

Is It Wrong to Be Like Oprah?

by Francis Chan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of giving and serving others, particularly in the context of the church's work in Lima, Peru.

Duration: 46:50

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:35, Romans 2:11, Ephesians 3:20, 1 Timothy 5:3, James 2:1, 1 Peter 1:16

Topics: "Oprah"

Description

In the video, the speaker shares about their experience in Mexico where they went to serve and give to those in need. They describe how the church was alive and worshiped differently because they were focused on giving rather than receiving. The speaker expresses their desire to maintain this attitude even when they return to their home church. They also share an example of testing the friendliness of their church by observing how they interact with someone who looks different, highlighting the importance of not showing favoritism.

Transcript

Last weekend was like the greatest weekend in the history of Cornerstone Church. I mean, I have never, I've never seen the church so alive as when we were in Mexico. I mean, I wish everyone could have been there.

I mean, it's just, we were different. We acted differently, we worshipped differently. Everyone was so alive because we went there to give.

You know, you go there to give and then you understand what the Bible means when it says it's more blessed to give than to receive. Everyone's over there after spending, you know, seven hours getting there, you know, working all day, Saturday, serving in some capacity. And then when we came together to worship Sunday morning, it just, it was different.

We were so filled with life. And I don't want to lose that. I don't want to lose that.

I don't want to come back and go, okay, now we're back in Simi Valley, so give to me something, you know. Let me come and consume. Let me go back to church to consume.

Because do you realize you can come here and actually give? You can actually walk through the doors, walk into the foyer and actually be looking, who can I serve? And you'd be amazed at how much greater

your worship experience would be if even here in Southern California, you came to give to other people and serve other people. It was the greatest trip though. Absolutely.

I don't want us to lose that. I don't want to lose that giving attitude towards we're back. We're going to be doing plenty of trips to Mexico, plenty of different missions, opportunities and things, because I think there is something real about it.

I think it's great when we go into another environment. And for some of you, it's your first time. And it just blows your mind when you look at the need.

I want to do services in the inner city. You know, why don't we all go down to Compton and have service down there and serve people there, you know. Let's just, the church, the church needs to be alive.

We need to be doing things, you know. Not just showing up, same place, same old thing. I mean, life is supposed to be an adventure.

People were filled with the spirit. You guys are just in the clap. So fun.

All the other services have been dead. Okay, this is good though. This is good.

You guys are the ones that must have gone to Mexico. It was, but it's just, it's going to make for a long service too, if after every sentence you guys clap. But that's okay.

That's okay. We can do that. We can do that.

But it was cool. I mean, just for some of you, man, there were tears. There were people serving, you know.

One lady, 60 years old, going, I think this was the greatest day of my life, you know. It's just to experience giving like that in that type of environment. I'm just saying, I don't want to lose that.

I so don't want to lose that. Did you come today desiring to give? Was it the same mentality now that we're on the other side of the border? Because it's so easy to lose that. I get home Sunday night and it took us like 10 hours to get back because of some issues at the border.

But it didn't take everyone that long, but we did. And I got pulled over and everything else, but I didn't even have to talk myself out of it. And but all sorts of things.

But then get back Sunday night, jump on a plane the next morning to go to Lima, Peru. Okay, now Lima, Peru. Okay, because I did not know what Lima, Peru was all about.

What do you think about, okay, when you think Lima, Peru? What comes to your mind? Tropical? Dry? Dirt? What's that? Enchiladas? I can't hear. Chichen Itza? Oh, the ruins. Are they there? Okay.

I didn't know. Oh, okay. Machu Picchu.

Okay, same to you. Okay, what else? What do you think? Lima, Peru. What comes to your mind? Mangoes? Air pollution? All right.

Soccer? Good. Primitive? Oats? Oh, the oats. Yeah, Kevin and Jessica Oats, our missionaries are down there.

Okay, yeah, when I thought Lima, I thought tropical. Doesn't that sound tropical? Lima, Peru. You know, it just, it's like this beautiful tropical little place on the coast.

It's ugly. It's not tropical at all. Try to find a tree in Lima.

It's just, it's brown. It's just dirt. It's just this desert.

The sun never comes out. There's always just a haze. So the sky's always gray.

Everything's just brown. And there's amazing poverty in Lima. Did you know in Lima that there's been this religious persecution in some of these areas? There's been a cult called the Shining Path.

