The Folly of Favoritism

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[0:00] If you would open your Bibles with me to the book of James. Tonight we'll be in James 2 verses 1 through 7.

! What would your reaction be to SGA walking into the room?
I would freak out. I would lose my mind. I would be like, man, SGA is the best. Let's take a picture with him. Let's talk to him. I wonder, what if he starts coming here? What if he starts coming to our church? What if he posts on social media and I'm in the background?
That would be sick. We start thinking all these things. Those would encapsulate some of our reactions to SGA walking in. Now imagine if as we're sitting here in Elevate, there's a homeless looking guy who walks in as well.
What would our reaction be to him? Very different. We wouldn't swarm him to talk to him. We'd probably stay away from him, keep our distance from him.
[1:20] We'd want SGA to be at the center of what we do. We'd want a chance to get to talk to him. Why is that? Why the difference?

Well, there are certainly levels to it. Certainly with the homeless looking guy, you might have your safety in mind or something like that. So there's some complexity to it. But our tendency is to think, SGA is here.
That's awesome. This other guy is here. What is he doing here? And that, my friends, is what the Bible calls partiality.
That is what the Bible calls, we could say, favoritism. Favoritism, or partiality as James is going to call it, takes a look at someone before it decides how they're going to treat him.
You kind of try to figure out who this person is before you decide how you're going to interact with them or how you're going to treat them, whether you treat them kindly or keep them at a distance.
[2:18] And favoritism is a nasty sin. It seems innocent on the surface. It seems like it's not that big of a deal. But favoritism can split families in half.

And favoritism can burn churches to the ground. If you remember last week, very end of chapter 1, James tells us to keep ourselves unstained from the world.
That's the mark of true religion is keeping oneself unstained from the world. And then from that command, he immediately goes on to describe the sin of partiality or the sin of favoritism.
And he applies it specifically to the issue of poverty or riches. Treating someone based on how much money they have. Treating someone based on how rich they appear to be.
The world loves to honor the rich and mistreat the poor. The world loves to make popular those who are wealthy and influential.
[3:27] And the world loves to mock and make fun of those who are poor. And the church can fall into this way of thinking as well. We are sinners. We're a collection of sinners.

And as individuals, we can fall into thinking this way. Valuing someone based on how much money they have or what they can do for us. And then we as a church can fall into this way of thinking as well.
And it may take an innocent form. It may take a form that seems reasonable or seems logical. Like there are some churches who every year, at the end of every year, they invite their top 25 givers to a dinner and talk to them about the next year.
What the church hopes to do. What the church hopes to accomplish. And that might seem innocent on the surface, but what is that? That's the partiality that James is talking about. It's showing favoritism to those who seem to have influence or have money.
And this was a significant issue in this church. Because as we'll see for the next two weeks, verses 1 through 13, James is going to be talking about this. This is one of the longest treatments of a

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specific sin that James gives in this entire book.
[4:37] And so this was a problem in the early church. And favoritism obviously goes beyond just money. It can apply to any number of things. But that's how James specifically is going to talk about it in our passage.

Let's read James 2, verses 1 through 7. James says,
We're going to look at favoritism. We're going to see an example of favoritism. And then why it's foolish. So favoritism, what it looks like, and why it's foolish.
So number one, favoritism. We see this in verse 1. James begins this chapter by saying, my brothers. And that's again a reminder of the familial love he has for his people.
He is their pastor. He cares about them. He views them as brothers and sisters in Christ. This is also kind of an indication that he's about to shift topics slightly.
[6:40] And so throughout this letter, he'll say, my brothers are my beloved brothers. And that's usually kind of beginning a new thought for James. And that's true here as well. My brothers, show no partiality.

As you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. He says, show no partiality. And so this is going on in their church.
He's telling them to stop it. They're showing favoritism to certain people. They're judging people based on external things. They're judging people based on how they look or what they feel like these people can do for them in society.
They're judging them based on appearance. They're judging them based on worldly preference. They're judging them based on what their flesh thinks is significant.
And as I mentioned, this kind of favoritism doesn't just apply to finances. This can apply to a number of things. James is specifically talking about finances here because this was what they were struggling with.
[7:43] But you could show favoritism to someone based on their looks, based on their personality, based on their money like James talks about, based on their influence, based on their ethnicity, based on their popularity, based on their intelligence, based on how well you get along with them personality-wise.

