

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to continue with our series this morning we are two James Chapter two now we finished up James one last week and as we go through this again I just want to ask a couple of questions as we get going here at the beginning just to kind of make sure people are still remembering So who is James. Jesus's brother James is the half brother of Jesus was raised in the same house by the same parents again if you can just imagine what that must have been like right I mean many of you were probably compared unfavorably to a sibling at some point in your life now just imagine that that sibling really was perfect right I mean that is that's that's tough tough sledding there right I mean imagine the awkward miss of praying for salvation to your sibling right all the things that James had to do to really fall in line with with his faith in Jesus what did James do what was his what was his job. People already forgot that one he was the pastor of the Church of Drusilla OK that is where he pastored was there and who was the letter of James written to. Come on somebody knows this answer don't get all quiet on me now who is James written to. Christians the Jewish believers. That have been scattered because of persecution OK he was writing to Jewish believers who had been scattered because they were being persecuted and that's important as we read this as we look for clues as we look for what James is trying to actually say to us it's important to remember who he's writing to because you know when you read that you need to have your tongue you know to tame your tongue and you need to take care of widows and orphans and in their distress basically take care of people who can't take care of themselves and keep yourself on station from the world when you read that and you realize that he's talking to people who are being brutally killed in the streets and being beaten for their faith and he's still saying hey this is stuff that you need to do it really adds a weight to it that is important for us to understand it's not just saying you know when things are really good in your life when everything is going really smoothly and there are any bumps in the road then you can really start to pay attention to what's coming out of your mouth and help other people and make sure that you're not falling victim to the world right only when things are really good do you have to set those standards for yourself that's not what he's saying at all he's writing this to people whose lives aren't up he will live their lives have been totally turned upside down and he's saying if you want to prove your faith. You need to actually live it out you know actually walk it out in the middle of your struggles right and so it's important James readers are looking for strength in the face of persecution in James says yeah you can find strength through the middle of your persecution if you just look to the Word of God open up your Bibles read them take in the Word of God but he says it's not enough. To just read it it's not enough to just hear it you actually have to do something about it right when the Bible tells us that we need to change something or do something it's not enough just to hear those words we then have to make the change or go do what it says to do. Not only is the mature Christian patient in testings we've been talking about lots of about maturity and according to James one not only is the mature Christian patient in testing but he also practices the truth of Scripture This is the entire theme of James immature Christians talk about their beliefs immature Griffins will tell you up and down what they believe will just take Christian out of it immature people will tell you what they believe until they're blue in the face. But they never do anything about it. Right and you can apply that to Christianity just as well it doesn't matter if you've been part of a church or you chose Jesus for fifty sixty years ago if you're not doing what the Bible tells you to do you would still be one of these immature Christians it's not about age it's about allowing Jesus to change. We have to do what the word says not just hear or read what the word says. Now. And only my intro and I know some of you are already like man seriously again. You have to do this overnight Jesus never says in the Bible you know what you pray to me and then everything's going to be I'm going to I'm going to I'm going to change you in an instant you know I mean we're changed like our soul is saved in an instant but Jesus never says Well now you're totally like me and if you ever screw up again I'm just totally embarrassed of you and you can't be a follower of mine. This is a process right of becoming more like Jesus it's a process so James has been kind of laying out general principles in chapter one. And now he starts to flesh out the details of it all right we get to do chapter two and it's not just about a general idea anymore it's about some specific marks of faith some specific things that we can do so

we can see at the end of chapter two one of the things he talks about his work to care for those who cannot care for himself right and so we start to address that a little bit how do we practice is one of the things that that we do is we can't ignore people in need right we cannot ignore those who need help and that is exactly what we do we're totally ignoring a need when we show favoritism for one person to then another right and so that's that's his launch into chapter two we're ignoring the need. If we're showing favoritism he launches into chapter two verse one James Chapter two verse one. He says My dear brothers and sisters how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others. Like I said last week I could stop right there on one verse if I wanted to take the next three years and preach James I could do it verse by verse and almost have something pretty deep to say about every single verse. How can you claim to have faith in Jesus if you show favoritism. Right I mean just right there that's enough anyone ever showed favoritism to somebody like raise your hand if you've ever shown favoritism to anyone in your entire life. Everybody has everybody has done it how many you have ever made a snap judgment about somebody based on their appearance and been totally wrong in your entire life. Everybody have N.J. I'm just saying how can you claim to have faith if you're doing these things. And he doesn't stop there of course he just continues to go for example let's