And just like in Sudan, Africa, where, you know, these rebel groups will chase everyone out of there because they're running for their lives and they go to northern Uganda. And so now you get all these refugees. Same thing has happened in Lima, Peru.

People have been chased out of their homes and they have come to Lima. But now you're going to a place, unlike Uganda, that's got some natural resources. Lima's got nothing.

It's a desert. You just chase all these people into this desert. In the last 10 years, the population of Lima has grown from 850,000 to 8 million in 10 years.

So imagine all these people coming to this desert area to find a home. And so they set up these little shantytowns all over the place where they just find wherever they can to make four walls and a roof, you know, if you're lucky, of something, of some sort. But picture, you know, 7 million people that are displaced in this place.

It's about 85, 80, 85 percent just severe poverty here in Lima. And I was shocked. I was shocked.

I didn't know all this stuff about Lima. I went with Children's Hunger Fund, which we're a big part of here in Cornerstone. But one of the coolest things, one of the first day, first day I go there, and many days in my life, I wake up, I just go, God, do something crazy in my life today.

I don't want to just wake up and live another day. OK, do something. Show me you're around.

Show me something great. And first day I go to this place. And, you know, those food packs that you guys packed for CHF, we get those boxes.

You know, we went out distributing some of those. I mean, it could have been some that you packed, you know, and we go and I'm distributing this this box at this one home. I mean, you can you can call it a home.

It's about the size of that wall, these walls, like, you know, about this big. And and there's four people living there. It's a single mom and just two handicapped kids who can't walk and and a daughter.

And so what's she going to do? She can't go work. She can't leave her handicapped kids at home alone. And and so it's a situation like that.

And there are so many situations like that. So many husbands have left. I mean, just all these single moms and kids and orphans everywhere.

And I'm passing this box to this lady who, you know, this will tire over for a few weeks, you know, but it's food. It's exciting to them. It's like, wow, a box, you know, and we're able to share that, you know, someone from the States, you know, cares and loves.

And there's a lot of love in this box. You know, it's not just the food. It's someone someone cares about you.

And but but anyways, I come to find out, you know, after talking to the translator a little bit that just the week before, someone from America had brought wheelchairs to her two wheelchairs. So for the first time, her two boys could go. And then I find out it's someone from our church, Horace Jones Church, the week before.

That's just so nuts. I'm middle of a slum in Lima, Peru, with eight million people in this one home and someone else from Cornerstone Church was there the week before delivering, you know, wheelchairs. You know, it's just the craziest thing.

I'm going, wait a second. Someone from Johnny and the Friends. I go, was it so? And they're like, yeah, I translate.

I'm like, it goes to my church. I mean, it's just like this crazy thing of just seeing the love of Christ through Cornerstone Church. I mean, there's there's nothing like it.

And then I, you know, then I go and visit our missionaries. We have missionaries in Lima, Peru, Kevin and Jessica Oates. A lot of you guys remember them.

He used to head up our Bible Institute. And that was a huge loss to us when we lost Kevin. It's like, man, you ran our whole Bible Institute.

He taught us so much of the scriptures. Kevin is doing an amazing job out there. He's teaching at the seminary, but he didn't speak Spanish.

So he had to go learn Spanish first. And now he's teaching Greek in Spanish. OK, you know, so that's what Kevin is doing.

And he's training pastors there. And then Jessica, Jessica is a nurse. His wife's a nurse.

And so she's been doing these these mobile medical clinics. But I want to show you some pictures of the area they live, you know, that they're ministering in. This area is called Mon Chai.

This is just a small, small section of it. There are actually 300,000 people that live just in this area, this little shanty town. Three hundred thousand.

And this is a small area. And there's like eight to 12 of these. I forget, eight or 12 of these that surround Lima, where they just they just live up in the dirt.

Here's here's their homes. I mean, they're just trying to find anything. They don't own the land.

They just find a piece of land, try to find some wood and just put up something to put their family in. And so here's your typical home. As you can see, everything.

That's just what you see. Everything, every day. It's just dry.

It's just gray. It's just here's your whole life, your whole existence in there. A lot of these single moms.

