

Hello and Opening Prayer

Songs - Worship Team

God of Wonders

Lord of all creation
Of water, earth and sky
The heavens are Your tabernacle
Glory to the Lord on high

God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy
The universe declares Your majesty
You are holy, holy
Lord of heaven and earth
Lord of heaven and earth

Early in the morning
I will celebrate the light
When I stumble in the darkness
I will call Your name by night

God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy
The universe declares Your majesty
You are holy, holy
Lord of heaven and earth
Lord of heaven and earth

Hallelujah, to the Lord
Of heaven and earth (3x)

You are holy, holy
The universe declares Your majesty
You are holy, holy

God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy
The universe declares Your majesty
You are holy, holy

God of wonders beyond our galaxy
You are holy, holy
Precious Lord
Reveal Your heart to me
Father, holy, holy

Forever

Give thanks to the Lord
Our God and King
His love endures forever
For He is good
He is above all things
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise

With a mighty hand
And outstretched arm
His love endures forever
For the life
That's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise

Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us
Forever, forever

From the rising
To the setting sun
His love endures forever
By the grace of God
We will carry on
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise

Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us
Forever, forever

Forever, You are faithful
Forever, You are strong
Forever, You are with us
Forever, forever

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning and welcome to those of you who are here, as well as to those who are joining us via the live stream. If you are a guest this morning, we extend a special welcome to you. We trust that our time together will give you a glimpse into God's heart for his world. If we've never met, my name is rob one of the pastors here at the church.

Brendon, our lead pastor of the morning, is away on sabbatical for the months of June, July, and August. If you have any questions or would like to visit more about Emmanuel you can catch me after the service or drop me a note at info@ebap.ca.

The Nominating Committee is looking for people to serve as Elders. Please to speak to Krista Noble or drop her an email if you are interested at: kristadean77@yahoo.ca

You can find details about our programming, notes from some of our partners in the Community, Financial Updates and Prayer concerns in the bulletin. Most of that information can also be found at our website www.ebap.ca, as well as in the weekly emails that we send out on Mondays.

Songs - Worship Team

Thy Mercy My God

Thy mercy my God is the theme of my song
The joy of my heart and the boast of my tongue
Thy free grace alone from the first to the last
Hath won my affections and bound my soul fast

Without Thy sweet mercy I could not live here
Sin would reduce me to utter despair
But through Thy free goodness my spirits revive
And He that first made me still keeps me alive

Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart
Dissolved by Thy goodness I fall to the ground
And weep for the praise of the mercy I found

Halleluiah halleluiah halleluiah

Great Father of mercies Thy goodness I own
And the covenant love of Thy crucified Son
All praise to the Spirit whose whisper divine
Seals mercy and pardon and righteousness mine

Halleluiah halleluiah halleluiah

Patient Kingdom

Let my soul rise up to meet You
As the day rises to the sun
Let my soul rise up to meet You
Let that patient kingdom come
Let that patient kingdom come

When's the last time you felt steady in the chaos
Hear the sound when the seed falls to earth

Is it time to give up your destination
Slow me down let love do its work
Slow me down let love do its work

Let my soul rise up to meet You
As the day rises to the sun
Let my soul rise up to meet You
Let that patient kingdom come
Let that patient kingdom come

As the trees and hummingbirds lead the chorus
They work so hard yet their center so still
Is it time for a change in direction
Slow me down where I bend to Your will
Slow me down where I bend to Your will

Let my soul rise up to meet You
As the day rises to the sun
Let my soul rise up to meet You
Let that patient kingdom come
Let that patient kingdom come

Community Prayer – Ike Friesen

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God,
we acknowledge and confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed.

We have not loved you with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength;
we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.

Forgive us of our sins, O God.
Create in us clean hearts and put a right spirit within us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation.

Bind up that which is broken,
give light to our minds, strength to our wills,
and rest to our souls.

Remodel us in the image of Jesus.
Fill us with his love and enable us with his risen power,
that we might be faithful to his way,
used by you in the redeeming of your world.
Amen

Heavenly Father, Almighty God, Redeemer, Saviour, You have reminded us that if we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9)

Thank you that you have made forgiveness possible and available for us by your amazing sacrifice on the cross...a sacrifice of boundless LOVE.

Thank you for being with us Always ...never forsaking us. We have access to you at any time and wherever we are ...thank you Jesus.

