

The Sin Of Snobbery

James 2:1-13

Pastor John Miller

James 2:1 starts out, “My brethren...”—this indicates he is starting a new subject and is talking to Christians—“...do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory...”—and here’s our topic—“...with partiality,” or the King James translation says, “with respect of persons.” James is telling us that we should not, as believers, show favoritism or have “respect of persons.”

I got my title to this sermon from the New English Bible translation of verse 1, where it is rendered, “My brothers, believing as you do in our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns in glory, you must never show snobbery.” I like that. Basically it is saying that if you show “snobbery” or are a respecter of persons, it is inconsistent with a person who has put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian and a follower of Christ, it is inconsistent for you to be a respecter of persons.

One of the best ways to test the reality and maturity of your Christianity is how you treat people. If your doctrine lifts you so high that your feet don’t touch the ground, it’s a false doctrine. If your Christianity doesn’t change the way you view people, talk to people, deal with people, love people, show mercy to people, then it’s not genuine or authentic Christianity.

Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another,” John 13:35. Love is the birthmark of a true believer. It’s not that we accept sin in the lives of others or approve of their sinful lifestyle; it’s that we should love them, because Christ died for them. If they’re believers, Christ is in them. If they’re unbelievers, Christ died for them. And we should never judge a person based on outward appearances, because “The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart,” 1 Samuel 16:7.

One of the overall, arching themes of this text is that God looks at the heart. We look at the outward appearance and make a judgement, but it’s not based on reality. What we do is “judging a book by its cover.” We should be looking at the heart like God does.

We’ve seen already in the book of James that the mark of a mature Christian is, number one, joyful in trials. James 1:1-12 says that if you are a true believer, that you rejoice in your trials, knowing they work for you and not against you. The second mark of maturity is that they are triumphant in temptations, James 1:13-18. And thirdly, we saw that they practice the truth of God’s Word, James 1:19-27. That means they are “doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

Now fourth, which is our topic today, we are not to show “respect of persons,” “partiality” or “snobbery.” So in verse 1 where James says, “Do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality,” that is a sin, he’ll say. It is contrary to God’s grace.

Unfortunately, this was happening in James' day. There was a great rift. You think we have racial prejudice in America today? In the New Testament times, it was even worse. They had Gentile on one side and Jew on the other, and "never the twain shall meet." If a Jewish person walked through Gentile area, when they left the Gentile area, they would take their sandals off and knock the dust off the bottom of them, then step into the Jewish area and put them back on. They didn't want to bring "dirt" from the Gentile area into the Jewish area. They would walk hundreds of miles out of the way just to avoid Gentile areas for fear of contamination.

There was this great hatred. Even the early church was replete with this Jew-Gentile issue; whether Gentiles could be saved and whether there could be one church, Jew-Gentile, or there could be two churches, Jew and Gentile. It took some time before they realized we are one in Christ.

The answer to modern racism, partiality and showing snobbery is Jesus Christ. He breaks down the walls and barriers. We know from the Bible that God created all men equal. They are all loved in His sight.

So it was happening in James' day and sadly it's common in our own day. And sadly, too, it's common in the church. There are Christian snobs in the church. They look at what people are wearing, the color of their skin, their social status and these things should not be a part of those who believe and follow Jesus Christ.

There are three, main points in our text. The first is the command, which we read in verse 1: to stop showing "snobbery" or "respect of persons." It's an actual command. So to show "respect of persons," is a violation of this command. In verse 1, James was writing to believers, so this was a problem in the church, in the assembly of believers. It says, "My brethren, do not hold." In the Greek, it's called "an imperative," or a command. It could be rendered, "Stop having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory..."—the words "the Lord" are italicized, so they don't belong—"...with partiality." It's saying if you are a believer in Jesus, He is the Lord of glory, He sits on the throne in heaven and it is inconsistent with His deity and His majesty that we would show "respect of persons."

