

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE:	The Strange Case of the Snooty Usher
SERMON REFERENCE:	James 2:1-10
LWF SERMON NUMBER:	#0514

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means –electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other– without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2019 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The book of James shares with us lessons on practical Christianity.
- b) James 2:1-10
 - i) In this passage, James warns strongly against prejudice.
- c) James makes at least five powerful points in this Scripture that we will focus on today.

2) THE PROHIBITION OF PREJUDICE (JAMES 2:1)

- a) The literal translation of the phrase “respect of persons” in this passage means “don’t lay hold of a person’s face.”
 - i) This means that we’re not to judge a person by their appearance.
 - ii) 1 Samuel 16:7
- b) Prejudice and snobbishness in the church, based off of economic status and the way someone is dressed or how a person looks, hurts the kingdom of Christ and the work of our Lord.
 - i) We sometimes treat a person with flattery because he looks affluent and intelligent, or we may reject him because of his appearance.
 - (1) This is laying hold of a person’s face.
 - ii) When we do this, we have what the Bible calls respect of persons.
- c) When we have respect of persons, we may be flattering some people and gossiping about or criticizing others, not because of inherently good or bad in that person, but because of simply how they appear.
 - i) Flattery is where we say to someone’s face what we don’t say behind their back.
 - ii) Gossip is where we say behind someone’s back what we don’t say to their face.
 - iii) Both of these scenarios are wrong.
 - (1) Whether we flatter the rich and the cultured or whether we criticize and gossip about the poor and the down and out, we are wrong in the sight of God and do damage to the Kingdom of God.

3) THE PROBLEM OF PARTIALITY (JAMES 2:2-4)

- a) In this passage, we see a man in fine clothing being given a better seat than a poor man.
 - i) There are several things we need to notice in this account.
- b) The appearance of the men who came to church:
 - i) The word used for “gold ring” in this passage literally means in the Greek, “a gold fingered man.”
 - (1) He has a gem at every joint.
 - (2) He is very wealthy.
 - (3) The usher shows a lot of respect to the rich man when he comes into the assembly.
 - (a) Some people think it is very important how we dress and what we look like outwardly when we come to church.

- ii) Another man comes into the same church service wearing “vile raiment.”
 - (1) This phrase means dirty clothes.
 - (2) This is a working man.
 - (a) Perhaps he has dirt under his fingernails and his shoes are not shined, but he is someone for whom Jesus died and someone Jesus loves.
 - (3) The usher doesn’t think this person is worth very much and that it makes no difference whether he gets a seat.
 - (a) This person’s spirit is crushed and wounded.
 - c) The attitude of the usher:
 - i) James 2:3
 - (1) The usher made the same mistake that many make in our churches and that is indulgence of the rich and indifference to the poor.
 - d) The appraisal of the Lord:
 - i) James 2:4
 - (1) The phrase “partial in yourselves” literally means “you have made distinctions among yourselves.”
 - (a) This means to set one person in one category and another person in another category.
 - (2) We need to remember that the ground at the cross is level; all people are precious in the sight of God.
 - ii) The Bible does not say that there is no seniority.
 - (1) There is seniority in a church.
 - (a) The Bible speaks of those who have labored long in doctrine and of those who have proven their lives by living the right kind of life.
 - (i) Romans 13:7
 - iii) There is to be authority in the church.
 - (1) God has set some in authority.
 - iv) There is to be seniority and authority, but there is not to be superiority.
 - (1) We each may have a different calling and job, but everybody is somebody when Jesus Christ is Lord.
 - v) When we make differences among ourselves, we sin against the Lord.
 - (1) 1 Samuel 16:7
- 4) THE POSITION OF THE POOR (JAMES 2:5)
- a) There are three things the Lord says about the poor in regards to their position:
 - i) They are chosen of God.
 - (1) God loves the poor, and He loves the common people.
 - (2) It is God’s divine plan that He carries on most of His work through ordinary people.
 - (a) 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
 - (i) God has chosen to use ordinary people so that He will get the glory and not human flesh.

