

The Sin Of Snobbery

James 2:1-13

Pastor John Miller

I want to read just verse 1, and I want you to follow with me in James 2.

James says, “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality” or “with respect of persons.” I like the New English Bible’s translation of verse 1, which renders that “My brothers, believing as you do in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who reigns in glory, you must never show snobbery.” That’s where I got the title of my message today. If you have faith in Jesus Christ, you’re a follower of Jesus, and you’re one of His children, one of His disciples, you should never have snobbery.

One of the best tests of the reality of your Christianity, and the maturity of your Christianity, is how you treat other people. Flat out. If you are a Christian, you should be treating other people with God’s love, God’s grace, God’s mercy and God’s kindness. Every child of God should have God’s love flowing through them to the world around them. So how you treat other people is a great test of your spirituality and your true Christianity.

Jesus said to His disciples, “By this will all men know that you are my disciples.” What was that mark? That you have “love one for another.” That’s the birthmark of the believer. Doctrine and theology and knowing God’s Word are important, but it’s possible to have a big head and a shriveled-up heart. It’s possible to have a lot of theology and doctrine—and trust me; I’m all for doctrine and theology and Bible truth. It’s foundationally important. But it does no good to have a big head if it doesn’t translate into your life. Then you have a shriveled-up heart. If your theology lifts you so high that your feet are not touching the ground, it’s false theology. If your doctrine lifts you so high that you can’t help someone out, and you’re not loving another person or you’re not loving your wife or husband or your children or neighbor or coworker, your Christianity is false.

We’ve discovered in our series in the book of James the marks of a mature Christian. Number one, they are joyful in trials; number two, they are triumphant in temptation; and number three, they practice the truth. They are “doers of the Word and not hearers only.”

Today we are introduced to our fourth mark of Christian maturity, and that is they don’t show respect of persons. They don’t practice partiality or snobbery. It was happening in James’ day, and sadly, it is common in the church today. There are a lot of Christian snobs. They judge people by the clothes they wear or by the watch they have on or by their education or the color of their skin or the length of their hair or whether or not they have tattoos or where they live or where they went to college or if they did go to college or what part of the country they are from. It’s sad.

Even Jesus was rejected because He was from a podunk town called Nazareth. People actually said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Now I grew up my whole life in San

Bernardino. That's not the town today that people want to be known for. I remember being at the beach one day, and I met a couple from Laguna Beach and they said, "We're from Laguna Beach."

"Oh, that's good."

"Where are you from?"

"San Bernardino." They actually said this: "We're sorry." But you know, it didn't bother me. Jesus was from Nazareth. "Can anything good come out of San Bernardino?" I think so. If Jesus can come out of Nazareth, something good can come out of San Bernardino. We're going to see that God is concerned about the poor, and God's chosen the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, so we shouldn't be partial. We shouldn't cater to people just because of their education or their money or their influence or their social status. So today we have the same problem as in James' day: partiality.

But the Bible says that God "looks on the heart and not on the outward appearance." That's really a summary of what we're learning today: God looks not as men look, on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

There are three points that I want to share with you regarding the sin of snobbery. First, we are commanded to stop showing snobbery, and that's in verse 1. We've already read it. We first have a clear command; it's an imperative in the Greek. We are to stop showing snobbery. Again verse 1 says, "My brethren..." So James is clearly speaking to Christians. This is one of the sins of the saints. And believe me, there are a lot of sins among the saints. This is a sin of attitude. There are sins of the flesh, and there are sins of the spirit. This is a heart attitude.

So James says, "My brethren..."—or "my brothers, my sisters"—"...do not hold..." In the Greek it is actually "stop having." It's an indication that the believers he was writing to were showing respect of persons or partiality. They were being snobs. So he was saying, "Stop showing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality." By the way, in my King James Bible the words "the Lord" are italicized, which indicates they were inserted by the translator to give a flow of thought, but they were not part of the original Greek. So it would read, "...the Lord Jesus Christ of glory, with partiality." It's not "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ"; more accurately, it's "the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ of glory, with partiality."