And "respect" is shown for the first time in our text in verse 1: "respect of persons" in the King James translation. What do the words "respect of persons" mean? It comes from two Greek words: "face" and "receive." What it means is that you accept or reject someone based on their physical appearance, at face value. It could be the color of their skin, their social status, that they're male or a female, that they are from a certain country or ethnicity, their money, the way they dress. This is not consistent to being a follower of Jesus Christ. James says it is inconsistent with faith. God doesn't look at what men look like, but God looks on the heart. So we, as believers, need to look as God looks—on the heart.

I like the fact that verse 1 says, "of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." The object of your faith as a Christian is Jesus Christ. He's not only your Savior and Redeemer, but He's your example. And all through the Bible we see that Jesus did not show favoritism. There are many

verses in the Old Testament and in the New Testament where it says that God is no “respector of persons.”

When God spoke to the judges in the Old Testament He told them they were not to judge the poor differently than they judge the rich. When you go to court, you don't want the judge looking at the clothes you wear or your income. You want him to judge righteously according to the law. And in the New Testament we see also that God is no “respector of persons.” So verse 1 makes this clear.

And Jesus was no “respector of persons.” Let me give you some examples. First, in Luke 21, Jesus was talking to the disciples about the widow's mite. Jesus was in the temple in the court of the Gentiles. On the walls were the coffer treasury receptacles. They were trumpet shaped, with the large part at the base. People would put their money in the receptacle, and it would go down into the base. And the disciples watched rich people put their money in the receptacle. They were probably doing it very ostentatiously; they were showing off. The disciples were so impressed with the rich people's offerings, that they brought it to the attention of Jesus.

But Jesus observed this widow who put in two mites or two pence into a receptacle. Two pence would be equivalent today to half a penny. Jesus used her offering as a lesson to His disciples. He said, “This poor widow has put in more than all.” The disciples thought, How could this possibly be?! The answer is that God “looks at the heart.” Jesus said the rich men put in offerings “out of their abundance...but she out of her poverty.” The rich did it to be seen by men, so they already had their reward. People applauded for them. But the widow gave out of her “penury,” the King James says, or “poverty.” It's the same word used for the poor man in our text. It means dirt poor. She gave sacrificially, willingly and lovingly to God.

So one of the lessons is that God does not look at the amount we give; He looks at the attitude of the heart when we give. God is not impressed with your great gifts to Him if your heart is not right. God wants your heart; not your wallet. Money that you give is a blessing, and He lets you participate, but He doesn't need your money. God is not impressed with the amount of money we give. Sometimes people think that if they give a lot of money that it justifies how they live. That's not true.

Jesus was looking at the widow's heart and the sacrifice she gave. Jesus is not impressed with rich people because they're rich; He's no “respector of persons.”

Second, in John 4, which is a classic example, when Jesus was passing through the area of Samaria, a despised area—He didn't go around but went through it—He met at Jacob's well in Sychar with a woman of Samaria. He said to her, “Give me a drink.” She was shocked, because Jesus was a Jew, He was a man and she was a woman, so she said, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” Jews had no dealings with Samaritans.

Samaritans were half Jewish and half Gentile, so they were considered despised by the Jews.

Though the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, Jesus did. Then Jesus spoke with her about her need for “living water.” And He said, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

But she said, “I have no husband.”

And Jesus said, “You have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband.”

She said, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.” Yes. And she came to faith in Jesus Christ.

When the disciples came back from running an errand, they saw Jesus speaking to this sinful woman of Samaria. They were shocked. And the woman came back from the city and brought a lot of people with her. The fields were ripe for the harvest. And “The Lord does not see as man sees...but the Lord looks at the heart.” He deals even with those who are despised and outcast.

Then there is the story of the rich man, Zacchaeus, in Luke 19, which is another example. He was rich because he was a thief; he was robbing the Jews of their taxes for Rome and the Roman government. So he was hated and rejected and despised. But Jesus was coming through his town.