You can show favoritism in any number of ways. Favoritism is treating some people better than others based on your preferences or their status.
It's treating some people better than others based on your preferences or their status. What you like, what you enjoy, or who they are and what they can do for you.
So for example, you may hate your coach personally. If you play sports, you may hate your coach. And yet around your coach, you're like a star athlete.
You're just like trying to do the best you can so that he or she thinks well of you. That's a form of favoritism. That's a hypocritical favoritism.
[8:48] You don't like this person, but when they're watching, when they're around, you're trying to do what you can because they have influence over you. They can determine how well you do in that sport or how much playing time you get.

Again, James is going to be thinking about this in terms of people being rich or poor, and that's also a temptation for us as well. You could show a lot more grace to a rich friend you have because you want to keep getting invited over to their pool to swim.
You see things in their life that are out of line. You see things they do, but you don't want to call them out on it because, man, I really enjoy hanging out with them and spending time with them. That's a form of favoritism.
And so this affects all of us. We're all guilty of giving into this temptation. And this is how the world thinks. The world honors those who can do them favors.
The world treats well those people that can return the favor to them in some way. And this is sin.
[9:53] This is the exact opposite of what James calls us to do. Look back with me at chapter 1, verse 27. You'll remember this from last week.

He says, Now, true religion is going to do a lot more than just serve orphans and widows.
So James specifically mentions those two groups of people because they can't pay you back. They can't do you a favor in return. Service to this class of society is strictly for the goodness of what the Lord has called us to do.

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We would only serve people in this status because the Lord has called us to do it and not because we'll get some return on it or that they can repay a favor to us. And yet this church, time and time again, instead of serving people like widows and orphans, is catering to those who are rich.
They're only serving those who can make a return to them, who can repay the favor. And this is a sinful way of thinking. And if you look at that word in verse 1, partiality, it's a funny word, but that's a uniquely Christian word.
[11:13] Okay? So this word actually doesn't really exist before James uses it. And after James uses it, the only documents that use it are Christian documents.

And that's significant for a couple of reasons, but one of them is that Christianity is uniquely in a place to call this kind of behavior a sin. The world just accepts this way of thinking.
The world just thinks this makes sense. The world just says, okay, yeah, that checks out. You're advancing your career or you're helping your family out by compromising your morals to show favoritism to this person.
The world just accepts this. The world doesn't think this is wrong. But the Bible gives us a unique perspective that allows us to say, yeah, you can be rich and have become rich by being a bad person.
Most of the world thinks they're rich, they've done something right. They're rich, God is pleased with them. And Christianity is able to say, well, whether you're rich or poor, what determines who you are as a person is how you live.
[12:17] And so we don't show favor to people or mistreat people simply based on appearance or status, but the world operates that way.

And even if there is a godly person who's rich, is that person worthy of more honor than a godly person who's poor? No. No. Both are equally made in the image of God and saved by Christ and so they have the same value, the same status.
And James says, do not do this as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is belief in who Christ is, belief in what he's taught, belief in what he has done, and this is something these believers were actively struggling with.
faith. And James says, faith and favoritism don't match. Faith and favoritism do not go together. As you're holding the faith in Christ, stop showing favoritism to people based on their financial status.
And he calls Jesus the Lord of glory. glory. It's a pretty unique title for Jesus and James is usually using unique titles for who Jesus is.
[13:36] He calls him the Lord of glory. The Lord of glory. Paul calls Jesus this in 1 Corinthians 2.

We saw it on Sunday, in Sunday school. Paul says that the rulers of this age didn't understand God's wisdom because if they had understood his wisdom, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.
Those are two times the New Testament uses this name or this title for Jesus. And why is it significant here? Well, as you think about the Old Testament, the glory of God is prominent. The glory of God is kind of a visible showing of God's holiness.
It's a visible display of who God is and what his character is like. And so you'll see his glory appear and fill the temple as smoke. You'll see his glory go before Israel in the wilderness as a pillar of fire or a pillar of smoke, a pillar of cloud.
You'll see these shining beings appear representing God's glory. You'll see God's glory descend on the mountain as Moses receives the law as fire and smoke and lightning.
[14:42] There's a brightness to God's glory. And James is saying Jesus is that glory. He is the glory of God.