What James is saying basically is that faith in Jesus Christ and partiality are mutually exclusive. They are incompatible. They don't go together. You can't have, in one hand, faith in Jesus Christ, Who's the Lord of glory, but have in the other hand, partiality. You can't be showing respect of persons.

What do we actually mean by "respect of persons"? That phrase is taken from a Greek word that is taken from two words. The two words are "face" and "receive." What it basically means is that you accept someone or approve of someone based on the outward appearance: the color of their skin, the clothes they're wearing, their ethnicity—whatever it might be. You

basically approve of or reject them based on appearance, but the Bible is prohibiting us from doing that. It is showing favor of or rejection of someone because of outward appearance. James says that it is inconsistent with the Lord of glory.

Jesus did not show respect of persons. Let me give you a few examples. There was the poor widow who put in her two mites in the temple treasury. It was about half a penny. The disciples were watching the rich folks. They were coming in and dumping all their money into the treasury. There was a trumpet-shaped, metal container on the wall in which they would drop in their money. The money would clank as they dropped it in. They would come in with an ostentatious show. They would unload their wealth and money. People would see this and say, "Ooo. Aw. Look at that rich guy. Look at all the money he's putting in!"

Then this little widow lady came in. She was very poor. Scripture refers to her penury, her poverty. She reaches in her little purse, and she takes out her two mites, which would be about half a penny, and drops it in the treasury. It went "clank, clank." Everyone goes, "Aw, that's nothin'." But Jesus said, "No. She has put in more than all the rest." The disciples said, "What?! How can that be?! Jesus, didn't You see all the money they were putting in?"

But Jesus said, "They put in of their abundance; they have a whole lot left over. But this woman gave her next-week's groceries. She gave everything she had. She gave from her heart, and she gave sacrificially and she gave self-denyingly. She gave out of love." Jesus sees not as men see. The disciples were blown away. They said, "Wow! We didn't see it that way." Jesus looks at the heart.

By the way, when you give, Jesus doesn't look at the amount. You say, "Lord, I'm sorry; I don't have much to give." He knows your heart. It's not the amount. God doesn't really need your money. What's important is the attitude of your heart and your service to God. Are you doing it with the right motive? Are you doing it out of love for God and for others and for the glory of God? God looks at your heart. It's not the amount of our service or the amount of our giving; it's the heart attitude and the motive behind what we're doing.

In John 4, Jesus stopped at Jacob's well in Sychar and interacted with a woman of Samaria. The disciples were gone, and when they came back, they saw Jesus talking to this sinful woman. They're thinking cooties in their mind. They're thinking, Oh, my! Look at Jesus. He's talking to that Samaritan woman! Not only is she a woman, but she's a woman of Samaria. Not only that, but she's living with a guy out of wedlock. She's been married five times, and she's shackin' up with this other dude right now. It doesn't say these exact words in the Bible, but when Jesus told her to call her husband, she said, "I don't have a husband."

Jesus said, "I know you don't have a husband. You've had five. Right now, you're living with a guy who you're not married to."

She's thinking, Busted! She said, "Sir, I believe that You are a prophet." Jesus actually spoke to her heart, and she came to faith in Jesus Christ. The disciples were like, What's goin' on

here?! I can't believe the Master would even talk to this person, let alone interact with her! This is amazing! But, again, that's because Jesus looks at people differently than we do.

Then when Jesus was passing through Jericho, there was the rich tax collector, Zacchaeus. He was the equivalent of a Mafia boss today, the head of a mob family, of a Mafia family. He worked for the Roman government, so he was a traitor to the Jews. He was rich and had a big house. He went up into a tree so he could see Jesus. Jesus stopped and looked up into the tree at Zacchaeus and said, "Come down. I'm going to go to your house today for lunch." By the way, that's a Biblical basis for inviting yourself over for lunch. Jesus did it. Just go up to someone after church and say, "I'm going to your house to eat. Jesus did it, so I'm doin' it." Jesus said, "Come down, Zac. I'm goin' to eat at your house today."

Zac said, "Me?"

