

# Show No Partiality (Part 2)

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you're there in James chapter 2, would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! Beginning in verse... Actually, I'm going to begin in verse 1, and then we'll read to verse 13. My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, you sit here in a good place, while you say to the poor man, you stand over there, or sit down at my feet, have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

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, which he has promised to those who love him?

But you have dishonored the poor man. 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?

[ 1 : 18 ] 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.

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. But mercy triumphs over judgment.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? There's a part in Mark Twain's classic novel, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, where Tom informs his good friend, Huck, that he is not welcome to be a part of his gang.

This news upsets Huck and he protests, saying, Now, Tom, ain't you always been friendly to me? You wouldn't shut me out, would you, Tom?

[ 2 : 35 ] And Tom replies, Huck, I wouldn't want to do that. And I don't want to. But what would people say? Why they'd say, hmm, Tom Sawyer's gang, pretty low characters in it.

They'd mean you, Huck. You wouldn't like that. And I wouldn't. You know, children play cruel games like that, don't they?

But they aren't the only ones. Adults do it too. We are quick to exclude from our group those whom we judge undesirable, choosing to omit people from our circles because they don't fit in with the image of ourselves that we'd like to project to others.

Or because they don't support our opinions or reinforce our prejudices or boost our egos or flatter us. Churches and Christians aren't immune from playing these cruel games.

Those of another culture, another ethnicity or social status sometimes are made to feel as unwelcome in our churches as Huck Finn was in Tom Sawyer's gang.

[ 3 : 49 ] But as we saw last week and as we'll continue to see this morning, such exclusive, inhospitable, and unwelcoming attitudes and conduct deeply grieves the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

John 17 records Jesus' prayer for his present and his future disciples. In verses 20 through 21, Jesus makes the following request.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. That's us.

That they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us so

that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Now, the same cultural barriers that exist today in our world are barriers that existed in the ancient world. The same temptations to show favoritism back then are temptations that we still experience today.

And just as it was the case back then, if Jesus' command to go and to make disciples of all nations is to be realized, then we must seek to demolish whatever barriers that the world erects by showing favoritism to some and excluding others, especially if that was the case in the church.

[ 5 : 16 ] We're thinking and behaving in ways that keep unbelievers from hearing the good news of Jesus Christ because we judge them to be unworthy of hearing it, of receiving it.

In Acts chapter 10, Peter receives a strange vision while he's praying. In that vision, he saw something that he describes like a sheet descending from heaven, and in it were all kinds of animals.

Some were of the unclean variety, animals which God had restricted from the Israelites' diet to separate them from their idolatrous neighbors and to keep their witness to them pure.

So Peter receives instruction in this vision from God, and he's told to kill and eat. But he protests, as any devout Jew would have.

But then the voice came again and again and again, saying to him, what God has made clean, let no man call common.

[ 6 : 28 ] Since the coming of Jesus Christ and the new covenant that he instituted through his sacrificial death on the cross, the day of those dietary restrictions is over.

And all of us who are Gentiles and love barbecue said, Amen! Right? Amen! Jesus was not only the Savior of the Jews, but of all people.

Peter is then sent to Cornelius, a Gentile. And in Acts chapter 10, verses 30 through 35, we read a portion of that meeting.

It says, And Cornelius said, Four days ago about this hour I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon a tanner by the sea. So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come.

Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

[ 7 : 40 ] So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly, I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Now later in Galatians, the apostle Paul records how Peter, despite that revelation from God in Acts chapter 10, had begun to slip back into upholding those old distinctions which the gospel had shattered.

When some Jewish believers visited the church in Antioch, Peter, who had been taking his meals and who had been fellowshiping with Gentile believers, all of a sudden broke away from them to separate himself and to take his meals and to be fellowshiping with these Jewish converts, afraid of what they might think of him.