I mean, some of them just tons of kids, you know, just nothing for them to do. Jessica, like I said, has been doing these mobile medical clinics where she'll get a team of people and they'll they'll go to a certain area and maybe, you know, rent out a church or something like that and just do like a one day clinic and try to see as many people as they can. And then Kevin, Kevin's preaching at a local church.

And like I said, he's teaching in the seminary and go ahead and go to the next one. So this is this is just a typical countryside area and there's no water, obviously no running water or anything like that. But a truck will come by every once while a water truck and people will run down with a bucket and scoop some water out of the bucket.

But they have to pay for it. It's not the government. It's just they just get some water from some vendor and the water they get, I'm sure, is pretty disgusting, but it's water.

At least there's something for them to drink. And so they'll just run down to that. That's that's their existence.

And the tough thing is I was talking to Jessica about it in that area of three hundred thousand. There's no medical care. There's she said there's one little clinic, but she says you wouldn't even want to go there.

She says that everything's misdiagnosed. She goes, she's explained how this one lady, you know, came to her just going, yeah, they told me I have this liver disease that they just can't cure. You know, that's where my skin is dry.

And Jessica checks her out and goes, no, all you need is lotion. It's just, you know, it's just it's like a crazy I mean, the things that she runs into, she goes, you got to understand what these people are about. They'll they'll come in and kids or, you know, if they've got an eye injury, they'll have something over the eye.

I'm like, what is that? And it's some cloth that's soaked in urine and blood or whatever else. And they just believe it'll cure. They'll bathe their kids in urine, you know, cuts.

They'll pour urine. I mean, it's, you know, she'll talk about babies that come in and, you know, with with different diseases. And and what they do is they'll catch a pigeon and have the pigeon poop in water and they'll mix it up and put it in a baby bottle and have their baby drink it, believing, well, that'll I mean, this is the medicine they have.

This is what three hundred thousand people. Not just in one area. That's just one area.

And there's there's a few of these. This is the one that Kevin and Jessica have landed in. And and so what she was trying to do was set up a medical clinic, you know, just something there.

And so she showed me the area and they had a few walls. I'm like, well, what happened? She goes, we ran out of money. I'm like, how much more money do you need? And she goes, five thousand.

I'll put on the roof and finish off this building and I can start working. And so immediately I call the church and go, you guys just just wire them ten thousand dollars, you know, saying buy some medicines and we had money from those pictures you bought, you know, so it's like, OK, just just wired over. Oh, yeah.

And it was so cool, you know, and she's like, really, you guys will do that. I'm like, of course, you know, and she just goes, you know, this is the greatest day of the year. It's Jessica's day.

I think this is the greatest day of the year for us. This is just the best news. And and so I'm talking to them and and just trying to figure out what are the needs.

And she says, you know, honestly, we need some help here. I mean, it's the two of us. Jessica has gotten one one nurse practitioner that's helping her now.

But now, as we're setting up the clinic, I mean, understand picture all of Simi Valley, Moore Park, Thousand Oaks, Newberry Park, all of them going to two girls for their medical care. OK, try to picture that everyone's seeking after them and you're all living in those conditions, too. So that's what it is out there.

And she's saying any help, just someone to even teach. And I'll teach you medicine and they can in turn just teach the people. Look, urine doesn't solve everything, you know, whatever.

Just the the basic obvious. Here's what aspirin is for. Here's what this is for.

Just basic hygiene, those types of things. She says, even if even if someone would help me watch my kids so that I can be out there more, because, you know, they have a one year old baby and she's and she's pregnant again and she's like four or five months pregnant. And so she goes, I'm going to have both babies and it's just gonna be really tough.

And she's been trying to find child care, but it's just it's not easy out there. And because we have these dreams, they have these dreams and they've become my dreams and they've shown me the pictures of what they want to build in this area. They want to build a church, a nice church so that people can come and worship.

They want to build a real medical clinic that will cost about two hundred thousand dollars. They want to build a school where they can educate some of these kids and teach them English, because if you can speak English and Spanish, you'll be out of your poverty. I mean, it's that valuable out there.

They want to they want the church. You know, we're talking about how maybe we can make the church the place where people can come and get clean water somehow. And basically, we're talking about a million dollar project.

But we need laborers. We need people who know about construction that may be able to go there and organize the thing. We need people who'd be willing to teach people who help with the medical clinic.