"Yes, you." And everyone started snarling and complaining and gossiping. He's goin' to the house of Zacchaeus. He's gonna get cooties for sure! Zacchaeus is a sinner! He's a wicked man! What's he doing?! A few hours later, Zacchaeus came out with a smile on his face, and he said, "Half of all I've ripped off from you, I'm going to give back!" When a tax collector returns money, you know he's been born again. That dude got saved! We need the IRS to get saved in America; don't we? Filled with the Holy Ghost and giving us our money back.

So Zacchaeus was a born-again, new man. Life changed because Jesus sees as no other sees. He looks at the heart. I believe that if we would just see as Jesus sees and reach out and care like Jesus cares—He didn't say, "Oh, no. I don't want to talk to that woman. I don't want to talk to Zacchaeus. Jesus saw the hearts and reached out in love.

If a person is not a Christian—never forget this—Christ died for them. "For God so loved the world..." I believe that means just what it says—the world. God loves every human being, and He gave His life on the Cross for their sin. If a person is not a Christian, remember that Christ died for them, and if they are a Christian, Christ lives in them. So snobbery is condemned in verse 1.

The second point I want to make is the illustration that is given of snobbery in verses 2-4. So what He does in verse 1 is He commands us to not show respect of persons. And then he illustrates it in verses 2-4. James says, "For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings..."—in the Greek, it's plural. With multiple gold rings. Some translate that "gold fingered." Every finger on both hands was full of gold rings—"...in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes..."—or "vile" or "dirty" clothes. He walked to church after he slept under the bridge, and he hasn't bathed in weeks. I just threw that in there—"...and you pay attention to..."—or "show respect to"—"...the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man 'You stand there,' or 'Sit here at my footstool'..."—and here's the application—"...have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" So they do two things: they show partiality in their own hearts, and they are judgmental.

This is most likely a hypothetical case, but it certainly could have taken place—and probably was taking place. Notice the expression in verse 2: “For if there should come into your assembly....” So it seems to be hypothetical, but it certainly could happen. There comes in this very rich man. He was nicely dressed. He had a beautiful chariot, and he got to park it in a nice spot. All the ushers were stumbling all over themselves trying to find this rich guy a nice seat in the church.

By the way, the word “assembly” is the word “synagogue.” The early Christians still met in the synagogue, and they had designated seating and nice spots in which to sit. The women were up in the balcony, and the men were down front. They had “chief seats” in the synagogue where the aristocrats and the big-wigs would sit. These seats were up front, so everyone could see them. So this guy gets ushered to this chief seat.

Then this poor guy shows up. He is dirty and smelly and isn’t dressed appropriately. The ushers say, “Man, that guy stinks. He doesn’t look good, so let’s hide him back in the corner.” That should never happen in the house of God.

But we struggle with that. My former church in San Bernardino was in a very, very rough, poor neighborhood. We had people crawl out from under bridges and come to church. There were times—I admit—I’d be driving to church and see a guy headed our way and I’d think, Oh, I pray he doesn’t come to our church today. Then I read the book of James, and God convicted me.

There are probably people you see who you think, Oh, I hope he doesn’t talk to me. I hope he doesn’t come my way. We want to avoid certain people because of the way they look. Those are the very people Jesus would be sitting down with, talking to, giving them some food and sharing the Gospel with. The very people we are trying to avoid, are the very people for whom Christ died and God loves.

Especially when we come to church, the ground is all level at the foot of the Cross. My desire for this congregation is that we don’t look at each other by our social status or our class or our money or our income or the cars we drive or the homes we live in or the education we have or don’t have or the color of our skin or our age or what ethnicity we have. We should just look at each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and in the family of God.

So in this passage you see the distinction or the snobbery: “Sit here.” Even at Revival, you can get in the habit of sitting in the same spot. “That’s my pew.” I busted you guys. I’ve seen you come to church, and you’re freakin’ out. “Someone’s sitting in my pew!” I’ve even seen people tell others, “Excuse me. This is where we sit.” Do you own the pew? “I can’t believe it. There’s a hippie, and he’s sitting in my pew! There’s a weird person!” God have mercy.