Zacchaeus was small of stature, but he wanted to see Jesus in the crowd, so he climbed up a tree to see Him. Then Jesus came along, stopped, looked up and saw Zacchaeus, this dignified, wealthy tax collector, and said, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” So Jesus went home with the despised, hated tax collector. “But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.’ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.’”

When a tax collector returns money, you know they’ve been saved! Then Jesus said, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” He looked at Zacchaeus’ heart.

This passage doesn’t condemn being rich. Nowhere in the Bible are riches condemned per se. Trusting in riches is condemned. Ill-gotten riches is condemned. But if God has blessed you, just humbly appreciate the fact that God has blessed you, and put not your trust in uncertain riches “but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”

Now this passage isn’t saying that we should hate the rich or despise the rich. That would be reverse discrimination. We’re to look at the heart. Rich people need Jesus and poor people need Jesus. And we’re going to see that God has “chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him.” Generally speaking, God has chosen poor people to magnify His grace, which is so very important.

So we are to stop showing “respect of persons.” We need to see others through the eyes of Jesus. If they are not a Christian, then we should say that Christ died for them. Sometimes we,

as Christians, despise non-Christians. That ought not to be. We don't approve of their sin, we don't approve of their behavior, but they are people for whom Christ died. And when they come to church, we shouldn't look at the clothes, what they're wearing or the way they look. We should welcome them. They're coming and hearing the Gospel. And if they are Christian, then Christ lives in them.

So verse 1 is the command: stop having faith in Jesus Christ with partiality.

The second main point is in verses 2-4, and that is the illustration of snobbery. So James commands us to stop showing snobbery, and then he illustrates what snobbery is in their assembly. "For if there should come into your assembly..." The word "assembly" comes from a Greek word from which we get our word "synagogue." It carries the idea of "a gathered group of people." It is also a synonym for the Greek word "ekklesia," which means "church."

This could have been a New Testament church, in which they were meeting in a synagogue. More likely he was just using the term that was common in that day for assembly or gathering together. This is the only place it is used in this context.

So if there had come into their assembly a man with "gold rings," who wore "fine apparel" and a "poor man in filthy clothes"—the word "poor" here means "abstract poverty" or "dirt poor"—not only were they poor clothes but they probably smelled and were soiled and dirty. Verse 3 says, "You pay attention 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'" or "sit on the floor." Then you are showing favoritism to the rich and despising the poor.

Next, we see the application, in verse 4. "Have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" In verse 1 we have "respect of persons," you have respect of the one who wears the beautiful clothing, and in verse 4, that is defined as showing "partiality." So the application would be evil-thinking judges or judges with wrong standards.

This is probably a hypothetical story. It's probably not a situation James heard about, but it did take place commonly in the assembly, and he's trying to rebuke them into repentance for this sin. It's probably a picture of what could happen in the church.

As they were gathered together, a rich man was dressed in beautiful clothes and wore multiple rings on his fingers. In the ancient world, two of the ways you showed your wealth was beautiful clothes and rings. In the Greek, it says, "rings" on his "fingers." Some Greek scholars believe that every finger on both hands were covered with rings. They actually had places where you could rent rings to wear for social outings, so you could impress people with your wealth. One translation says "gold fingered."

So he had the finest clothes, gold all over his fingers, drove the finest chariot and when he showed up for church on Sunday, the ushers were falling all over themselves to give him the best seat in the house. "Wow! A rich dude's here today. Let's give him the nicest seat," and they helped him to the nicest seat.

Then a poor man shows up. He crawled out from under a bridge. He smelled. Some looked at him and said, "Oh, I hope he doesn't come to church," but he came into the church. The ushers said, "You can stand in the corner, but if you need to sit down, you can sit on the floor."

This ought never to happen in the church of Jesus Christ. The ground is level at the foot of the Cross. God looks at the heart; He doesn't look at our clothes. We should never cater to those who are rich or affluent or look the way we want them to look. But we should look at the heart and treat all men with respect and dignity.