You intercede for us and want us to pray for one another and we pray now for those in our Emmanuel community that are in need of encouragement, in need of healing, (those listed in our bulletin, as well as those who are not listed; Lord you know the needs of each one). We need you every hour.

Lord we also pray for all levels of government, that wise decisions would be made and that we have peace and unity in our country. We pray for an end of war in the Ukraine.

Be with all those who are or will be travelling nowadays...we pray for safety, protection, and good health along the way. May we all be a blessing to each other and good ambassadors for you Lord wherever we are.

Now we pray for your blessing upon your servant sharing your Word with us today. Help us to receive and put to practice what you teach us. Thank you for your challenges and blessings...in your name we pray...amen.

Teaching – Alan Barr (James 2:1-13)

JAMES 2:1-13

Hi, my name is Alan Barr. Today we're in the 2nd chapter of James.

I usually love preparing a sermon, but this time I found it challenging, for three reasons:

1. Today's passage has material for many sermons.
2. Some of the phrases are difficult to understand. James likes to connect things that seem opposite to make us think.
3. And James is hard hitting; some of his warnings point out shortcomings in my own life.

So I have questioned: Am I the right person to speak on this passage? And yet, praise God, I am not here alone. The Holy Spirit is here to teach us. May He show us that James' words are not only hard-hitting but also life-giving, even when, perhaps especially when, they call us to repentance.

We all make cognitive mistakes. One of my biggest mistakes is to think that people can't change. And thank God, James knows otherwise. God is in the business of changing people, transforming lives, making all things new. That's why James has the courage to be so brutally honest. That's why he can, in one breath address his fellow believers as **beloved, my brothers and sisters**, then in the next breath rebuke them, calling them **You foolish people**, even **You adulterers!**

I for one don't like to have my faults pointed out. But James, like God, is not a fault-finder. Remember his earlier words, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault (1:5)." God does not ignore our sins, but neither does He go about finding fault. He is a Savior, a Redeemer, a Shepherd. He is at work among us. And because God is at work, James is emboldened to speak the truth in love. He wants our lives to be rooted in the love and mercy of God -- for it is there, and only there, that we find the hope and power to change.

James' letter is a compilation of ethical exhortations written to "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations (1:1)", that is, to Christians among the Jewish diaspora. They have been believers for 20 years or more, and their initial enthusiasm is beginning to fade.

They are facing many trials. At the time James is writing, wealthy merchants have bought up most of the farmland and are taking advantage of the poor peasant farmers and day laborers. Among the poor are most of the Jewish believers, who are displaced and vulnerable. What's more, persecution is on the rise. James addresses the fallout from these trials: growing discouragement and insecurity in the church; quarrels, grumbling and slander; and the temptation for individuals to protect their own self-interests and vie for favour with the rich and powerful.

It is into this situation that James writes today's theme verse:

2.1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. (NIV)

He then provides a concrete example as a case study:

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

James is not speaking hypothetically. He is calling out actual situations where churches are giving preferential treatment to the rich and dishonoring the poor -- just as today we are apt to treat people differently based on their wealth and status, the way they speak, the way they dress. Certainly, one's social standing was important in James' day:

Social status and social stratification were vital aspects of life in the ancient world; where you sat in the pecking order determined every aspect of your life—your work, your income, who you could associate with. ... The places [you occupied in social gatherings] were a tangible expression of this status. The culture was one of struggle and competition ... and if you climbed up the social order it was by your own efforts. (Ian Paul)

Consider an important person who turns up at church unexpectedly. As you greet them, what goes through your mind?

- This person expects to be treated with respect.
- Perhaps they can give me a job.
- Perhaps they can help our church with its influence in the community.

And on the flipside, have you ever found yourself in a new situation where you feel awkward and out of place? I know I have. Because of that, I really appreciate those of you who look out

for newcomers or others who are by themselves -- acknowledging their presence, making them welcome, helping them to connect.

To James, showing favoritism is seriously wrong. Why? Because it raises a red flag. To paraphrase the Bible Project: "How we treat others opens up a window into our hearts and our core values. Our words and actions tell the real truth about [what we believe]."

And so in today's passage, James uses our uneven treatment of people to call us to account, to challenge us to love as God loves. He gives us three compelling reasons why Christians should not show favoritism, reasons that show us three ways to grow in love:

- By following God's example, learning to see others as He sees them (5-7).
- By obeying God's law in its spirit of love (8-11).
- And by extending to others the mercy we ourselves have received (12-13).

