

James #6 - Your Seat, Jesus' Seat

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- All right, I got my seat, you got your seat, I'm gonna ask you a question. Think back in your life, where was the best seat you ever enjoyed? It could be a sporting event, could be a concert, I can remember one time Grace and I were gonna do date night and somebody gave us tickets to the Seattle Mariners. And one of the benefits of going to a Mariners game with your wife, it's a beautiful field and you can really have some quality time without being distracted by things that are happening on the field. 'Cause nothing is ever happening on the field. So it was a nice sunny day, the roof was open, I was with my very best friend holding her hand walking in and I didn't know where the seats were. I was just glad to get tickets and we kept walking and walking and walking, and next thing I know we're very close to the game, now we're really close to the game, we're just a few rows behind home plate. And as a former catcher, I was very excited to be there. And I remember sitting there thinking "I would never pay for these seats, but I'm really glad to have them." And this is amazing to be so close to the game. You could actually hear what they're saying and some of it was not that good, so pray for them. But I thought, wow how great it is to be in this seat on a sunny day and to have this few hours in this amazing place with my very best friend. Think about the best seat you've ever had, think about the worst seat you've ever had. And it was probably on an airplane, Amen? I mean, we could just all agree to that. I've had a lot of bad airline seats. I still remember some years ago I had a quick connecting layover and the window of opportunity was very close. I'm running from one end of the terminal to the other, dragging my bag and I'm, you know, hot and sweaty and more grumpy than I normally am. And I get on the plane, I'm one of the last guys on the plane and I go way toward the back and my seat is the middle seat between two guys who could stuff the run for an NFL defense. They're like 300 plus pounds and they're already buckled in. And somehow they had conspired to put the armrests up which meant that there was no room for me at all. There's no way I could sit in this seat. And so I waited for everyone else to sit down, it was a full flight. So I hit the button, the flight attendant comes say, "Can I help you?" "Yeah, you really could, I need a seat." She said, "Well, that's your seat." "No, it's not, it's occupied by Bigfoot and Chewbacca. and their extra has gone into my vicinity, I have no place for myself." She said, "I'm sorry, we have no other seats." I said, "Bathroom." I honestly asked if I could sit in the bathroom for the flight. She said, "No, there's no seatbelt." "I'll duct tape myself in. How about," I'm trying to negotiate the deal, I ask her, "Can I go in the overhead bin?" And she says, "No, you can't go in the overhead bin." So I sat down and then Pete and Repeat, they sat in front of me and on top of me and I'm trying to breathe so I don't die on the flight. I spent the rest of the flight standing

up in the back the entire flight, worst seat I ever had. What's the best seat you've ever had? What's the worst seat you've ever had? And what we're getting into today in James is where we sit says something about who we are or at least what we think we deserve. So let me ask you a couple other questions. Let's say you wanted to go to a concert and you went online and you realized, "Oh boy, there's different tiered pricing." You thought, "Huh, well, VIP, I can't afford that. You know, near the stage, can't afford that. Festival seating, I can afford that, click." You show up early, but it's already packed, so you're way, way, way in the back. But it was a cheap seat, you paid for a cheap ticket. And then as the concert starts, you notice they move that golden rope out of the way and incomes all the VIP right to the front of the stage, and they paid a mint for their seats. Does that bother you that they get a better seat than you? Would that bother you? Yes or no? No, no, no, probably not, you're like, "Well, you get what you pay for." How about same thing for a sporting event, you go online and you decide, "Well, I wanna go to a game, I don't wanna be, nah, that's too much, too much, too much, I'll go up to the 300 level, that's okay." And you show up and you've got a cheap seat, and you realize that some people are really close to the field or they're close to the court. They paid a lot more. Does it bother you that they get a better seat than you? Yes or no? No, okay. Let's do one more. Since I have the time. You try to figure out, is there a location near me, what are the service times, you go online, and it says, "If you'd like to attend, click here to buy a ticket." And you can click and it goes to a seating chart just like the concert or just like the sporting event. And there's different tiered pricing based upon what location and what service and what seat, you wanna sit near the front? Well, that's gonna be more. You wanna sit in the back, that'll be less. If you wanna stand up in the back, that'll be cheaper. You wanna sit on the floor, we'll give you a discount but then we try and up-sale you, "Oh, you wanna be prayed for?" That's gonna be a fee. You know, you wanna take communion, click, you know, somebody's got to pay for the wine. Hey, you wanna join a community group, that's a double-click and all of a sudden, like your Amazon account, they're asking for your credit card and to get a ticket to come to church, you have to pay for it, does that bother you? Oh, you hypocrites. It didn't bother you for the sporting event, it didn't bother you for the concert but it does bother you for the church. Here's my question, why? Okay, we'll read the Bible. All right, James 2, we'll start in verse one. Here's the case study, okay? "For if a man wearing a gold ring," so this guy's really bedazzled, right? He just is, here he comes, and fine clothing, right? Nice suit, all done up, looks great. Comes into your assembly, shows up to church service and behind him comes a poor man in shabby clothing. You could tell this guy doesn't make the same as the other guy. And if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing, the guy who's very affluent and say, "You sit here in the good place, we have reserved seating for guys in suits who rolled up in Bentleys and showed up with an entourage." While you say to the poor man, "Ah, you stand over there, get out of the way, don't block anybody's view. We don't have a seat for you, stand up in the back. Or you know what, I do need a foot rest, how about that? You could sit on the floor with my feet, which in that culture, you walk to church with open-toed sandals on the road you share with a lot of animals, your feet are not in great shape. He continues. "Have you not then made distinctions," he's talking about partiality among yourselves, "and become judges with evil thoughts." You know what? That guy's rich, that guy's poor, that guy's worth more than that guy. Listen, see, I need you to pay attention to this, heed this, hear this, "My beloved brothers has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be

