've lived your life?
[34:19] What will he say to me about how I've lived my life? God has been gracious to us. And if you're a Christian in here, you know the gospel, you've turned from your sins and believed in Christ, you've received mercy and praise God for that.

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But just because you've received mercy doesn't mean your obligation to obey God is now over. It doesn't mean you can live however you want. You need to obey him because there is still a judgment that is to come.
As we think about mercy triumphing over judgment, I want you to think about the cross of Christ where he died. That's the place where mercy and judgment met.
That's the place where God's judgment against sin and God's mercy that triumphs over judgment met together as Jesus took our sins on himself, even though he was innocent, and received the judgment for our sins.
And God's mercy for us triumphed over that judgment. Jesus conquered death. Jesus conquered our sin because mercy triumphs over judgment.
[35:32] And so do you show mercy to others? Are you forgiving of others? Do you love others as yourself? Again, you're not earning God's favor.

You're not earning his mercy. You're just giving evidence of it in your life. John MacArthur is one of my favorite pastors and theologians, and he is with the Lord now.
He died about a year ago. But he was famous for saying that there are only two kinds of religion in the whole world. There's the religion of divine accomplishment and the religion of human achievement.
And so you can put every single religion in the entire world into one of two buckets. The religion of human achievement. What can you do? How can you work your way to God?
How can you earn favor with him? How can you do enough good stuff to outweigh the bad stuff you've done? Every false religion fits into that category. There's only one religion that proclaims divine accomplishment, that God has done it all, that Jesus has paid it all, and that's Christianity.
[36:37] That's the Bible. That's the gospel. And so there are people who will mock Christianity. They'll make fun of us for saying that Jesus is the only way to the Father, that Jesus is the only way to receive life.

And they'll say like, yeah, Christianity is different from Islam, which is different from Mormonism, which is different from Buddhism. But really, all of these religions just look different because they have different perspectives.
And so they'll say things like, God is really on top of this mountain. And the Christian is climbing up the mountain from this way. The Muslim is climbing up the mountain from the opposite side. And so they look different because they have different perspectives, but they're all going to the same place. They're all striving for the same goal of reaching God through good works. That's not a good analogy because Christianity isn't about God being in heaven and us working our way to him.
The Bible tells us that God came down and emptied himself and took on human form and that Jesus died for us. That he is good for us so that we, through trust in him, aren't trying to earn his favor, but we're living in the full stream of his mercy and grace.
[37:55] And we see this in the cross where mercy and judgment met. And Christ took our punishment on himself so that we can live in the freedom that he provides.

And if you've received that mercy, praise God, live accordingly. And if you've not received that mercy, if you've not believed in Jesus, mercy can triumph over judgment in your life tonight.
If you trust in Christ and call out to him for forgiveness. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for these students and for all they mean to my life and all they mean to the life of our church.
we thank you for the mercy that you've shown to us. You did not show favoritism towards us, but while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
You sent your son while we were rebels and when we didn't know you and you've revealed yourself to us through your word. And so we thank you for that because we don't deserve it.
[39:03] And so I pray that we'd also be merciful to others, that we would love others as you have loved us. Not because people around us are always worthy of it, but because we remember that we weren't worthy of your love and still aren't.

And so I pray for students here that are saved, that you would help encourage them through your word, that you'd help them to show mercy and remember to avoid favoritism.
I pray for students here who are not saved, that you would open their eyes, that you'd help them understand the gospel and see what you've done for sinners through your son, Jesus. I pray that they trust in you for eternal life.
It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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