So they had respect for those who wore beautiful, expensive clothes, so they showed "partiality," verse 4, and they were "judges with evil thoughts." The phrase "judges with evil thoughts" could be translated "evil-thinking judges" or "judges with wrong standards."

This has been a problem in the church. In the 18th century in England, as one example, you could only go to church if you paid money and rented your own pew. The pews had doors at the ends of the pew, and they had a family name on the pew. You paid money to sit in that pew. If you didn't have any money, you couldn't come into the church.

So John Wesley began to go outside the church to preach the Gospel to the common people. And those in the open fields who John Wesley preached to, without a public-address system, numbered sometimes up into the thousands, up to 30,000. It was said that the coal miners' faces would be black from the coal, and as they heard John Wesley preach, they would have white streaks down both cheeks from their tears. So the birth of the Methodist movement, the Methodist church and the Wesley revivals of 18th century England came over to America later.

One hundred years later, William Booth was bringing poor people into church, and he was rebuked. "You can't bring this riffraff into the church; they need to clean up! They need to get some Christian clothes on. Get a Christian haircut!" So William Booth went to the streets and shared the Gospel with the poor, and what followed was another revival, the birth of the Salvation Army. And so it went all through the church's history.

In the early '60s and through the early '70s, we had the Jesus Movement, which we know about from the movie *The Jesus Revolution*. I was one of those "Jesus people." I was a hippie. I remember going to church, I got saved, my hair was long, my beard was humongous and I had scrubby clothes on. People would say, "When's he going to look like a Christian?" I remember thinking, I look more like Jesus than you do! What are you talking about?! I've seen the pictures of Jesus; I look like Jesus.

Thank God for Chuck Smith. He opened the doors of Calvary Chapel, hippies were coming in, were sitting in the pews and were putting their toes through the communion-cup holders. Some of the senior, snobby saints said, "This is the 'abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet! We're living in the last days!" Someone put a sign in the foyer that said, "No bare feet allowed." Chuck Smith took down the sign and said, "If we're not going to let them in with their bare feet, because it ruins the carpet, we'll tear out the carpet." We had the birth of the

Jesus Movement, and thousands of smelly, dirty hippies came to Christ. And I'm one of them. What a blessing. And many of you, too.

No wonder James says, "Do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality."

Proverbs 22:2 says, "The rich and the poor have this in common, the Lord is the maker of them all." I like that.

So in verse 1, we have the command: don't show "respect of persons"; in verses 2-4, we have the illustration; and now we have the third, main point, in verses 5-13: three reasons for not showing snobbery or "respect of persons."

Reason number one, in verse 5, is a theological reason. "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" In verse 1, James said "my brethren"; now he is making more application by saying, "my beloved brethren." He is appealing to their emotions.

The point is that showing favoritism or partiality, being a snob, is contrary to or inconsistent with the grace of God, because God, in His grace, has chosen "the poor of this world to be rich in faith." It means in a general sense; not in an exclusive sense that God chooses the poor of this world. When he says, "rich in faith," that's in the sphere of faith. They're in this world poor, but as far as toward God, they have great wealth. That's the true wealth.

The word "chosen" is the very same Greek word used for God electing or choosing us to salvation. This is just a footnote in the book of James, but it is taught in the New Testament. If you are a Christian, Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." That's humbling.

But it's important to understand the basis on which God chooses us. It's not because of the color of our skin, our money or income, our status or our education, our nationality; it's because of His grace. Grace is unearned, undeserved, unmerited favor. No one is saved because of something they are or something they do. Even though you repent and believe, you're still saved by grace; salvation's by the grace of God. It's "not of works, lest anyone should boast." That's what James is saying here, in verse 5.