rich in faith?" Sometimes people who have nothing trust God because they have to trust Him in a way that others don't." "And heirs of the Kingdom." What he's saying is these people are rich, they just don't get their inheritance yet. Like Jesus said, "They've stored up their treasures in heaven." These people who are poor on earth, but rich in faith they have a massive inheritance, they just haven't cashed it in yet. "Which He has promised to those who love Him." He continues, but here's the problem, "You've dishonored the poor man." You've dishonored the poor man, James here is a pastor and apparently what's happening at their church is somebody decided that what you would do at a sporting event or what you would do at a concert is a good idea for the church. James is saying, you're dishonoring those who are poor, like my father. James' father, Jesus father was Joseph, he was a poor man. James is saying this isn't right. If my mom and dad came to church, you'd put them on the floor or stand them in the back but it's the pastor's parents, it's the Lord's parents, this is not right. If Jesus came to this church, they would've sat Him on the floor or made Him stand up in the back because He was poor. James says, that's dishonorable. You start to get the sense that the world and the church are supposed to operate differently. None of us would have a problem going to a sporting event or going to a concert and paying for a seat, and then whatever money we paid determines where we are. And in church, it troubles us if that were the case. "Are not the rich ones who oppress you and the ones who drag you into court." Not all rich people are evil, but in this case, the rich people were evil. They were oppressing and taking advantage of the poor who could not legally defend themselves. "Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?" He says, there's even some unbelievers that are showing up or some people who are like Judas who claim to be believers, but they're not. And they've got a lot of money and they're suing and taking advantage of and hiring, but not paying the Christians who were poor and defenseless. And he says, how do you think that feels when the poor people come in and the people who are suing them and stealing from them, get the seats up front and they're supposed to sit on the floor like a piece of furniture? Here's my question. Does this bother you? This is my first question. How many of you say, "Yeah, actually this bothers me." Here's my second question, why? Immediately you just wanna rush to indignation. This is just wrong, we shouldn't be like this, you should be seated wherever you wanna be seated, all people should be treated equal, there should not be partiality like this. Okay, well, there's the conscience that God gave you, but here's my question, on what basis? On what basis would you make that kind of moral determination? If you're here and you're not a Christian, let me submit to you that if you believe in a pure evolutionary theory, you have no right to be upset. You're being a hypocrite. Because if you believe in a purely evolutionary worldview, here's the idea, some people are more advanced and evolved than others. Some people win, some people lose, it's the weak against the strong and only the fittest survive. So if the rich guy wins and the poor guy loses, that's just natural selection as applied to church seating charts. You have no right, if you believe in a purely evolutionary worldview to start throwing around words like discrimination or partiality or prejudice, you don't. You just need to put your moral flag down and you need to deal with your ideology because it doesn't allow you to argue against partiality, it doesn't. Some of you would come here and you're part of another religion. You have a more religious ideology and you might say, "Similarly, this really troubles me, profoundly bothers me." My question is, why? See the difference between Christianity and other religions is in other religions you get what you earn,