- (b) God takes the weak and makes them witnesses.
 - (c) God takes the base and turns them into believers.
 - (d) God takes the despised and makes them disciples.
 - (e) God takes the nobodies and make them nobilities.
 - ii) They are rich in faith.
 - (1) James 2:5
 - (2) A rich man has a tendency to trust his money; a poor man has to trust the Lord.
 - (a) There is a propensity toward faith among those who are poor.
 - (i) Sometimes being poor may be a blessing; sometimes riches are a curse.
 - (3) If we snub the poor, we may really be snubbing a spiritual millionaire.
 - (a) Hebrews 13:2
 - iii) They are heirs of the kingdom, which God has promised to them who love Him.
 - (1) They are rich, not only here, but in eternity.
 - (a) Psalm 37:11
 - (b) Matthew 5:5
 - (2) The great missionary, Adoniram Judson, once replied that his future was as bright as the promises of God.
 - (a) Every poor person in the world who knows Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior is an heir of the Kingdom of God and can say the same thing: that his future is as bright as the promises of God.
- 5) THE PERSECUTION BY THE PROSPEROUS (JAMES 2:6-7)
- a) James is speaking in this passage of the wealthy ruling class that persecuted the early church.
 - b) Christianity, by and large, was spread by the common people.
 - i) These people were called uneducated and ignorant.
 - ii) The common people heard Jesus gladly.
 - c) The rich and the wealthy rejected Christ for three reasons:
 - i) The Gospel hit at their position.
 - (1) The Gospel says that everyone is equal.
 - (a) Some people like to feel a little superior to others.
 - (2) Pilate had position with Caesar, and his conduct was based on what gave him that position.
 - (a) John 19:12-16
 - (b) When the Jews told Pilate that he was not Caesar's friend if he didn't allow them to crucify Jesus, Pilate then decided to allow the crucifixion.
 - (c) Pilate had a position, and the Gospel hit at his position.
 - (i) Pilate sided with his position and sided against Christ and His followers.
 - ii) The Gospel hit at their pocketbook.

- (1) There were many who were rich who rejected the Gospel because of economics.
 - (2) Acts 19:27
 - (a) Those in position were concerned that their businesses were in danger due to the Apostle Paul's preaching.
 - (3) Acts 16:16-24
 - (a) The wealthy people in charge of the demon-possessed girl Paul had healed had Paul and Silas cast into prison.
 - iii) The Gospel hit at their pride.
 - (1) The reason why many people want money is because it helps them to feel elevated above other people.
 - (a) The Gospel says that we should boast in nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (b) When God looks at us, it isn't the book of society or finance that matters, but it's God's book that makes the difference as to who we are.
 - (2) We tend to divide people by class: upper class, middle class and lower class.
 - (a) God never divides people as such.
 - (b) God never divides people horizontally, only vertically:
 - (i) The sheep and the goats
 - (ii) The saved and the lost
 - (3) The wealthy work all of their lives to attain all the things that will put them in a high position in society, and then the Gospel comes along and says that we are all the same when it comes to needing salvation.
 - d) James said that when the rich persecuted the poor, they were actually blaspheming God.
 - i) Acts 9:4
 - (1) When Paul was persecuting the Christians, he was persecuting Jesus Christ.
 - ii) When we speak against a poor servant of Jesus, we are really speaking against Jesus.
 - (1) Matthew 25:40
 - e) James is not trying to put down the rich; he is saying that we shouldn't elevate one person above another.
 - i) We can be just as prejudiced against the rich as we can against the poor.
 - f) 1 Corinthians 1:26
 - i) This Scripture does not say "not any" noble or mighty; it says "not many."
- 6) THE PRECEPTS FOR PROPER PRACTICE (JAMES 2:8-10)
- a) To love our neighbor as ourselves is called "the royal law" in this passage.
 - i) It is the king of all laws.
 - (1) If we have love in our hearts, then we will not show partiality.
 - ii) This type of love is contagious.

7) CONCLUSION

- a) Everybody is somebody because Jesus Christ is Lord.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16