Where he says, "chosen the poor of this world," it's in a general sense. It doesn't mean that rich people aren't saved; God chooses them, as well. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 says, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

God didn't say "none are called"; He said "not many." In the early church especially, the majority of Christians were poor. They might be owned by a slave master. In the New Testament is a

story of Philemon and his slave, Onesimus. Onesimus ran away from his master and then got saved under Paul's ministry in Rome. Paul sent Onesimus back to his master with a request that Philemon receive him back as "a beloved brother." So the slave and his master would go to church and be equal. Sometimes a slave would be given a gift of teaching, he would get up and preach the Word and his master would be sitting there hearing him preach the Word in the church.

This is why in the church and in our country today, Christ is the answer to our divisions. We need Jesus. We need the church. They were not to be divided over race and different things by judging someone by their appearance.

Warren Wiersbe said, "A class church is not a church that magnifies the grace of God." I like that. A congregation should reflect God's grace. We're not Jew, we're not Gentile, we're not bond, we're not free, we're not male, we're not female; in Christ, we're all one.

This is clear in Acts 10 when God wanted to save a Gentile named Cornelius and his household. He was a Roman centurion living in Caesarea. God sent an angel to Cornelius saying, "Send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter." Simon Peter was to come to Cornelius "to hear words from you."

And when Peter was up on the roof where he was staying, he was taking a nap as they prepared lunch downstairs. In a vision, Peter saw a big sheet bound at the corners coming down from heaven, and on the sheet were all these unclean animals, according to Jewish, Levitical law. In his vision, a voice said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Then Peter responded to the Lord in his vision and said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." Then the voice said, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

Then the moment that happened and Peter wondered about the vision, the men, Gentiles from Cornelius, arrived at the gate. Peter let them in, because God had prepared him through his vision. Peter asked them, "For what reason have you come?"

They said, "Cornelius...was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." Peter put two and two together and thought, I guess God wants to save Gentiles. He agreed to return with them, but he wanted them to know "how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." So Peter went to the Gentiles.

What a great way to open your sermon for the house of Cornelius: "First of all, you're all unclean and I shouldn't be here."

"Well, thank you Peter, we're glad to see you, too."

But Peter said that God had shown him that he should not call anything uncommon or unclean. In Acts 10:34, Peter said, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality." Isn't that beautiful? Then Peter preached the Gospel, the Holy Spirit fell and they were all saved and filled with the

Spirit. God was saving the Gentiles.

So a class church is not a church that magnifies the grace of God.

The second reason we should not show snobbery or “respect of persons” is a logical reason, in verses 6-7. “But you have dishonored the poor man.” They have despised the poor, but God had chosen them.

Now we see the contrast to the poor. James asks two questions: “Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?” And note a question mark at the end of verse 5, at the end of verse 6 and at the end of verse 7. So these three verses are filled with rhetorical questions that expect a “Yes” answer. God chose the poor of this world, God gave them riches and God is going to give them the kingdom. I like that. And the rich blaspheme the name of Jesus, “by which you are called.” And the rich bring you before the courts.

So James is showing them that their favoritism toward the rich is illogical. Now don’t forget that James is not condemning wealth, so we don’t despise rich people. If rich people want to come to this church, they’re welcome. But they’ll be treated like poor people, like anybody.

For all the years I’ve been a pastor, I’ve never known how much anybody in the church gives to the church. I have no idea if you give a penny to this church, and it does not influence the way I treat you, love you or serve you. It has nothing to do with that. I don’t want to know, because I don’t want to show favoritism. You are people for whom Christ died and for whom Christ lives. So we shouldn’t show favoritism to the rich—or despise them—or show favoritism to the poor—or despise them. We should treat all people equally in the church. It’s so important.

So in verse 6, James is saying that they were favoring the rich, yet the rich were exploiting them. They were favoring the rich, yet the rich were blaspheming God, verse 7.