And so Paul got up in Peter's face, pointing out the hypocrisy of what he was doing, his actions, their inconsistency with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In fact, Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians in defense of the doctrine that we are justified by faith. They had been plagued with false teachers who were telling them to reconstruct those old barriers that the gospel had demolished, teaching that in order to be a Christian, you first had to become a Jewish convert and observe all the laws and the rules and the rituals that no longer served a purpose since Jesus had come.

[ 9 : 16 ] In Galatians 3.28, Paul says, There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.

And as I mentioned last week, this verse doesn't mean that differences don't exist between us, but that in Christ they should not and they do not matter. In Christ, it doesn't matter your ethnic identity, your gender, or your station in life.

If you are in Christ, you are one of God's chosen people and you stand to inherit all that God has promised in his word. Not only should we not show partiality to one another in the church, we are commanded by Jesus to be impartial in our witness to unbelievers.

We are to go and we are to make disciples of all nations. And so to do this, we must see others the way that God sees others and not show favoritism.

Last week we were reminded of this truth through James 2.1-4, that the gospel is available with equality to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

[10:30] Showing favoritism contradicts the gospel. And so James continues with that theme here in verses 5 through 13, which brings us to our main idea.

Showing favoritism is incompatible with who God is and what he commands. Showing favoritism is incompatible with who God is and what he commands.

Now, you could be thinking, is showing favoritism really that big of a deal? You better believe that it is.

Showing favoritism, excluding others based upon outward assessments and judgments, grieves God.

God. James says that it's evil. And while you and I may be tempted to think it's not a big deal, God says that it is a very big deal. And it's a very foolish thing to not take the creator of the universe seriously.

[11:39] God is speaking to us this morning with his dad voice here. He's saying, hey, be attentive to hear this. Be attentive to obey this instruction.

This is a big deal to me and it should be to you. So in our text today, we see three ways that favoritism is incompatible with who God is and what God commands.

The first way comes from verses 5 through 7. Showing favoritism is inconsistent with God's character. It's inconsistent with God's character. Look again at verse 5 with me.

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 which he has promised to those who love him? In the preceding verses, James demonstrated an illustration of how Christians were showing favoritism to the rich over the poor in their churches.

At the end of that illustration, he says that favoritism causes us to judge falsely, which contradicts God's character because God is a righteous judge who, according to verse 5, has chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of his kingdom, his promises, and to be recipients of his love.

[12:59] That is what we see all throughout scripture. This consistent character of God who cares for the poor. In Deuteronomy chapter 7, 7 through 8, God through Moses reminds his people that it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

God chose to be gracious to a people enslaved, a people with no nation, a people with no true home, a people who had no rights and held no value in the eyes of their masters, people who were oppressed, their children were snatched out of their homes and slain in their streets and thrown into the Nile River by their masters in order to try to control their population.

They had and they held little worth in the eyes of their masters. But God chose them. God delivered them.

And then he lavished them with his love and his grace as he caused them to prosper. Israel was poor when God delivered them and he continued to make special provisions for the poor amongst his people as he established them as a nation.

[14:34] In the Old Testament sacrificial system, those who were too poor to bring the prescribed offering of a bull, a goat, or a lamb were permitted to offer a dove or a pigeon instead.

Jewish parents were to sacrifice a lamb at the temple as an offering of thanksgiving to God for their newborn children. When we read Luke chapter 2 verse 24, we see how and we read how Mary and Joseph brought an offering for Jesus and it was a pair of turtle doves and pigeons.

The parents that God the Father chose to raise his son were poor. He favored them for this task, not some wealthy aristocratic family or king.

In the Old Testament, God made provisions for the poor by preventing them from incurring crippling debt that they could never pay back. Every seventh year, he commanded that all debts be canceled.

Every 50 years was a year of jubilee, which was celebrated, in which slaves could choose to be set free from their masters. He also commanded that crops not be completely harvested so that the poor could come in afterwards and glean from them to get food for themselves.