it's works. Well in Christianity, you get what Jesus earns, it's grace. Because we believe in grace, we believe in Jesus, we believe that people should be treated equal. But if you believe in a religious ideology or philosophy, you believe in karma that some people have paid off more debt than others. And if there's suffering in this life we shouldn't help them because after all, we could be interrupting their karmic debt payback. Some religions teach levels of enlightenment that some of us have reincarnated, some of us have become more enlightened, some of us are more evolved. I remember having a debate with Deepak Chopra on Nightline and he talked about how he had reached higher levels of consciousness. What that means is I'm more spiritually advanced than you, you're more, and he used this language, primitive. If you believe that, well, then the primitive people sit on the floor or stand in the back and us more enlightened people, we sit up front because we've earned it, we've gotten to a higher state of consciousness. I learned this some years ago, I was in Florida and met a very affluent Jewish businessman who I built a bit of a relationship with at the time and was talking to him about Jesus. And he said, "Oh, you wanna come see my synagogue?" I never, "Yeah, sure, I've read about," you know, okay, whatever, go to the synagogue, it's beautiful. This is a very affluent neighborhood, very nice, like wow, synagogue. And he said, "My family sits here." I said, "All the time?" He said, "Yeah, well, these are our seats. He said "Yeah, we bought these seats." What the, okay, this is evil, and the potential way to make budget, this was some years ago. I said, "Explain that." He said, "Well, you know, a lot of the Jewish people in this community, we don't go to synagogue very often, but for the holidays, the high holy days, the place is packed and you can't get a seat." So he said "It's kind of like getting box seating at a sporting event. You can buy seats that belong to your family so you have good reserve seating for the high holy days." Huh? Oh, just like James is talking about. See religion teaches you, you earn it. You pay for your seat through your enlightenment, through your good works, through your reincarnation and paying off your karmic debt, through your evolutionary consciousness. You earn your seat. And some people get a better seat than other people 'cause some people are better than other people. If you're troubled by this, it's 'cause God gave you a conscience. But if you believe in a purely evolutionary worldview or a purely religious worldview, you have no right to get upset. And if you are upset, you're a hypocrite. You're inconsistent. You have no basis for your frustration. That being said, here's their problem. Their problem is, is that the church is behaving in a worldly way, okay? And when it comes to biblical thinking, there's the Kingdom of God. This is where Jesus is alive, ruling and reigning right now as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And that God's people will be together forever in His Kingdom. Today, we're in the world. We're in cultures and nations that don't think in a way that is biblical and don't submit to King Jesus. In the middle is the church, the church is in the world, but belongs to the Kingdom. These are God's people, Jesus' people. And the problem is that sometimes the church thinks in a way that is more worldly and less like Jesus' Kingdom, that's exactly what's happening here. And James is saying the church shouldn't be like the world, the church should be like the Kingdom. And their problem ultimately is partiality, don't get hung up on the finances here. The case study here is one of finances and wealth and influence. But the underlying issue that we'll get to in just a moment I started in chapter two, verse two, and we'll revisit chapter two, verse one. The underlying issue is partiality. Their problem is they think rich people are good and poor people are bad, okay? We have a theology for that today, it's a very worldly theology, it's called