give an example of this For example suppose this is verse two I'm not making it up Suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes if you give special attention in a good seat to the rich person but you say to the poor one you see you can stand over there or else sit on the floor Well doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives listen to me dear brothers and sisters Hasn't God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in the faith aren't they the ones who will inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him but you dishonor the poor isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ who's noble name you bear now I want to I want to say again right here Jesus isn't saying all you rich people are terrible and you're never going to amount to anything. It's not what Jesus is trying to tell us or James. We talked about that in the last one it's all about our heart issue it's all about that but what he is saying is many of these people that they're they're looking in their churches many of them are already in need and in distress because they've been persecuted they've had to abandon their homes they had a band in their trade they had to admit they had to run and then somebody with money walks in and right away that person is given a special seat of honor. Right and they're elevated based on nothing more than they look like they have money and he says How in the world. Can you do this right how can you call yourselves Christians if this is the way that you're judging these people is readers come together for a church service right on this day there's two visitors James literally called the one Mr Goldfinger's OK like a Gold Finger Man OK So we have Mr Goldfinger's and he calls the other one basically Mr grimy. Man who's grimy is closer grimy So we have. Mr Gold man and Mr grimy come into church service and people immediately make snap decisions about them and they give one place a precedence and they just pick one of the side. Right and he says what in the world are you doing. There's certainly nothing wrong with being rich is long as Jesus is first the problem here isn't the money it's how people are treating them right and so it's such an important thing. I want I want you to understand he uses one example here and I would say from my own experience Kay I've been around people who have money who look down on poor people right they think of them as less than themselves and that's not OK And I've also been around people who have very little and they look at people who have very much as just as distant and disgusting as the as a as a wealthy person would look on them this street can go both ways right it's not about who has money and who doesn't it's about making snap decisions about people and judging them with wrong motives. So we can take money totally off of the table here and just fill in whatever you struggle with. Right most of us probably have a certain type of people that sets us on edge for whatever reason. Sometimes fair. Sometimes not. Can I tell you that it doesn't matter if it's fair or not. If we're just going to snap judge people and make them less valuable in our own eyes. Then James would say to us how can you even claim faith. Is tough. This is a difficult thing let me make it really uncomfortable so I'm going to just take a deep breath

right now OK I just brace yourself because I'm going to intentionally make it uncomfortable for a minute. Republicans what do you think about Democrats. Democrats what do you think about Republicans. Those of you who are in the middle What do you think about the people on the edges. Those of you who are on the edges What do you feel about people who stand in the middle. Do you make snap judgments. Do you judge their heart and their motives based on a political stance. Jamie would say. How dare you. I told you I'm going to make it uncomfortable I think a deep breath. Let's just move on to something else what do you struggle with. What is it when somebody walks in and they have a certain look or they associate with a certain label and you're just like I'm done. James would say. That's not OK. We snap judge people's hearts based on what's on the outside and instead of on the inside without ever really getting them getting to know them and what we do when we do that is we literally say to them you're not is valuable to the kingdom of God as this person who I value more. And that is never. Going to be OK. In any circumstance in any way shape or form it's never going to be OK now I know we would never say I know God doesn't care as much about you as as somebody else but that's what we're telling them. When we immediately set them aside for someone we prefer. And James would say you want to be mature. Stop it. That place has that that kind of stuff has no place. In the Kingdom of God. That's difficult. We all have a history we all have a past we've all had some rough encounters. To not let that. Jade us in our fuel people is a difficult thing. But if some mark of Christian maturity. It's a measuring standard that we can look at our lives and say maybe I'm not quite there yet or hey I've got at least one thing figured out. How do we do it how do we do with this. How we do this I want to go back to verse one because there's something really cool here. And I knew it would be a little heavy right here so I just want to go something that I think is really awesome OK James Chapter two verse one he describes Jesus and sometimes James gets a bad rap as a letter because people say he doesn't talk enough about God but I think this is an amazing sentence of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ OK It's so easy we talked about faith and that we have faith in him I want to there's a few things about here Jesus why should we value Jesus right James people want to say I doesn't talk enough about God just kind of work your way through that one whatever but James has a very clear descriptive view of his savior slash brother. In this in this verse All right why should we prize you just because he's Lord He is the ruler of everything right Jesus is the sovereign lord of all. He deserves to be prize we prize Jesus because he is Jesus he took on humanity God Himself came to earth. Took on flesh and walked among us we prize Jesus because he is Christ anyone know what Christ literally means. This this this not not not yet not not Christian not little christ what does the word Christ actually mean like what in the Greek What would that word actually mean we say it