FIRST, in verses 5-7, James calls us to see others as God see them, to welcome as He welcomes. Showing partiality to the rich is contrary to the ways God welcomes the poor:

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?

⁶ But you have dishonored the poor.

Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of Him to whom you belong?

Think back to James' opening words: [Believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism \(2:1\)](#). He highlights Jesus' glory to show that, next to the LORD, we all look very much alike, ordinary and small. The focus on His glory diminishes, even eliminates, any distinctions among us. We are poor, weak, and needy. He is glorious!

What's more, our glorious LORD has chosen [those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom](#). Not only does God see everyone as created in His image, precious beyond measure, He is especially inclined to the poor, looking on them with particular love and concern. From cover to cover, the Bible tells of God's commitment to the poor. Think of the words of Isaiah, which Jesus applies to Himself:

[The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners. \(Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18\)](#)

Further, it is the poor who are most responsive to God's call. They are the ones who are [rich in faith ... who love Him](#).

But James says: Look at your choices, your preferences. They are different than God's. He has chosen the poor. You prefer the rich.

It can be hard to relate to those who are different from us, at least until we get to know them. I wonder if there are people who make you feel uncomfortable, who you disregard, perhaps even look down on, based on social status, race, occupation, values, or beliefs? May God search our hearts and show us where we are grieving His+ Spirit.

On the plus side, I would like to share two examples where our church has been enriched by welcoming people who are different than ourselves -- our ESL classes and our refugee

sponsorships. As I speak with the ESL volunteers, I see the joy in their eyes as they describe their growing friendships with the students. For sure, it takes work to develop a cross-cultural friendship. There are cultural and language barriers to bridge. But the rewards are incredible. And do you know who these people are? [PHOTO] Froduald, Lawrence and family, who our church sponsored in 2008. And who is this? [PHOTO] The oldest daughter Merveille, who just graduated from high school and will study nursing in the fall. When the family first came to Canada, my wife Barb acted as their translator (they were more comfortable in French than English), and over the years they have become dear friends. I know that many of you, likewise, are aunties and uncles to this family and the other family members who followed. I can't tell you how much we've learned from them. In James' words, they are **rich in faith, those who love God!** We are so blessed to have them in our lives.

SECOND, in verses 8-11, we learn to love by obeying God's law, in a spirit of love.

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For He who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

Here James refers to **the royal law** as well as **the whole law**. The royal law **Love your neighbor as yourself**, which Jesus singles out as the 2nd great command, is from a section in the book of Leviticus called the Holiness code. The original context includes many laws about social justice, including one on partiality and several others that are echoed by James. From Leviticus 19:

- **⁹⁻¹⁰ When you ... harvest ... leave [some] for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.**
- **¹³ Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.**
- **¹⁵ Do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.**
- **¹⁸ Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone ... but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.**

Don't these verses remind you of James, in both tone and content? James, like Jesus, singles out the **"Love your neighbor"** command, calling it the royal law, the law that rules all other laws, teaching us that love for God and love for neighbor are the heart of the law.

This does not mean that the commands to love God and neighbor make all other laws obsolete. Rather, the royal law roots the law in the love of God. Love and mercy must always be the lenses through which we read and live out the law. Without love, we miss the law's spirit and intent, which is imitating God, living in right relationship with God and each other, loving as He first loved us.

That is why favoritism, failure to care for those in need, violates the law both in letter and in spirit. Favoritism is motivated by self-interest rather than love. As James says, if you find yourself favoring some people and snubbing others, you are guilty of breaking the whole law, even if you keep it in every other way.

FINALLY, in verses 12-13 James calls us to extend to others the mercy we ourselves have received. Here the passage comes to a climax and conclusion, both sobering and comforting, one that contrasts God's judgment and mercy with the ways we are apt to judge each other.

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

There's a lot to unpack here. The middle phrase is sobering: **Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful**. James' warning echoes Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18). The king has forgiven the debt of a servant who owed him \$100,000, only to discover that the servant is being harsh with someone who owes them \$10. The king is furious and revokes his forgiveness.

In contrast, we who have received mercy are called to be merciful. We are to **speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom**.

We are so apt to be judgmental. In today's passage, James rightly asks, **"Have you not become judges with evil thoughts?"** Later, he asks, **"Who are you to judge your neighbor?"**, in reference to the ways we grumble against and slander each other. Our negative thoughts and words are rooted in a critical spirit that is quick to form negative judgments, finding fault, tearing others down. Whenever we find ourselves in such an attitude, we need to humble ourselves and ask God for forgiveness and the grace to love.