There are not only theological and logical reasons for not showing favoritism, but there are also two Biblical reasons, verses 8-13. First, it is the breaking of “the royal law,” verses 8-11. Only one link on the chain needs to break to be a law breaker. “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture....” It’s called “the royal law” because it comes from God and governs other laws. It’s taken from Leviticus 19:18. The royal law is “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” And if you keep it, “You do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”

So if you show partiality, you’re sinning and breaking the law. “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.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.” So the first, Biblical reason we should stop showing favoritism is that it is a breaking of God’s royal law.

People came to Jesus and asked Him, “What is the greatest commandment?” He said, “You

shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." But He didn't stop there; He said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." So these two laws are called the royal law. In verse 12 it's called "the law of liberty," because it comes from God and controls all the other laws.

We are all innately narcissistic. You don't believe me? Any time you're in a group photo and you get a copy of it, who is the first person you look for in the photo? Yourself. "Oh, my hair doesn't look good. The lighting was bad. I should have turned sideways; I look fat." You're stoked on yourself. We're narcissistic. Since no one ever hated himself, you are to "love your neighbor as yourself."

By the way, in the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, the first set of Commandments deals with our relationship to God. Loving God takes care of those Commandments. The second set of Commandments deals with loving our neighbors as ourselves. If I love my neighbor as myself, I won't lie, I won't murder, I won't commit adultery, I won't covet. Loving your neighbor as yourself, verse 8, is a fulfillment of the royal law.

Someone said, "I have no problem loving my neighbor as myself, if I can choose the neighborhood."

Last night, about four houses away from where we live, at 2:00 a.m., there was all this crazy noise going on, screaming and yelling, and I thought about this verse that I had to preach on today: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

"Lord, I do. But not that house down the street. I do, but not at two o'clock in the morning!" I felt like getting a megaphone and yelling, "I have to preach tomorrow! SHUT UP! GOD LOVES YOU! GO TO BED! SEE YOU AT CHURCH."

Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan. The Samaritan is the hero of the story. He showed love to the man in need. And the message of the good Samaritan is that anyone in need is my neighbor. It doesn't matter what race they are or who they are. I should show them love and care and concern. Having "respect of persons" is inconsistent with God's law.

In verse 11, James quotes from the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, and he says, "Do not commit adultery," which is the Seventh Commandment, from Exodus 20:14, and "Do not murder," which is the Sixth Commandment, from Exodus 20:13.

There is an amazing parallel between the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus gave and the book of James. Jesus said that if you have anger in your heart toward somebody, you've murdered them. You've broken that Commandment. If you have lustful desires toward somebody, you've committed adultery in your heart. You are a transgressor of God's laws.

The second Biblical reason for not showing partiality is that we will be facing future judgment, verses 12-13. James says, "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." We should speak our words and do our works in light of the fact that we will be judged

by the Word of God, by “the law of liberty.” It’s the same as “the royal law,” in verse 8.

Verse 13, “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” Remember that Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” If you give mercy, you’ll receive mercy. “Whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”

You say, “Wait a minute, Pastor John! I thought we weren’t going to be judged for our sin!” That’s true. But we will be judged for our works. Our words speak and our works do. Both of those are in that verse.

I believe it’s possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life. Salvation means you’re going to heaven when you die. That’s for sure; salvation’s secure. But will you hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant”?

Are you showing favoritism? Are you showing “respect of persons”? We will stand before the bema, the reward-seat of Christ, and we will give an account to God of our words and our works. There is no place for snobbery in the life of a true Christian.

To summarize our text, to show “respect of persons” or “partiality,” is inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ, it is inconsistent with the grace of God and it is a transgression of God’s law. And we will one day have to give an account to God for the way we dealt with and treated other people.

You say, “Well, I’ve never committed adultery.” That’s good. “I’ve never murdered.” That’s good. But in your heart, you’ve been critical, fault-finding and judgmental. And you’ve shown “respect of persons.” That’s a transgression which we need to repent of and ask God to forgive us.