And the New Testament talks about this. Hebrews 1.3, he's the radiance of God's glory. John 1 says we have seen his glory, glories of the only son from the father. And so what the New Testament is teaching us is that when we read the Old Testament and hear about God's glory, we should be thinking about God's son.
That's who he is. He is a visible display of God's glory, a visible display of God's holiness and who God is. He reveals his character. And so it's significant theologically like we've just talked about, but it's also significant in terms of what he's going to be talking about because rich people have a certain amount of glory.
Rich people have a certain amount of flash to them. And the way he's going to describe these rich people is they actually wear bright clothing. That's how the ESV translates it as fine clothing.

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James actually calls it bright clothing. And so rich people do have a certain amount of earthly glory to them, but Jesus is the Lord of glory. He is the glorious one.
[15:55] He's the only one who deserves special treatment in the church. He's the only one who deserves honor when Christians gather because he is the Lord of glory. And I want you to think about this.

God does not show any favoritism. God does not show any partiality. God cannot be bribed and he is not impressed by worldly status.
You can be the richest person in the world and God is not impressed with you. God cannot be bribed by you. And so I want you to turn in your Bible with me to a couple of places.
We'll go to three places, which I normally don't do this, but I want you to just feel the weight of this. So save your spot in James and go back with me to Deuteronomy. We're going to Deuteronomy 10. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. We'll be in Deuteronomy 10, verses 17 and 18.
[17:15] Moses is speaking about who the Lord is. In Deuteronomy 10, 17, it says, for Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God.

And how does Moses describe him? Who is not partial and takes no bribe. And now how is he going to continue to describe him?
Verse 18, he executes justice for the fatherless, or the orphan, and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.
And so God is impartial, and he cannot be bribed, which means he gives equal care to those who are poor as he does those who are rich.
And that was actually in a text that Grace Pritz sent me this week, and I came across it while I was studying as well, so great passage of scripture. All right, now go with me to the New Testament, to the book of Romans. Romans is the sixth book of the New Testament.
[18:20] You've got the four gospels, then Acts and Romans. Romans chapter two. Romans two, we'll look at verses nine through 11, and God is talking about the judgment that he's going to pour out.

He's going to pour out judgment on the ungodly, and he's going to judge the godly. And the way he's going to judge them is he's going to assess what they've done. He's going to evaluate how they've lived their life.
Verse nine, Romans two. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first, and also the Greek.
That's all of humanity. Verse 10, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first, and also the Greek.
Verse 11, for God shows no partiality. Everyone will stand before God, and everyone's life will be evaluated based on what you have done.
[19:29] And God shows no partiality. He's not impressed by worldly status. He's not impressed by who you are. He will evaluate your life based on how you've lived.

Okay, then one more place. It'll actually be the book to the right of James, 1 Peter, chapter one. Verse 17.
And Peter says, And so when we think about God being fair, God being righteous, God being impartial, you can go back to James 2, we're primarily thinking about how he judges people, how he assesses, how he evaluates people's lives, and he does so fairly.
He does so based on what people do, not on factors like how much money they make. And we are called to be like God.
We are called to imitate him and to value what he values. And so the way you as a Christian treat the lowest of the low should be the same respect and honor and dignity you show to the highest of the high.
[21:01] Whether they are rich or poor, influential or unknown, you should treat them with the same amount of respect and dignity because that is how the Lord our God acts.

Okay, so secondly, let's look at what it looks like. So we've seen favoritism. Number two, what it looks like. And we see this in verses two through four. And you notice the first word of verse two is the word four.
And so James is about to give an example. He's about to give a picture of what favoritism looks like in action. And I think the example he gives is hypothetical.

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So I don't think this exact example actually happened, but this type of thing was going on. And so I think James exaggerates a little bit to make his point, but this type of activity was happening in this church.
Okay, so here's the hypothetical situation. Verse two, if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in.
[22:08] And so this is hypothetical, like my picture at the beginning was with SGA and the guy that looked homeless, but the teaching, the point he's going to make is not out of touch with reality. This type of thing is certainly going on in their church.