[15:54] God had also established the rule of the kinsman redeemer, a male relative who had the privilege and responsibility to act on behalf of his relatives when they were in trouble, in danger, or in debt.

The kinsman redeemer would come to the rescue, purchasing the person's life, or paying their debt. All of these things, all of these commands, reveals God's impartial character to provide provision for the least of these, and they are things that foreshadow who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ would do.

Last week, we saw how the first Christians sold their property and distributed the proceeds to those in the church who were in need in Acts chapter 2 and chapter 4.

In Galatians 2.10, the apostle Paul reports about the instruction he and Barnabas received while in Antioch from Peter and James and John. This is what they told them.

Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. So again, we see all throughout the Bible, God does not show favoritism to the wealthy, but he cares for the poor.

[17:07] Now, while it should be clear that showing favoritism to the rich and neglecting the poor is incompatible with God's character, that should be clear, but we can't forget that our number one mission is to make disciples, not end poverty.

In Matthew 26.11, Jesus said that we will always have the poor among us. This is a fallen world and sinful people will be compelled by greed to take advantage of others and hoard resources that they don't need.

As James points out in verses 6 and 7, but you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you? The ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

As Christians, we should understand that we are stewards, not owners of what we have, even the lives that we have. It all belongs to God.

And we are to reflect his generous character and love to the poor in how we steward the resources that he's given to us.

[18:21] But the gospel must be the motivation for why we do it. What poor people need most, what all people need most, is to have their debt to sin canceled by the cross.

Our provision and care for the least of these is an avenue through which we share the gospel with them in the hopes that they will be saved and become disciples of Jesus Christ like us.

about 14 years ago, I was a youth pastor in an affluent community. And every so often, Danny and I would take some of our teens and we would go to downtown Kansas City where there was a homeless ministry that was ran by a church.

And some of the things that we would do, they had a thrift store, and so we would help them organize the clothes, we would sweep the floors, we would clean windows, and all those different kinds of things.

But then in the afternoon, when they opened their doors to feed people, I would have our teens go out there and we would sit down with the people who came to eat with the intent that, hey, we're not going to be over here in this corner, just us.

[19:43] We're going to spread out. You know, a couple of you go sit at this table, a couple of you go sit at that table. And while you're there, fellowship with these people who came in to eat and try to share the gospel with them.

That was the hope. So the meal would come and it was brought in by a church. Different churches would come in and they'd have the meal and they'd serve it kind of like the lighthouse here in town. What just so happened this one day that I had our teens there that our church had come to provide the meal. And so we're eating. The kids have received their instruction.

They're all over the cafeteria. They're talking with the people who come in to eat and I'm doing the same. And then our church members were off in the kitchen.

They were serving and they were done and they kind of stayed back there except for one lady. She made a beeline right for me and I could tell she was angry. I didn't know what. Like, what did I do now? I'm a youth pastor.

[ 20 : 43 ] I do stupid things. It could be a number of different things. And she stood over me and she said, are you really going to have them eat this food and interact with these people?

And I just looked at her and I smiled and I said, yeah, and she left. But the next day or soon after, I had a meeting with our pastor and he was concerned that, you know, is it safe?

Is it safe for you to have the kids doing that? And my response was something like this. You know, there's a problem. If the food that our church brings to the people at the shelter to eat is food that we wouldn't want our own kids to eat.

That's a problem. And secondly, you know, I won't do anything to endanger one of our students, but should we be elevating a feeling of safety over doing what is right and doing what God commands? What are we teaching our kids about what it means to follow Jesus Christ? And so I ask you, is your attitude towards the poor consistent with God's character?

[ 21 : 58 ] Do you pretend not to see those in need who are around you, leaving it up maybe to someone else? Someone else will come along and take care of them or help them.

Do you make excuses to ignore the needs of the poor by assuming things about them that you don't know to be true? And then, you know, I ask you kids this morning.

When you're at school, I mean, one of the hardest places, one of the most difficult places to be a poor person, I think, is also in school because kids will treat you differently based upon what you don't have and the clothes you wear.