all the time right Jesus Christ it's almost it's a messianic claim it literally means anointed one OK Jesus the Christ Jesus Christ and literally means anointed one Jesus is the annoying did one he was brought by God for a very specific purpose he was anointed prophet priest and King he declares the truth of God He died in our place the Christ came among us he is good we prize do this because as James says he is the Lord of glory he is the Lord in which that perfectly reflected the glory of God on this earth and someday will call us to live with Him in glory we prize Jesus because by the grace of God. He brings faith into our lives and we are able to begin to wrap our minds around this relationship of Jesus. So quick it's such a quick little descriptor when all of these things that James says How can you claim to have faith in this amazing. Jesus. We're going to continue to judge his creation. If we're going to judge them by nothing more than our prejudice and nothing more than their outside appearance how can we claim. To have faith. I was reading on this section. And there's there was one. One scripture or one one commentator said this and I've read this before but I just want to say that again today the way that we treat. People. Indicates you know it reveals how we really think about God. Right the way that we treat those people around us. Indicates what we really think about God What we really believe about him. I need somebody to hear this again. Because if we view if we treat people as somehow less right if we treat them as somehow like not worthy. Then what we're saying about God is he created not worthy people. That his sacrifice wasn't really worthy. For these people. Were saying all kinds of things if you walk around we're just all grumpy with people right every time you're out you're just rugby. You're supposed to

be the reflection of Jesus. What are you reflecting a grumpy Savior. Is that how you view Jesus I'm not saying you're never going to have a bad day don't Don't mistake what I'm saying I'm not saying if you have a bad day you're not a mature Christian. Like generally in life. How do you present Jesus the way that you treat people the way that you talk about people the way that you talk about people when they're not there. Really in view or reveals a lot. About what you think about Jesus. Some of us need to grow in this area. Most of us are right all of us probably could be better. In this area. Is this is a difficult thing. And yet James takes time to call and he continues verse eight. Yes indeed it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures love your neighbor as yourself you'll notice James didn't quote the whole Testament law he just gave us that one because that's enough. Love your neighbor as yourself verse nine but if you favor some people over others you are. Committing a sin it's not just a bad idea. James literally calls it a sin to favor someone over others. Oh. I wanted you to read that because I don't like it OK. You are guilty of breaking the law for a person who keeps all the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all God's law. For the same God who said you must not commit adultery also said you must not murder. James literally just put judging other people right he just put that and I'm not talking about judging fruit Don't Don't mistake what he's saying here right but he says literally if you're favoring other people he compares that to would dull tree and murder in the eyes of God I'm not saying the earthly consequences are the same but he's saying you're just as guilty of breaking the whole law is someone who does these other things. So if you murder someone who didn't commit adultery it still broken the law so whatever you say or whatever you do remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free there will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others but if you have been merciful God will be merciful when he judges you. Again. That's pretty fed. That's not like just. Simple go out there and be happy kind of. Word of God. If we don't show mercy. Mercy will not be shown us. We've been merciful. More mercy will be felt. Now I want to say here real quickly James is not suggesting that you can secure salvation by showing mercy to poor people. Like if all you do is go show mercy to poor people you don't somehow get there by your way into heaven OK that's not how it works we're going to get there next week OK we're saved from sin only by the grace of Jesus only by the death and the resurrection of the spotless lamb he is not saying you can somehow earn salvation by being nice to poor people. But he is saying. That if we don't show mercy we will not receive it. And that's weighty enough. Right so what does this say here right I want to say I want to say a couple things in these verses right in the context here James continues to deal with this business of favoritism he does it by calling attention to three things right he has a look at three things he says chapter or verses eight through eleven favoritism flat out violates the law of God It's not just a bad idea it's sinful to show favoritism is not it's not just not nice it's flat how sinful. The second thing he says. Is our favoritism in verse twelve we'll be judged by God like we will give an account for that the same way that we give account for other things it's not just a little thing it's a big deal. And he says in verse thirteen that favoritism what it really does it just indicates that we're not merciful people. We're only merciful when it suits us. Instead of being somebody who is generally merciful Now listen this comes into play in all kinds of ways as we've got to go through life. We're church that wants to see this community come to know Jesus and we believe that the best way to do that is through relationship right John mentioned that as he was up here receiving the offering that our church our mission statement our heart beat is to see this community come to know Jesus through relationships through building relationships that never works if your relationships are all full of you just showing favoritism to other people. Right people don't want to be in relationship with you if you're a jerk I just say it like that. No one's like oh man that person immediately makes judgments about everyone but I know they won't do it to me so let's go be their best friend. Right. This this carries out in so many different ways. In our walk with Jesus you want to be effective in reaching people for Jesus this is gonna get carved out. We've got a loud Jesus space into our lives to begin to carve this out of our life it's tough though right. I'm going to I'm going to get specific teenagers you can stop listen for a second because I don't want to hear about your judge Kay. If I say the word Millennial. What immediately pops into some of your head. Oh. Flexible work schedule