And I just thought, you know what? I told them, you know, I'll ask the church, see if people would be interested. Maybe we can get some of you to move down there for a year, a year or two, invest your life in something like that. And it's crazy.

It's crazy down there. I'm not going to lie to you. There is a city in Lima.

There is an area that's pretty, what do you call it? Established, modernized, whatever. You know, basically there's McDonald's or Starbucks. There's a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

You know, there's there's there's Applebee's. OK, so, you know, so there's like a normal part of town, not normal. That's the wrong word.

It's it's what? Developed. Yeah, a developed part of town. But it's still dangerous.

A ton of crime. And, you know, Kevin and Jessica live in an area that's pretty protected, you know, and you kind of need to. But it's still not totally safe.

And and I don't want to paint like this. Oh, yeah, go. It'll be beautiful.

It'll be easy. No, it's it's it's crazy. You know, leave Simi Valley and move to Lima, Peru.

That's that's crazy. But at the same time, isn't there a sense in which. It would be crazy not to.

I mean, when you when you look at what you know of scripture. And what you know of the need there. And Lima is not unique to the world.

Many places like this. Isn't there a side of you of you? I'm not isn't just coming from me. But isn't there a side of you that even thinks it's kind of crazy not to.

Invest a couple of years of my life into something like that. Just just just think about it. It's hard for me to talk about anything else when I get back from a trip.

I just got back Friday and. And it's hard for me to talk about anything else because. And it's not it isn't unique to me, it's unique to me because I go and I go to these places and I have opportunities going.

I thank God that I get to go to these places because I believe if you visited this place this week, your heart would be the same as mine. I mean, Bill went with me and he knows exactly what I'm talking about right now. I mean, you can't think about anything else.

And when you go, it's not that I'm this godly man. It just happens that I get blessed and get to go on some of these trips. But if you went, you would come back with the same feelings that I have.

Where you get back, you jump into your bed and you go, wait a second right now. Right now, as I'm sitting in this air conditioned room, they're still over there. And some woman is mixing up pigeon poop and water for her baby.

You know, and then hoping that that'll cure whatever disease he's got. And and so it's just hard to even focus. It's hard to concentrate.

You just go, there's so much suffering going on. And as the church, that's what we need to be all about. I mean, that's what we preached on last weekend, right? What did Todd leave us off with? What's true religion? Caring for widows and orphans in their distress.

That's the religion that God sees as acceptable. That's what God wants from the church. Caring for widows and orphans in their distress.

So what else is there to talk about? That's true religion, according to the Bible. Is to care for widows and orphans in their distress. And to keep oneself unstained by the world.

But you know, I'm not going to spend my whole message on that. I'm going to leave it there. And we're going to talk about it more next week.

We're going to jump into James this week. And we will hit this next week. Next week, we're going to solve world hunger.

Okay, so we'll save that for next week. You guys think I'm kidding. That's what's funny.

You just show up next week. Just show up next week. But right now, we're going to transition.

I'm going to switch gears. Would you guys just pray with me? This is right. Father, I want Cornerstone Church to just set the pace.

And to practice true religion. And God, for us to pioneer, to start something that truly would change the world. Father, because we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us, God.

So there's nothing on this earth that we cannot do. And help us to truly believe that about ourselves. Not because we're great.

We're nothing. But we worship a great God who can do exceedingly abundantly. Beyond all we ask or imagine.

According to the power that lives within us. And so, Father, I pray for great things. I thank you for Kevin.

God, that's amazing that he's out there teaching Greek and Spanish. I thank you for Jessica. That she's out there with her two babies.

Just trying to care for medical needs. God, it just. And I pray for those in this church that are going to go.

And help create this place of refuge. In that area, God. Where people will hide in you.

And find security in you. God, I pray that you make it happen. Because it's way over our heads.

But God, I know you can do it. And guide us now, Lord. As we open your word.

In Jesus name. Well, this week we're going to talk about James chapter 2. It talks about favoritism. Favoritism.

And it kind of relates to what we've been talking about. About who we care about. Who we lift up.

I remember last week the passage ends with true religion. Being caring for the widows and orphans. And keeping oneself unpolluted by the world.

That means unstained. You're just pure. You think the way God thinks.

You see things the way God sees it. Even though you hear these messages from the world. And you're bombarded by the world all week long.