And oftentimes they're the ones who are left out. Will you invite them in? Will you let them be a part of your circle, a part of your life? Will you make them feel special because they bear the image of God?

And will you be a friend in the hopes that you will share the good news of Jesus Christ with them? And hopefully, as adults, we are all trying to do that on a regular basis. The second principle we see here, ways in which showing favoritism is incompatible with God's character, is that showing favoritism ignores God's commands.

[ 23 : 12 ] Verses 8 through 11. Now you can read these verses about showing favoritism and again, be tempted to ask or think, is it really that big of a deal?

I mean, there are sins that seem to be much worse and that cause a whole lot more damage than showing favoritism. And I think here in these verses, James anticipates that some of his readers would read what he had just said and have such a reaction.

Look at what he says in verses 8 through 9. If you really fulfill the royal law according to 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.

James's point is that if you show favoritism, you aren't truly loving your neighbor as yourself. You're not truly keeping the royal law, which was handed down by Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

In Matthew 22, 35 through 40, Jesus was questioned. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. Teacher, which is the great command, greatest command in the law?

[ 24 : 25 ] And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbors as yourself.

On these two commandments depend all of the law and prophets. In his incarnation, Jesus Christ became our neighbor.

God descended from heaven, adding a human nature to his divine nature. He lived sinlessly, fulfilling all that the law required, perfectly.

Jesus demonstrated his love for the Father by willingly offering himself as a sacrifice on the cross to die for our sins, to die for his neighbors.

Not only that, to die for his enemies. Jesus wasn't crucified because he fed people and served the poor.

[ 25 : 31 ] Most everybody loved that. He died because of what he said. That he was the son of God. And that it's only by faith in him that we can be saved from our sins.

And on the third day after he died, on the cross, he arose alive from the tomb. And it proved that what he said was true.

And that he reigns eternally as king of kings and lord of lords. Jesus loved his neighbors. And he expects that you will do so too.

In John 13, 34, he said, a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another.

We'd seen this command in the Old Testament for Jesus' incarnation. So what was true or what was new about this command? Well, that Jesus demonstrated it for us.

[ 26 : 40 ] A love that goes to the cross. A love that sacrifices. A love that doesn't give in order to get. A love that doesn't play favorites.

This is the royal law laid down and demonstrated by our king, Jesus. And you know, when a king gives an edict, it is incontestably binding on all of his subjects.

There is no court of appeal when the king issues a command for you to appeal to. So understand that this is not a suggestion. This is Jesus' expectation for us.

So don't see favoritism as, you know, one of those little sins. Because in God's eyes, there is no such thing as a little sin.

And you will not be judged by sinful men who excuse little offenses that they've committed. But by God, who is totally, utterly, perfectly, wholly, and righteous.

[ 28 : 02 ] And so James continues in verses 10 through 11. Forever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point, just one, has become guilty of all of it.

For he who said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not murder. If you commit adultery, but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James says, to break just one part of the law makes you accountable and guilty of breaking the whole. Breaking one law violates the whole.

We cannot think that we can pick and choose whatever commands we are going to obey and which ones we're going to ignore because they're not a big deal. Yes, some sins are more heinous and more damaging than others, but when it comes to serving God and obeying God, it's not like eating in a cafeteria or at an a la carte where you can pick and choose and determine what is good for you to eat and what is not good for you to eat because it doesn't appeal to your appetite.

If you follow only the laws that appeal to your appetites that you like, if you only obey the laws that you find agreeable, you have made yourself the final authority of what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false.

[ 29 : 25 ] It's foolish to think with the mind that James presents us here when he speaks of adultery and murder. You can't be of the mind that thinks, well, this sin may be bad, but it's not as bad as that one and I've done this one, but I haven't done that one, so all in all, I think I'm doing okay.

But that's not the way that God sees it. It's not little. And breaking one of his commands shatters the unity of the whole, which again are summarized by loving him completely and your neighbor as yourself.