when taken to a nice place. I'm not actually asking for response I want to internalize this one. One of these only pops in your head. If I say the words food stamps. What immediately pops into your head. Some of you don't struggle with that at all. And you do. Write. If I say the word three brand new cars. What immediately pops in your head. We make snap judgments all the time about people's character when we don't really know them. We show favoritism to things that make us comfortable and we show discrimination to people that doesn't or to things that don't make us comfortable and we do it without even thinking. In James says. You lack mercy. And mercy will be with the. Day. Right. This isn't just a little deal. This is a big deal. This is James Lennon on the line and saying you want to grow in the faith you want to be like Jesus you want to measuring stick. For how much sure you really are. Let's stop talking about how much you put in the plate let's start talking about how you treat people. Because this is one of those. I wish I could make this just funny I wish I could just make this life and be like knowledge it's OK. Just keep doing what you're doing God doesn't care less and God loves you just like you are there is absolutely nothing you can do to make God love you more or less but because God loves you so much he refuses to let you stay how you are when you come to him it's not out of judgment of God It's not because he doesn't like you it's not because he thinks you're such a terrible person it's because he knows there's so much more. For you did you notice how James described the law when he read that the law that set few free they didn't view it as this burden James is talking about love God and love people the great commandments he doesn't view it as this burden he sees it is what sets him free to be who he's really meant to be to allow God to really do it is hard what God wants to do and then we can be free of that. It's not about grinding your face into the ground in guilt and shame it's about there's me more there's better for your life. Than being somebody who discriminates against people. There is a better there's freedom there's excitement cut it out not because it's just this shameful thing but because there's so much more. Waiting on the other side of. The law that sets you free. It's not about you are terrible at life. It's about God wants from. So giving. Jesus. You're good and. I thank you for who you are. Thank you God for all you've done. You came to this earth and you lived and you died for me. And you lived in you died for my friends. And you lived in you died for people I have never met. And you lived and you died for people that really bother me. I pray to Jesus that you help me to be a person. Who doesn't just judge who is worthy of your sacrifice. But a person who genuinely loves people. Who genuinely seeks. To see people come to know you regardless of who they are regardless of what our story may be. Your good. Now if you keep your head about the mask you keep your eyes closed. If you've never met Jesus before I would love for you to come and talk to me at the end of this time it is so simple to choose a life. Of forgiveness the life of Jesus of so do so simple to receive His forgiveness and if you've never done that before I want to talk to you after this I want to I want to help you with that if that someone you. Really want to focus this morning on those of you who have already children these are some of you you're good some of you like I should say you're good at like this. You've got to carve this out of your life. And some of you out there are like most of us. And this is a real struggle. It's a real difficult thing. I'm going to ask our leadership. Their spouses to come back for work just come up here. Like literally I want you guys to come up here. I want you to sit up here and some of you in here I'm going to I'm going to say closing prayer again if you need to go away from you all. Some of you maybe just you don't need to come up and pray with somebody you just need to sit in your in your chair and allow God to work in your heart. Some of you out there might need somebody to pray with you. We're here. You don't have to feel pressured into that but we're here if you want someone to pray with you about these things. I would challenge you again. Some of you out there. God works in you and you hear his voice and then we pray and you just get up and you go. And walk away before you have a chance and some of you just need to take a step you literally need to take a physical step and change your space right now. And allow God to do something some of you don't you can just do that in your seat. And I challenge you before you go this morning it's only eleven forty three right there is seventeen minutes before you have to go pick up kids if you have them with the kids ministry. And if you don't have kids in the kid's ministry what's your excuse right you have to go anywhere. You got some time if you need to if you need to go if you're ready to go if you want

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to go that's fine. But I would challenge all of you to just search your heart for a few moments this morning. To really ask God to reveal if there is something in there that needs to be moved. And allow him to help cut some of these prejudices. Out of our life. God you're good. For the chases. When their stuff in our life that isn't pleasing to you I'll pray you give us a pass. I pray that you can visit. That he killed that's not what. You bring conviction. And that causes change. Because you want more for us. Sometimes you choose for ourselves. For this morning that you search our hearts. Pray that you reveal anything in there that isn't pleasing. Shells. Thank you for loving us enough. To not let the states. Thank you for loving us enough to know that there are more. Elves five. In there. And your turn else music back there if you need to go. And go one coming pray come and pray. If you need to sit in prayer so you sit right here so like I said I challenge you. To give God a moment. To dig into their eyes and see if there's something there that you're.