You're not stained by it. You think the way God wants you to think. You act and live the way God wants you to live.

That's what God wants of us. Now one of the areas that we get stained and polluted. Is what he goes into here in chapter 2. Which is the area of the way we view people.

And so in chapter 2 verse 1 he says this. My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Don't show favoritism.

Suppose a man comes into your meeting. Wearing a gold ring and fine clothes. And a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in.

If you show special attention. To the man wearing fine clothes. And say here.

Here's a good seat for you. But you say to the poor man. You stand there or sit on the floor by my feet.

Have you not discriminated among yourselves. And become judges with evil thoughts. Okay so basically he says my brothers.

He goes don't show favoritism. The word favoritism is literally translated. Respector of persons.

Don't be a respector of persons. Don't assume that one person is more important than another. Don't treat people differently.

And it's interesting because I love the phrase. As believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Don't show favoritism.

That's very important. As believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. See if you believe that right now.

If you are a believer like he's talking about here. If you're a believer that right now in heaven. There is this glorious being.

Okay right now as we're sitting in this room. There's this being in heaven. Who the Bible says dwells in unapproachable light.

There's this being where we would look at and just go oh. We would just be in awe. In fact if we saw him in our human bodies.

The Bible says we would just die. Because he is so holy and so unapproachable in that sense. And he goes so if you believe there's this being.

Sitting on the throne up there that's so glorious. Then you should not show favoritism toward people. You should not be a respector of people.

You should understand of all people. That there's God and there are people. There's not different levels of people.

When we are in the sight of God. There's just God. And then there's just a bunch of little flesh and blood.

You know people that walk around the earth. Like Isaiah 2 says. You know why do you regard man.

Who has but a breath of life in his nostrils. You know why would you lift up a person. When he doesn't even know if he's going to take another breath.

There's God and there's man. And as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We shouldn't have any distinction amongst ourselves as people.

And honestly this was an embarrassing passage to me. Embarrassing because I always assumed in my pride. I assumed that I was not one to show favoritism.

I just thought come on. You know I see people that are starstruck. And go look there's so and so.

And I'm like what you're weird. You know I mean who cares. It's like oh you signed this.

You know and they're so starstruck by different people. And I'm just like I am so not like that. But then I'll talk to a famous person.

And suddenly it's like I'm like thinking about what to say. I'm thinking about everything. I can't talk you know.

And I'm just realizing okay. So what does that say about me? I'm a loser. You know I do the same thing.

Like wait a second. Why am I speaking to this person differently? Because I'm a respecter of persons. And the bible says we can't be that way.

We shouldn't be that way. It's going to happen everywhere else right. There's certain people on this earth that wherever they go.

They'll get special treatment right. And at the same time there are people who are rejected by the world. And wherever they go they'll be rejected.

And that's okay. What's not okay is when they come to church and it's the same thing. And that's that's been some of the frustration.

You know and I admit it's in my it's in my heart too. But for example here at Cornerstone. We've had over the last 12 years.

We've had some pretty famous people visit the church. And they'll sit here and it's sad. Because they get treated at Cornerstone.

The same way they get treated outside of Cornerstone. People are like did you see who I sat by? You know and say hey will you sign my bible? You know what whatever it may be. It's like there's a flocking there has been.

The famous people have come to the church. Have gotten no different than what they get in the world. That maybe they were coming here just hoping.

Maybe they'll just treat me like another person here. Maybe I can I can blend in. Because they believe in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

That they'll see me as just another person. And care about my eternal well-being. Rather than a signature or a picture or whatever else there may be.

But but it hasn't been the case. And in the same way. There have been people who typically have been rejected in the world.

And they come here and you know what? It's kind of the same thing here. I mean we got to somehow get past this. I mean that's what the bible's saying.

We shouldn't be shown this special attention to people. Whether it's because of their wealth. Their fame or anything else.

We just should not be respecters of people. We respect God. And then we just love people all equally the same.

Can we get there? I mean just imagine if you came in this morning. Try to imagine this. You sat down in your seat.

Okay and then what if Tiger Woods sat next to you this morning? Okay just try to picture that. You sat down in your normal seat. And suddenly Tiger Woods sits down on your right side.

Whoa that's weird right? And then Oprah sits in the next seat next to you. And would you be distracted right now? Okay now why? See we got to get to this heart of why would that distract me so much? But it would. Now let me ask you another question.