Now, I think some people think of obedience as like a pile of good deeds, you know? The pile gets larger with each good thing that you've done and just a little bit smaller when you've done something bad.

But as James sees it, as the Bible communicates it, as God sees it, obedience is more like a sheet of glass. and disobedience.

And disobedience. Sin is not something little. Like that sheet of glass, if a brick is tossed through it, just one brick completely shatters the hole.

[ 31 : 05 ] So it is when we sin against God. You know, if one of your vital organs stopped working, you'd die. Even though other parts of your body might be healthy.

In the same way, we also need every spiritual system to be functioning rightly. If you disobey God in just one area, an entire system can fail.

Our witness will be diminished or disregarded. So you don't see favoritism as some small thing that's not a big deal as others.

It's a cancer that will spread and grow and does a whole lot of damage. It's a sin that needs to be repented of. It's a sin that needs to be put to death.

Don't ignore it. Plead for God's help to be rid of it. Because thirdly, what we understand from this text is that showing favoritism incurs God's judgment.

[ 32 : 12 ] Verse 12 says, so speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. James says two important things about the law here.

First of all, that it will be our judge. Well, why? God gave it. To break his law, to break his commands, to contradict his will, to rebel against him is to break his law, his commands.

Secondly, he describes the law as the law of liberty. God's law gives freedom. But many people see it the other way around, don't they? They see God's word, God's commands as being restrictive instead of freeing.

But you know, ask someone who has used their freedom to abuse drugs and alcohol and has become an addict of those things.

Ask them if they are feeling freedom from their choices. ask a promiscuous person what kind of freedom they are enjoying. Enslaved to their lust, having shallow relationship after shallow relationship and diseases as well.

[ 33 : 28 ] Ask what kind of freedom the divorced person has. They are often enslaved to a life of loneliness, sometimes poverty, and the after effects of their marriage being ripped apart and the effects it's had on their children.

Breaking God's law doesn't free. It does the opposite. It enslaves. It's Galatians 5.1 says, For freedom, Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. We'll be more on this in a moment, but understand that beyond temporal problems, troubles, sin leads to judgment.

At this point, James still has in mind the sin of favoritism and of those who need to be shown mercy. If we favor the rich, we do not extend mercy to the poor.

And all that James has had to say about the sin of favoritism to this point, we've been given some very bad news, haven't we? It's a sin. You do it once, you've broken all that God has commanded you and your sin incurs his righteous judgment.

[ 34 : 43 ] And we've all done this, haven't we? We've all sinned. We've all broken God's commands. We have all rebelled. We have all at different times thought that we knew better than God knew because we all have sinned.

We're all deserving of what our sinful nature wants to believe that we don't deserve. You know, this past week, Michael Kingston and I went and visited Russell Shelton.

Many of you all know Russell Shelton. Russell joined this church back in the 1950s and he's going to be 99 in February. That was a wonderful time.

Russell is a really wonderful person to talk to and so we talked about his life, how he had fought in World War II, how he worked hard and in hearing all these things I said to him, you know, Russell, you deserve to have this kind of retirement and he said to me, no, I don't want what I deserve.

That is a comment from someone who truly knows the Lord and truly knows themselves. You wouldn't want what you deserve for rebelling day after day, time after time, moment after moment against your God who is holy and righteous.

[ 36 : 12 ] So now that James has stepped on all our toes and we've heard the bad news, he ends with good news that should sound incredibly sweet to our ears in verse 13.

first a little bit more bad. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy, now the good. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

We have all fallen short of God's glory, God's standard, and we deserve his punishment, his wrath for how we've sinned against him, how we who have been created in his image which have grieved him with our sin against him again day after day, moment by moment, God is being sinned against. But his mercy triumphs over the judgment that we deserve. How so? I think again we look at Galatians this time, chapter 3, verses 12 through 14.