And he describes this guy as wearing a gold ring. And I wear a gold ring. I'm not rich. So what's going on here? Well, the word that James uses is actually gold fingered.
So it was a common practice in the ancient world for rich people to wear a ring on every finger. So these dudes were just dripped out. And wearing all their jewelry they had all at once, multiple rings, rings on every finger.
So much so that this guy by the name of Clement, an early church pastor, wrote to Christians and said, hey, just wear one ring at a time. All right?
Don't show off your wealth. Don't do any showy things in how you dress and wearing your jewelry. Just wear one ring at a time. And so that was a Christian pastor saying, hey, don't flaunt your wealth.
[23:12] Don't dress like this guy in James 2 who is described as being gold fingered, wearing rings on every finger. And I remember when our daughter Amelia was like two or three, she had this stack, this pile of like 15 beaded necklaces.

Okay? I don't know where they came from. I think a grandparent got them for her or something. But she had a lot of them. All different colors, green, blue, gold, yellow, orange, red. And she wanted to wear all of them at once.
And so she'd have her little princess dress on and her tiara and she'd be putting on like 20 necklaces. And she couldn't even like move her head because they were just stacked up under her chin. And she would start throwing fits because she couldn't see all of the necklaces she had on. So she'd be like, where's my blue one? We're like, you put that on first and she'd just lose her mind. What a trip being too. But anyway, and then they'd get all knotted up when she was trying to find them and stuff.
And so we eventually sat her down and said, Amelia, you can only wear one necklace at a time. And the reasoning we came up with is that princesses only wear one necklace at a time.
[24:17] And that carried the day. We survived the twos and the threes on that one. And so in the ancient world, this is what people would do. They would wear all their jewelry all at once.

And you think about it, it kind of makes sense in some ways because they didn't have a safety deposit box. They didn't have a safe in their house. And so if they were leaving their home, the safest place for their jewelry was on their person, wearing all their rings, wearing all their necklaces, wearing whatever they had, putting their pearls in their hairs, what the ladies would do.
People would wear all their jewelry all at once. And so you could tell by someone walking around how wealthy they were. And so this would be, I'm not a big jewelry guy. I have some watches. It'd be like wearing four watches at once.
Or I have some nice pins that people have gotten me. Probably showing favoritism to me. No, I'm just kidding. And it'd be like carrying 20 pins on me. And it's like, you don't, that's not functional. You don't need all of those.
That's what people were doing to show off their wealth, to try to keep it safe. And James is saying, this guy comes into your assembly and he's also wearing fine clothing or literally bright clothing.
[25:22] And so this guy comes in, he's rich and he's obviously rich. And he's wearing this kind of bright or shiny clothing. And so think of a material like silk. It's soft, it's shiny, it's delicate, it looks rich, it looks luxurious.

Today we'd probably say a three-piece suit. That's not sinful to wear, but it just looks nice. It looks wealthy. It looks rich. And a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in.
This guy would have looked and smelled awful and think of material like work clothes. Their texture is rough.
They're kind of dingy or dirty. They're durable. They're not made for luxury. They're made for work and getting things done. And so if we think of a three-piece suit, on the other hand, think of like a

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construction worker at the end of the day.
Not because he's poor, but just that picture of he's gonna be stinky, he's gonna be dirty, he's wearing clothes that get the job done, but they're not intended to put on a show or be elaborate.
And so the scenario is a rich man walks in who's obviously rich and a poor man walks in who's obviously poor.
[26:36] And the story goes on. The action moves to verse three. And if you pay attention or give favoritism to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, you sit here in a good place while you say to the poor man, stand over there or sit down at my feet.

In ancient synagogues, which is where early churches often gathered, there was really just two benches on the front row. So think of a center aisle and then kind of the front stage area where the teacher would stand.
And there was just like a front row, basically, that was split in two. These were the good seats.
These were the honorable seats that the Pharisees always wanted. These were the places of honor, the places of influence.
These were the season ticket holders of the synagogue. This is where they sat. This is where they were recognized. Everyone else just kind of sat on the floor around the walls or just crisscross applesauce in the middle of the floor.
Those were the seats of dishonor. Those were the normal seats, the regular seats. And so the good place is a reference to that front row, the bench that's off the floor.
[27:50] So the rich man walks in. You say, hey, hey, hey, come up here. We got a seat for you.
And you say to the poor man, get away. Just go sit down somewhere. Just sit on the floor, wherever fits, or even at my feet, which was a sign of dishonor even.