They're still sitting next to you. Okay Tiger's on your right. Oprah's on your left.

And then suddenly God appears on the stage. The glory of God. This being who just let's say he allows us to get some glimpse.

He allows us to live through seeing him in our in some veiled form. He's on this you know throne just filling up this whole place. You know the glory of God.

At that point will Oprah and Tiger be a distraction to you? At that point suddenly it doesn't matter right? Because all you're interacting with is no way. God and me. God and me.

Why? Because we have in our sights the glorious Lord Jesus Christ. You see that's the problem here is that we forget. We forget who God is.

We take our eyes off of God. And suddenly we become a respecer of persons. All we see are the people.

We put them in these different systems. And these different classes. Because we forget as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

All we should see is there's a great God out there. And then there's people. And our job is because of all the mercy that God has shown us.

That we're out giving to people. Sharing with people. Showing mercy to people.

That's all this is. That's all this is. And that's why we can't be consumers.

We got to come here and say you know we're going to give. And if a famous person comes. I don't want anything from a famous person.

Why do I need to know this person? The Lord's my shepherd. I shall not want. I'm not going to look at them the way the world looks at them.

Hey can I have an honor? Can I have a picture? Can I have you know some money? You know can I have this or that? I'm not going to treat my boss the way everyone else treats them. You know of trying to get something from them. Of oh man maybe I'll kiss up to this person.

Because they can help. Because I want. I want.

I want. I want. That's the core of the issue.

Is we're people who want something from other people. Whereas the Bible says the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

If we are people who really get all of our fulfillment from the Lord. And satisfaction from that glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Then we can walk into the church and give.

And show mercy as God wants us to. But we don't. Instead we show favoritism.

And you go no that doesn't happen at Cornerstone. Oh yeah? I had a hidden camera okay last night. In the lobby okay.

And I just wanted to know okay. How friendly are we as a church? Let me just stand at a table. And let me put someone else you know next to me.

And you know one of our high school kids. Kind of a punk looking guy you know. Not too bad.

Just a little ring through his lip. You know let's just. Let's just see.

You know what do we show favoritism? Are people going to greet me and not him? And so here's the video from last night. This is fun. And we got a little counter on it.

Shows you how many people say hi to me. So there I am. And you can't really see.

So just standing at the table. And there's the other kid. Oh there's some people greeting me.

Interesting. Now they actually talk to the kid for a second. They ask him to take a picture of us.

So that doesn't really count as them talking to him. So here's another guy coming up greeting me. And there's a lonely boy.

Still lonely. Cool. So we're talking, talking, talking.

Cool. Here's a book. Hey read it.

Okay I'll try. All right. See you later.

Oh here's another guy. Hey I brought you something. Cool.

Okay yeah. Okay good good. Thanks.

No I appreciate that. All right. You want to talk to my friend now? Okay.

Hey buddy. What's up man? Good to see you. All right.

Cool. Rock on. Um and uh Hey brother.

I love you man. That's good. Good.

Hey what's up? I haven't seen you in a while. Yeah yeah yeah. Everything's good.

Yeah yeah yeah. No way. And then um an usher here is talking to him.

So good job. Ed. One more usher.

Ed's talking to him asking how he's doing. Yeah yeah. Okay.

Here's some more people talking to me. Ignoring him. Um let's see what else happens.

Hey what's going on? Oh Todd. Yeah Todd and Lisa. All right.

Okay so you guys that that's what I'm talking about. It's like are we really that different from the world? Honestly we'll walk in and we'll zoom in on maybe someone who has something to offer us. Someone that we'd like to talk to but are we looking to show mercy? Are we looking to care for people or even in the church are there these classes and different people that we'll talk to and other people that we'll ignore? It's it's it feels like high school sometimes.

You know remember you walk in there's the popular kids. You know the geeks. There's whatever else you know.

And there's just certain systems like that. And and the people that are you know popular in high school are popular in the church. You know it's the same type of thing.

And and the bible's saying look there shouldn't be a difference. If there is a difference if we do show preference we should show preference to the poor. To those who are typically rejected like it says in verse 5. Listen my dear brothers.

Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him? But you've insulted the poor. Isn't it the rich who are exploiting you? Aren't they the ones who are dragging in the court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? He goes hasn't God chosen those rejects on the earth that to be rich in faith? Hasn't God chosen them to be his own children? Don't you understand? God has associated himself with the poor with the rejects of the earth. God's associate.

They're his children. Now suddenly you're rejecting God's children. The glorious Lord Jesus Christ is going those are my kids.

Those they love me. They're crazy about me. And you're rejecting them? And he says it's the poor that have chosen.

I mean isn't he's just saying in general. It's typically the poor who are crazy about God. Doesn't mean that there aren't rich people who are also rich in faith.

It's just it's rare. Typically we're complacent. We've got God you know we've got so much stuff.

And we believe that we've built the security for ourselves. We don't need God as much. And so we've got all this other stuff to distract us.

But for the poor when you go like some of you went to Mexico. And you're blown away by the joy. And the happiness of some of these people that have nothing.

But they have God. And they find so much that's the way I felt in Africa. I'm like man there's so much happier than we are.

You know with nothing. But God is everything to them. And they're so rich in faith.

And God says you know some of the rich people that are material wealthy. Materially wealthy or or have this fame. Or you guys lift up.

Even though they're exploiting you. Even though they speak against me. I mean like if someone like Lance Armstrong were here this morning.

He'd be like no way. Lance Armstrong seven time tour de France winner. You know and he was sitting next to you.

And you found out it's like whoa. Just what what do you say to Lance right? I mean never mind the fact that he rejects everything we teach here. Professed atheist that would speak against Jesus.

But boy can he ride a bike fast. So let's lift him up. Let's do the same thing in the church as we do everywhere else.

Rather than being more concerned about a person's salvation. You see it's this whole idea of who do we lift up versus who does God look at. And who does God see as pure.

Don't you just want for one day to see people the way God sees them. You know just like I'm totally unpolluted. I'm just seeing people the way God sees them.

Not lifting up one person or the wrong person or whatever else. I want to interview someone from our church. Ian.

Is Ian in here? Oh there you are buddy. This is Ian. Hey Ian.

Good to see you man. I'm gonna I'm gonna grab the microphone. I'll be right back.

This is Ian. Ian's been with our church from day one. I mean literally day one.

Um uh Diana his mom plays keyboard. She's playing keyboard this morning. She's been with our church from the start.

In fact she used to be like our only musician. And I remember the day she was having she was having Ian. She was in labor and it was Sunday morning and she was supposed to play.

And she asked the doctor between contractions. Is there any way I can leave seriously and go play at Cornerstone and come back. And he just said you are crazy.

Because she ended up giving birth like 20 minutes after she made that statement. And uh and Ian was born. Now Ian something happened to you when you were one.

What happened when you were one? I have a seizure disorder. Seizure disorder. And and so um so does that make some things tricky for you? Yeah.

Yeah what? I have no good speech. Yeah. So you you can't speak real good? I have special needs kids right now.

I see in the lobby. Now you help out with the special needs kids here right? You help out in the class. What do you do there? I do the crafts and sewing and singing.

So you help with singing and crafts? Yeah. Now what what else do you do to help out here at Cornerstone? I help with the donuts, put the rubber gloves on to be safe with the domes. Good you help with the donuts.

He said he put gloves on there because he wants to be safe with the donut. What else what else do you do on Sunday morning? Help with bulletins every morning. Yeah you pass out bulletins every morning.

Now you want to imagine you got your imagine shirt on. So you want to imagine what did you do when you were there? I went to the Gabriel house to special needs kids while we were having seizures. So you helped other kids who had seizures.

What did you what did you do at the Gabriel house? I pushed them a lot and Dylan played the guitar. And so you helped push them in their wheelchairs and Dylan played guitar. That's awesome.

Now you worship God right? Yeah what do you like to sing? What's what's like your favorite songs to sing to God? Singing to the king na na na na na. Na na na na na that one. That's every move I make right? Now what what what what has God done for you Ian? God's done God's forever things in you.

That's right. Thanks buddy. Thanks Ian.

Just just for one day to say okay God let me see what you value and what's what's beautiful to you. As God looks in this room how does he view us? Who who does he look at and go wow now there's a person after my heart. There's a person that's pure.

Here's a person that I would lift up. I'm willing to bet that it's different from how we view people. And the people that we place as first are probably many times last in his eyes and vice versa.