But the law is not of faith, rather, the one who does them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law because again none of us could measure up every moment of every day fulfilling all of those laws for all of our lives, no way, by becoming a curse for us.

[ 37 : 38 ] For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, that's us, so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

God's grace is greater than our sin. God's grace is greater than your sin. The gospel goes to sinners.

It goes to the unworthy. It goes to the poor in spirit. His spirit when he saves us is at work to sanctify us.

making us more like Jesus, bringing us to repentance when we see our sins and we're grieved by them. But once that part is done, he lavishes us with his love, with his forgiveness, with his grace, though we fail.

And we fail him a lot. God's love, and so I ask you a question I've been asking myself as I've been reading these verses and studying these verses these past two weeks.

[ 38 : 53 ] I want to do better about this. Don't you? I want to be more like Jesus. Don't you? Don't you? So the main point of application is to be intentional in putting attitudes of favoritism to death.

Be intentional in putting attitudes of favoritism to death. And one thing studying these verses has done for me is just to open my eyes to see how much I am tempted to do this.

See someone that I've never met before or don't really know and just automatically put them into all of these categories based upon how they look or what they drive or how they dress. I don't want to be like that anymore.

I don't want to do that. And I certainly don't want to have the attitude that sees anybody as being unworthy of me sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

Jesus became our neighbor. Becoming one of us. Knowing that we could never measure up to God's perfect standard. That if it was up to us we would all receive what we deserve and that's a lifetime spent in eternity in hell apart from our creator.

[ 40 : 18 ] But it was God's plan to send his son to live that sinless life that we could not live. To die willingly on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins that we've committed and there are many.

To endure his wrath, to endure the shame, to become a curse for us. so that by faith in him we receive his righteousness, we are forgiven, we are cleansed, our relationship with our creator is restored and we have it forever.

We have life in him forever. And so understand we can read these texts and we often do and say, man I messed that one up and even though I'm reading it and studying it, I'm still messing it up. the great news to know for us that in Christ there is no judgment for us, it's just his mercy. But I'll say for you if you do not know him, there is no mercy for you.

You will suffer for the sins that you have committed, even if it's just as small as showing favoritism to one person one time. Because God is infinite and he's infinitely holy.

[ 41 : 35 ] But here's the deal. It's not about you doing enough good deeds to earn God's love or earn God's favor. All it is is acknowledging that yeah I've sinned, I've sinned a lot and that my sin is worthy of that kind of punishment.

And it's coming to him in faith, understanding that you couldn't do it, but Jesus did. And he did it for you. And if you trust in him, and if you have faith in him, God disciplines his children, yes.

But it's always love. It's always grace. It's always mercy. It's always forgiveness. It's always good to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

And I hope that if you don't know him today, it'll be the day that you do. Let's pray. Lord, forgive us our many trespasses.

God, I know myself and I'm sure each person in this room can confess that, God, we show favoritism in more ways than maybe even we realize.

[ 42 : 36 ] It's just hardwired into our sin nature to do that. And God, oftentimes we excuse it as well, that it's not a big deal. Lord, I pray that your spirit has opened our eyes to see what your word has said and that we will apply its truth by his help to our lives.

Lord, that we would never be of the mind that somehow we were worthier of others of the salvation that we've received or that we're better than others because we've received it or that there are some people who are just so sinful, just so bad, that they shouldn't know the grace that we have received from you.

God, I pray that you would use your word to change my life, to change our lives, that Lord, we would be more like you, we would desire to be more like you.

Lord, that your spirit would bring conviction to our minds whenever we start to show favoritism, whenever we see someone and we start to automatically assume things about them that we don't know to be true.

Lord, instead, we pray that we would repent of this sin and that by your health we would seek to put it to death day by day, and as a result of that, that we would be more like Jesus, that more people would hear the gospel communicated from our mouths and that they would know that we are a people who practice what we preach and we want to be like Jesus.

[ 44 : 13 ] And it's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.