In the eighteenth century in England, you had to buy your own pew, or you rented a pew. Only rich people got to come to church. So John Wesley said, “Okay, I’m taking the Gospel out into the country. I’m taking it to the poor people.” He preached to the miners, who were barred from coming to church, because they weren’t of the right social status. They would stand in the open

fields by the thousands listening to John Wesley preach. Their faces were blackened from working in the miners. The story goes that as John was preaching, you could see white streaks running down their faces as they began to cry when they heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. God raised up the Wesleyan revivals, because someone went to the fields and went to the highways and took the Gospel to those who the world rejected.

One hundred years later, William Booth was kicked out of the church, because he was bringing undesirables into the church. So he said, "Okay. We'll just start our own church." He went outside the church, and we have the birth of the Salvation Army. He reached out to those who the world rejects.

I was around in the sixties and the seventies when we had the Jesus Movement. Dirty, smelly, long-haired hippies were getting saved and were coming to church. Sometimes they came barefoot. Thank God for Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa and Chuck Smith, because the people were complaining, "These hippies need to get a haircut and need to put on shoes." They were sitting in the pews actually running their toes through the communion-cup holders. The old people were saying, "That's the abomination of desolation! Spoken by Daniel, the prophet, we're at the end of times!" Someone put a sign in the foyer one Sunday saying, "No bare feet allowed." Thank God Pastor Chuck took the sign down. He said, "If we are worried about the carpet because of their bare feet, we'll tear the carpet out. Let the hippies come in." And because of that, I'm here today.

But some people say, "When are they going to get a haircut? When will they look like Christians?" What does a Christian look like? We looked more like Jesus than they did. But we still have that mind-set. We look at people's hair. We look at the way they dress. We look at their tattoos. "I can't believe her! Look at the dress she wore to church!" We freak out. Kind of like the Harper-Valley-PTA thing. God, deliver us from this. That would have been a good title for my sermon this morning: "Harper Valley PTA." We're like snobs, and we judge people based on their outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:2, "The rich and poor have this in common: the Lord is the maker of them all." I love that. God is the one Who makes them all.

Now we've seen the command, in verse 1—not to show snobbery; we've seen the illustration of that; and now we have the reasons, in verses 5-13. Here James gives us reasons why we should not show snobbery. James gives the Christians three reasons. The first is a theological reason. Verse 5 says, "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen..."—Notice that; "chosen"—"...the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which He promised to those who love Him?"

By the way, in verse 1, there is a doctrinal or theological foundation for not showing respect of persons. That is the deity of Christ, the Lord of glory. Now we have the second doctrinal or theological foundation for not showing respect of persons. That is the grace of God. So how we behave is determined by what we believe. If we believe that Jesus did not show respect of persons—He's the Lord of glory—and if we believe in the grace of God, then we should not

show respect of persons.

Notice that God “chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith.” That’s a general statement. The Bible says, “There’s not many...”—it doesn’t say “not any”—“...mighty or wise chosen.” But the majority of people who come to Christ are common people. God must have loved the common man, because He made so many of them when we hear this statement. Most of the early Christians were poor when they came to Christ.

But God’s choice of them is by the grace of God. This is something you’ll never, ever be fully able to understand: God saves you by His grace. You don’t earn it. You don’t deserve it. You don’t merit it. That’s what grace is. The Bible says, “By grace you have been saved, through faith, though not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast,” Ephesians 2:8-9. You are saved by grace. Why? So that we can’t boast. All the glory and all the praise goes to God.

In 1 Corinthians 1:26-28, it says, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things...hath God chosen....” Why? “That no flesh should glory in His presence.” If you are a Christian, you are a foolish thing, a weak thing, a base thing. God saved you by His grace, so to Him be all the praise and glory and honor.

Someone said, “A class church is not a church that magnifies the grace of God.” I love that. I want this church to magnify the grace of God. We’re all saved by grace. We’re all sinners. We don’t earn, merit or deserve. So God has chosen the poor of this world.