Just like he says in scripture. In verse 8 he says if you really keep the royal law found in scripture. Love your neighbor as yourself you're doing right.

But if you show favoritism you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said do not commit adultery also said do not murder.

If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder you've become a lawbreaker. Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.

Mercy triumphs over judgment. So if nothing else really hits you. He closes this section with saying here's a motivation to not show favoritism.

You're going to be judged. And how do you want to be judged when you stand before God? Do you want to be judged based upon your works? Or do you want to be shown mercy? You see why why do we show mercy toward others because God has shown mercy to us and we believe he's going to show mercy to us

when we come before him at the end of our lives. Okay because you're going to stand before God and we will all need mercy at that point right? Right because God's going to go okay let's go through my commands here honor your father and mother.

Did you do that perfectly? You're going to want some mercy after that one right? Then he's going to say okay thou shall not bear false witness. You ever lied? And he's going to start running the tape. Let me show you time after time after time.

Okay I need a little mercy here. Thou shall not covet. Don't desire what anyone else has.

You ever desired what anyone else had? Let's run the tape. We got time for this you know? And it's like boom boom boom and it's like okay okay all right yeah I broke that one. I broke that one.

I broke that one. When he says here in James if you even just broke one of them you're already guilty. Okay how many millions of sins are we going to stand before the Lord on? And what are we going to need at that point? Mercy.

Please don't don't judge me by what I did. Because okay while I was on that earth I knew I knew I offended you. But I believed you loved me so much that you you sent your son right? Didn't didn't you you sent your son Jesus and he died on that cross for me and on that cross he was being punished for all of those crimes you just listed right? And and and that's why I can have mercy.

That's why God says yeah you know what my son did pay for all of that. And you did believe that while you're there on the earth that I loved you that much. That rather than punishing you I was fair.

I had my son pay for it. So someone paid for it and receiving that mercy. And if you understood that then because you gave me that mercy let's look at your life.

Did you then in turn show mercy to others? Is it because people who get it? People who have been fulfilled by God and understand the mercy of God. They in turn go out and show mercy to others. That's why James says that.

It's not a work salvation thing. He's just saying the ones who get it. The ones who've really been fulfilled by God.

They don't walk around wanting stuff from other people. They walk around with the Lord as their shepherd. They don't have wants.

You know that's the whole idea is we're so fulfilled in God. Then I shouldn't show up to church today. You know looking at someone and saying oh okay there's Dave and Pat.

I wonder what I can get from them. Because I don't need anything. I should be so content so satisfied so overwhelmed that my cup is just overflowing.

It's like I can't fit any more blessing in my life. My life is so good that I don't walk in this room and go. Oh I wonder if they can give me something.

See that's the way the people in the world walk around doing. It's like what can I get from him? What can I get from him? What can I get from him? Do you walk in the church the same way? I mean do they experience the same thing when they encounter us? People wanting something from them? I mean that's

the reputation of church in general right? Churches wants my money. Churches wants this.

Churches wants that. No the church ought to be just a group of people that are so filled with love. So overflowing that we don't need anything from anyone.

Man we just want to love. We want to give to you. We want to give to you this God that we've been so blessed with.

Is that you? Is that how you came in this morning? Just going man I've been so blessed. My life is so amazing. Who can I give to this morning? Imagine how this place would just explode.

You know if that were our reputation that's truly who we were as believers. So that's what I'd like us to pray for. I want you to take a moment and just say God I want to be that type of person.

I don't want to show favoritism. I want to see the glorious you and the rest of us here. I want to see that I'm so filled by you that I can just spend my life showing mercy.

And so that when I come before you to be judged you'll see that I lived a life of mercy. Giving to people who didn't deserve it. People who had nothing to offer me.

I was just giving to them. That's the picture with God. He gave to us while we were sinners.

You get that. You love that. Do you appreciate that so much that it makes you want to go out and give and show mercy to everyone you can.

I'm going to give you about a minute just in silence just to pray. To confess any sins of partiality and ask God to change you. And if you need prayer this morning.

If you want to get baptized. You want to give your life to the Lord. If you want to just understand what it means to begin this relationship with God.

I'll be over there by the prayer room and some other pastors and counselors. At any time during the worship you can go over there. But for now let's just spend a moment in silence.

And just pray to God and ask him to change you.

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