Instead of being judgmental, we need to learn mercy through **the law that gives freedom**. It is surprisingly, at first, that James links our freedom to the law. In doing so, he offers a new and fresh perspective on the law to those who believe in Jesus, not as a burden but a gift, "not a ladder to climb ... but a pattern of life that God gives to His redeemed people" (Alec Motyer). As we live by God's law, obeying its teachings, we discover true freedom -- not the absence of boundaries but the trusting acceptance of God-given boundaries that lead to human flourishing. And we discover that much of the law concerns mercy, caring for the poor.

For **Mercy triumphs over judgment**. God's mercy is powerful, transformative. It changes us from the inside out. In the words of Charles Wesley, "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free!"

One clarification: Mercy does not mean that we should close our eyes to sinful or harmful behaviour. Indeed, the entire book of James as a collection of exhortations that correct wrong attitudes and actions and encourage us become more like the LORD Jesus. Consider its final two verses:

^{5.19} My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: **Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

Mercy does not condemn, but neither does it look the other way, ignoring behaviors that cause harm. Mercy sees people as they truly are: fearfully and wonderfully made; precious in the sight of God; yet lonely in need of community; wounded in need of healing; prisoners in need of deliverance; sinners in need of grace. As Pope John Paul II has said, "Mercy is Love's second name." What's more, mercy understands that we too are in need of mercy, and that we can only give what we have received. Mercy is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

Let me end with a story. My wife Barb became a Christian at university. Her father was Jewish, and she grew up attending a reformed synagogue in Montreal until she was seven, when her family became Unitarian. In high school, her impression of Christians was quite negative; they seemed isolated and a bit nerdy. Barb went to university hoping to learn about woman's rights and social equality. There, she became close friends with two Christians in her dorm, and they began to tell her about Jesus. One night, she had a life-changing dream. She and others were placed on a huge set of monkey bars in the sky, and each person's position, how high up they were above the ground, was determined by their wealth, abilities, family status, and looks. Barb felt comfortable and secure with where she was positioned. Some were some above her and some were below. But down at the bottom, at ground level, were all of the Christians. And as she looked down, Barb felt God asking her to let go of her position, her power, security, and identity, and join the Christians. At first, she resisted, breaking into a cold sweat and holding on even harder. But then she realized that it was the Christians who were enjoying true equality, and so she let go and joined them at the bottom. Later she would learn the expression, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."

That is James' point when he says: [believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism](#).

At the foot of the cross, we join each other to humble ourselves before our glorious LORD.

At the foot of the cross, we all receive mercy.

At the foot of the cross, we welcome fellow travelers.

At the foot of the cross, we begin to see one another clearly, as special, as beloved.

At the foot of the cross, we worship together.

Let's take a minute to be quiet and ask the Holy Spirit. Is there anything You wish to say to us? Is there anything You wish for us to say to You?

Let's pray. Father, thank You that You delight in each one of us and have a particular love for the poor. May we become more like You, learning to see as You see and love as You love. Amen.

Soon we will take communion together, remembering our glorious LORD Jesus Christ. As Paul writes, [9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. \(2 Corinthians 8:9\)](#) As we break bread together, I encourage you to look around and see one another with a fresh set of eyes.

The communion packet you received as you came in contains a wafer and a container of juice. After we've sung the next song, we will remove the wafer and eat together and then uncover the juice and drink together these symbols of the body and blood of Christ. After we do so, please hold on to the containers and place them in the garbage cans as you leave.

Songs - Worship Team

Solid Rock

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.

When He shall come with trumpet sound
O, may I then, in Him, be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless, to stand before the throne!

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.

How Great Is Our God

The splendour of the King
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
And trembles at His voice

How great is our God
Sing with me:
How great is our God
And all will see
How great,
How great is our God

And age to age He stands
And time is in His hands

Beginning and the End
Beginning and the End
The Godhead, three in One
Father, Spirit, Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God
Sing with me:
How great is our God
And all will see
How great,
How great is our God

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing;
How great is our God

How great is our God
Sing with me:
How great is our God
And all will see
How great,
How great is our God

Benediction

May we go now, dependent on God, rooted in Jesus, and led by the Spirit, to fully love God and all people, for God's kingdom, power and glory, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.