Now, again, this is not a condemnation of rich people. Riches are neutral. Poverty is neutral. There are people who are poor in spiritual things in this world but rich in heaven. There are people who are poor in spiritual things in this world and poor in heaven. Conversely, there are people who are rich in spiritual things in this world but poor in heaven. And there are people who are rich in spiritual things in this world and rich in heaven. This last one is who I want to be.

Sadly, this is what the church caters to today: riches. It’s wrong; teaching or supposing that godliness is a way to get rich. Godliness is not a way to get rich. I believe that godliness can bless you in prosperity—you’ll be a good steward of your money, you’ll be honest and hardworking. Godliness will have its effect on your life, and God will bless you, but it’s not carte blanche; it’s not a guarantee. In Hebrews 11 are men and women of faith who “wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted and tormented” and lived in caves. They were “sawn asunder.” You study the history of the church and study the history of people who were persecuted, rejected and despised by the world, you’ll see they were accepted by God in heaven.

I’d rather be poor in this world and rich in heaven, than rich in this world but poor toward God.

So it's not an indictment toward the rich, just like it's not an indictment toward the poor. It's saying that you shouldn't have an attitude that caters toward rich people or shows respect of persons. That's my prayer for this church; that we treat everyone equally, that we don't cater to people who we feel will advance our cause or help the church.

Then James gives them a logical reason why they should not be snobs or show respect of persons in verses 6-7. The first reason is theological, and the second reason is logical. James says, "But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?"

I want you to notice that at the end of verse 5, there is a question mark, at the end of verse 6, there is a question mark and at the end of verse 7, there is a question mark. They all three are rhetorical questions, expecting a "yes" answer. "Has not God chosen the poor of this world...?" Yes. "Do not the rich...drag you before the courts?" Yes. "Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?" Yes. So it's illogical as to why the Christians are showing favor to the rich, because they exploit them and they blaspheme God.

Thirdly, and lastly, James gives them a Biblical reason they should not show respect of persons in verses 8-13. He says, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture..."—He's quoting from Leviticus 19:18—"...‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality..."—or "respect of persons" or "snobbery"—"...you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’" Those are commandments given by God in the Ten Commandments or in the Decalogue. "Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." First it's the "royal law," in verse 8; now it's the "law of liberty," in verse 12. "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment."

I want you to notice that the first reason Biblically is that as we don't show partiality and we "love our neighbor as ourselves," we are fulfilling the "royal law." The royal law governs all laws. Why is it called the "royal law"? Because it comes from the King, God Himself, and it governs all other laws. Under its obedience, we are set free. It is this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In Ephesians 5:29, it says, "No man ever hated his own flesh, but he nourishes it and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church."

We are actually pretty self-absorbed. If you are in a group photo, and you see a copy of it, who do you first look for? You're busted. "Where am I? Oh. I don't look that good." Come on. You know you're stoked on yourself. You're checkin' yourself out. "How's the light? How's my smile? How's my hair look?" You always look for yourself. We're so narcissistic. A Christian is to be thinking about others. Jesus, others and you—you're number three, last. That spells joy. So the royal law comes from God, and it controls all other laws.

Someone asked Jesus, "What is the greatest commandment?" He said, "Love God with all your

heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.” Number one, from the lips of Jesus Himself. Then He said, “The second is like unto it; love your neighbor as yourself.” Ooo. We don’t like that one. I’m fine with loving my neighbor if I get to pick the neighborhood. “Can I live right there, Lord, in that neighbor near those people? Oh, they’re so wonderful. But not over here, Lord.” We’re fine with loving our neighbor, if we get to pick who our neighbor is.