These are people basing their treatment of others on what their eyes see. This is evil.
This is sin. This is like a waiter at a restaurant who when a rich person comes in, he amps it up and is on his game because he thinks, I'm going to get a big tip from this person.
And when someone who seems poor comes in, he doesn't take care of them because he doesn't think he's going to get a tip. That's what favoritism in their church was looking like. And James says, have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?
So when God judges someone, he is impartial. He does not show favoritism, but these people have become judges with evil thoughts. Judging someone is making distinctions.
[28:59] And judging isn't inherently bad. We're always constantly assessing people around us.
That's how God has made us to work. But it depends on how you're judging someone. What are you basing your judgment of them on?

Favoritism is judging them based on external things, worldly things, fleshly distinctions. You're judging someone.
You're placing value on someone based on how they look or what they can do for you. And James says, this is evil. You have evil thoughts.
James calls this evil. That's a very strong word. It's one of the strongest words James uses in this letter to describe something that's sinful. It's a very strong word and it's how we use evil to describe things like murder or adultery or theft or terrorism.
Those things are evil. Those things are dark. And that's how James describes favoritism. If you think of the show Evil Lives Here, I don't watch it because I like to sleep.
[30:04] But anyway, in this show, they're documenting just kind of relatively normal people who do horrible things. They just live in a neighborhood and they commit horrible crimes and people don't know that the evil was taking place inside of them, their next door neighbor.

They don't know about the evil that was going on inside their home. And we describe those things that they would do as evil. And James says, that's what favoritism is.
That's what partiality is. It's evil. It's dark. It's demonic. And it seems so innocent. It seems so normal. It's just how the world works.
But God hates it. Jesus hates it. And we're guilty of it a lot. We're guilty of it all the time. And so we need to judge with right judgment. We need to judge all others as more significant than ourselves.
That's what Paul commands us to do in Philippians 2. He says, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. So what does good judgment look like in the church?

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[31:12] It's not like, oh, this person's influential. Let's cater to them. This person doesn't matter. So we won't worry about what they think or what they say. A true judgment looks at someone else in the church and says, that person's more important than me.

And you look at everyone in the church and say, that person is more important than me. They're more significant than me. Not based on an external factor, not based on how influential they are. This is a posture of humility that we have to have for our church to be healthy. And our church is great. But if everyone thought this way, our church would go to another level.
If everyone truly thought, this person's more important than me. Their needs are more important than mine. We would serve one another and love one another better. And I think one way that this can happen in a church, one way that favoritism can creep in is actually toward the pastors.
And I'm a pastor. Pastoring can be difficult. Pastoring can be hard. There are a lot of jobs that are hard. But I think one way that churches can show favoritism is by showing favoritism toward their pastors.
[32:21] And I think that it's right to be thankful for good pastors and to be thankful for the Lord raising up shepherds in a church who do a good job, do a biblical job.

But do not put us on a pedestal. We are just men. Do not exalt us. Do not show favoritism to us. Don't be partial towards us. And this can be dangerous because so often pastors will be sinning in their church and a lot of the church will know about it and kind of turn a blind eye to it just because, well, I mean, he's our pastor.
Like, no one's perfect. That's favoritism. We are held to the same standard as everyone else. We're called to godliness. We're called to holiness. We need to be helped. We need to be, we need people keeping watch on us as well as we even shepherd the church.
And so, I think that maybe in a posture of grace and thankfulness that pastors can be shown this kind of favoritism. And so, just be aware of that and don't participate in things like that.
Okay, the number three, why it's foolish. So, we've seen favoritism. We've seen what it looks like. Now, number three, why it's foolish in verses five through seven. James says in verse five, listen.
[33:45] And that takes us back to 119. Let every person be quick to hear, quick to listen. So, he says, listen, my beloved brothers. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?

So, why is favoritism foolish? Well, he's going to give us two reasons. One, it's foolish because of God's choice. Because of God's choice.
God has chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith. Paul says the same thing. We looked at it in 1 Corinthians 1. Not many of you were rich.
Not many of you were of noble birth. Not many of you were powerful. God has chosen the poor.
And this doesn't mean that every poor person is chosen by God.
It doesn't mean that God shows favoritism to the poor. But it does mean that of the ones that God saves, many of them are poor. Many of them are not rich in terms of this world's standards.
[34:50] But he makes them rich in faith and he gives them the kingdom. They inherit the kingdom. And it says, which he has promised to those who love him.

If you look back at chapter 1, verse 12, people who stay faithful in trial receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Same phrase. God has shown his love to the poor of this world.
But look at verse 6. But you have dishonored the poor man. Favoritism is sin. It's a failure to love your neighbor.
It's a failure to love and worship God. It fails to treat people as equally dignified, equally in the image of God.
And so just in this church that James is writing to, look at the way this church is treating the poor and look at how God is treating the poor.
[35:57] Look at how this church is treating the rich and look at how God is treating the rich. God is impartial. God does not show favoritism and we should not either.

And so it's foolish because of God's choice, because of who he's chosen. And the second reason that favoritism is foolish is because of man's sin. Because of man's sin.
He says in verse 6, are not the rich the ones who oppress you and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

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And so the rich people, where this church was, were the ones making their lives miserable. They were the ones oppressing them. They were bullying them. They were suing them in court. They were not paying their workers.
They were not paying them their wages. They were skimping them on paying them adequately for the work that they had done. So why are they being paraded around the church?
[36:58] They're the ones doing these evil things. Why are they getting rewarded in the church? And James says, aren't they the ones who blaspheme the honorable name? That's the name of Jesus by which you were called. And so they blaspheme Christ.

They speak evil of Christ, but get honored by Christians. They hate Christ, but the Christians welcome them and parade them around their church building.
It's foolish to praise those who are oppressing you. And so I want you to imagine for a moment that there's a politician who's corrupt.
Imagine. He's wealthy and influential and he hates Christians. He hates Christ.
And he's known for this. He's made money off of this. He's made money off of being evil and carrying out his wickedness and his hatred for God and hatred for Christ.
[37:57] And then he shows up to church. And the church just celebrates him. The church brings him up to let him do the welcome on Sunday.

Just to parade him around. And he's available for pictures after church is over just thinking maybe he's going to use his influence to prop us up.
Maybe he's had a change of heart. Maybe he actually will love Christ. Would that be right? Would that be fitting? Would that make sense?
Now should the church love him? Yes. Should the church make him feel welcome? Yes. But should the church cater to him? No. That would be sinful and that would be dumb.
And that's James' point. These rich people are the ones oppressing you. These rich people are the ones committing sin against you. It doesn't make sense that when they show up to church you're like, hey, hey, come up here, I've got a seat for you.
[38:55] It doesn't make sense because of God's choice and it doesn't make sense because of man's sin. And Jesus is the perfect embodiment of not showing favoritism.

He was completely impartial. Even looking at his genealogy, he has rich people like Abraham and David who are kingly in their status.
And he has poor widows like Ruth and women of no account like Tamar and Rahab. He was impartial in his ministry as well.
If you look at who he served and who he saved, it was the sick and the children and the poor that he had mercy on.
He never viewed someone as not worth his time. He never catered to the rich because they would increase his popularity. And those who did have status like the Pharisees, he confronted regularly for their sin.
[40:00] And 2 Corinthians 8-9 says this, we'll end with this, Paul says, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

If Jesus showed favoritism, none of us would be saved because none of us would be worthy of his time. But he is perfectly impartial, he is perfectly merciful towards those who don't have a claim on his mercy, and so Jesus became poor for your sake.
If you will turn from your sins and believe in him, you'll receive his mercy and receive his salvation that he purchased with his blood. And I would encourage you to do that tonight even.
Let me pray for us and we'll dismiss to our small groups. Father, thank you so much for your word. Thank you for being one who does not show favoritism, for being one who judges impartially, and judges fairly.
And we thank you so much for the gift of Christ who did not offer his ministry based on worldly appearances, based on what people could do for him, but based on the truth and the mission that you sent him on to save his people, which includes us.
[41:22] And it's in his name we pray. Amen.

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