So they actually asked Jesus; when He said, “Love your neighbor...,” they asked, “Well, who is my neighbor?” Then Jesus said, “Let me tell you a story about the Good Samaritan.” The Good Samaritan was going down to Jericho from Jerusalem, and he found this guy who had fallen among thieves, and the Scribes and the Pharisees and the religious crowd walked on the other side, around him. They pulled their robes up tight; they didn’t want to get cooties or help this man. So they all went by, but this Samaritan, who was from a despised race in the Jewish mind, gets off his donkey and poured oil in the man’s wounds. He helped him. He picked him up and put him on his donkey and took him down to Jericho to an inn. He dipped into his own pocket and paid for the man’s care. He said, “I’ll be gone a couple of days. When I come back, if he owes you anything more, I’ll pay that.” Everyone knows the story of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus said, “My neighbor is anyone who has need.” Even if I don’t like his race. Even if I don’t like the color of his skin, or even if he comes from the other side of the tracks. He’s my neighbor, anyone who needs help. When the Bible says, “Love your neighbor,” anyone who is in need, is my neighbor. So we need to love our neighbor and be free from showing partiality.

James goes on to say that it is the fulfillment of the law. In verse 9, he says, “But if you show partiality, you commit sin.” I’ve underlined that and highlighted that and made note of that: Respect of persons is sin; it’s transgression. “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” James is not talking about degrees of sin. Sin is sin. But there are sins that are more heinous than others—let’s admit that. But we’re still sinners; we’re still law breakers. You only have to lie once to be a liar. You only have to steal once to be a thief. You only have to break one of God’s commandments to break the whole law; you’re a law breaker.

The same God Who said, “Don’t commit adultery”—by the way, that’s in the Bible: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” “For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” So we don’t want to be law breakers.

Let me give you the third Biblical reason for not showing partiality, in verses 12-13. This is so sobering and so powerful, but it is often missed in this text. It is that we, as Christians—yes, you heard me right; twice in the passage, it is addressed to “my beloved brethren”—will face a future judgment. We have to give an account to God of the way we treat people. Notice these verses: “So speak and so do...”—so our words and our works—“...as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.” So I pointed out it was first the “royal law”; now it’s the “law of liberty” or “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Verse 13 continues, “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”

Now wait a minute. “‘Judged’?” Yes; “judged by the law of liberty.” So in our words, “so speak,” and in our works, “so do as those who will be judged.” You say, “Well, Pastor John, I’m confused. I thought that as a Christian, our sins were paid for. I thought, ‘There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.’ I thought it was a done deal. It’s finished. It’s paid for.” That’s true. When we go to heaven, we’re not going to be judged for our sins; we’re forgiven. But make no mistake: we will give an account to God for the way we treat people. We will give an account of what we did with our time, talents and treasure. We will have to give an account to God. God entrusted us with certain gifts and abilities. Did we use them for the good of others and for His glory?

I believe with all my heart that it is possible to have a saved soul, but a wasted life. Oh, yeah, you’ll be in heaven when you die, but will you hear the Lord say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord”?

I want to go to heaven with all my heart. I want to see Jesus face to face. I want to be with others who I love who have gone before me. I can’t wait to go to heaven, but when I get to heaven, I want to hear Jesus say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” He died for my sins, and He gave His life for me. What more could I do but say,

“Take my life, and let it be

Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;

Take my silver and my gold.

Not a mite would I withhold.”

Take my speech....

Take my feet....

Take my hands....”

Lord, use me for Your glory.

Basically, James is closing this passage by saying, “Look. You’re going to give an account to God. You’re going to be judged by God. It’s called the “bema” or the reward. The references to that are in 1 Corinthians 3 and in 2 Corinthians 5. If you serve the Lord with right motives, you’re going to take gold and precious stones to heaven, and it won’t be consumed by the judgment of fire; you’ll go to heaven with your rewards. But if you are serving for wrong motives—self-centered motives, self-advancing motives—it’s “wood, hay and stubble.” You’ll still go to heaven—you’ll be saved—but “by fire.” You won’t take anything with you. That’s a sad thought.

What are you doing with your time, talents and treasure? What are you doing with your life? Are you investing it? Are you showing mercy? Verse 13 says, "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy." Jesus said in His Beatitudes on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." You sow mercy, you will reap mercy.

So we should treat other people the way God treats us. Has God not been gracious and merciful and kind and patient with us? The answer is "Yes." Should we not be gracious and merciful and kind and patient to others? The answer is "Yes." Amen.