prosperity theology. Maybe you're poor, maybe you live near a city, maybe you went to college and studied too much philosophy. Maybe if you're an indie rocker who plays in a band, right? You would lean to the other side and say, "That's wrong, I think like Robin hood, rich people are bad, poor people are good." That's called poverty theology. Well, which is it? Rich people are good and poor people are bad or rich people are bad and poor people are good? And the Bible says everybody's bad, okay? It's equal, it's equal. And the issue is that different churches behave in worldly ways where they show partiality either to the rich or the poor, but both, both are wrong. The answer to those who favor the rich is not to favor the poor. The answer to those who favor the poor is not to favor the rich. The answer is not to show partiality to anyone, but to treat everyone equally. I'll give you a verse, Leviticus 19:15, Jesus and James, they would have been very familiar with this. This is actually a very well-known verse in a lot of ancient Jewish theology. This was a principle that guided a lot of their social ethic. Do not show what, partiality, favoritism, preference, to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. What he's saying is this, don't show partiality to the rich and don't show partiality to the poor, treat everyone fairly, rightly, justly. This is in the church, this is in the culture, this is in the legal realm. See, if we don't understand this, we read James and we say, "Okay, then all the poor people stand in the back. Well, no, we need to fix this, all the poor people come to the front, and now all the rich people stand in the back." Either way, all we're doing is changing our partiality. We're not resolving our partiality, we're changing our partiality. Now let me say that this is not only in the economic realm. Say "Women need to be up front, the men need to go to the back. No, no, no, the men need to be upfront and the women need to go to the back. No, no, no, the young need to come up front and the old need to go to the back. No, no, no, the old need to go to the front and the young need to go to the back. Well, those who are White need to go to the front, no, no, no, nope, all the whites need to go to the back." See how this works? "We want people like us to be upfront." And James says, Moses says, God says, "No." We're not gonna say that people like you are good and people that are not like you are bad so that we could show preference to you and people like you because that's idolatry. That's favoritism, that's partiality. But how many of you women wish that women got more? How many of you men wish that men got more? How many of you young people wish young people got more? How many of you old people wish old people got more? How many of you White people wish White people got more? How many of you not white people wish people like you got more? This leads to our classism, our age-ism, our racism, our nationalism and our tribalism. He's really hit a deep root, hasn't he? So what's the solution? Well, the solution biblically is that we treat people equally because they're equal, because that's what the Bible says. You can't get there through evolution, and you can't get there through religion. Okay, let's do a little quiz, okay? According to the Bible, everyone is equally made in the image and likeness of God, true or false?

- [Congregation] True.

- True. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Black and White, equally made in the image and likeness of God. Number two, all people are equally fallen and sinful. True, there's not a race or a gender or a class or a kind or a type of people that are not sinful. We're equal in our humanity, we're equal in our depravity. The Bible says that all have sinned and fallen short

of the glory of God. So people like you are no better than people unlike you. We're all sinners, we're all fallen, and we're equal. Number three, true or false, those who belong to Jesus are equally saved, equally loved, equally forgiven, true or false? True. So according to the Bible, we're equal. As a result, we shouldn't show favoritism and partiality toward people like us. But only through biblical thinking does this strong desire for cultural equality have any basis in reality. I find it amazing that sometimes those who yell the loudest for equality have a worldview that causes them hypocrisy. Only through a biblical ideology, a worldview, a lens, a thought process, a mindset, is there any basis for considering everyone equally valuable and treating everyone without partiality. Okay, we looked at chapter two verses 2-7, I skipped chapter two, verse one, here's the real issue, take a look at it. "My brothers show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." What he's saying here is don't play favorites, okay? And this is very important to remember that God is a Father, okay? I'm a father, I don't have favorites. I have three sons, two daughters, zero favorites. I ask my kids often because I need to know, do you think that I have any favorite or favorites? My kids always tell me "No dad, we're different, and you love us all the same. And we each do different things with you because you're trying to do things we like to do." So my sons wanna play catch, my youngest daughter doesn't wanna play catch. So I'll do different things with different kids. Love, serve in different ways 'cause they're different, but I love them equally. Horrible things happen when parents start playing favorites, horrible things happen. Jealousy, anger, violence, we read this very early in the book of Genesis. Parents start playing favorites and things go really bad, really fast, okay? We are, that's what he's saying here, brothers, we're God's family, we're God's children. God's our Father, our Father doesn't play favorites. How horrible would it be if my kids grew up and they all came over for dinner and I said, "Okay, well kids tell me your income." "Why dad?" "Well, the more you make, the closer you sit to me at my dinner table." "Really, we're gonna do this?" God's not like that. "Hey, kids bring your report card." "Why dad?" "Highest GPA sits next to me and gets dessert. Lowest GPA, you sit in the other room." God's not like that. God's a Father who loves all His kids and He doesn't play favorites. But the problem is sometimes His kids play favorites. And what's happening here with a case study in James is that God doesn't play favorites, but the kids are playing favorites. They have partiality, that's the real underlying fundamental problem. So who are you partial toward? Do you prefer men or women, young or old, single or married, Black or White, highly educated, uneducated, those who have their life together, those whose life is falling apart? Who do you prefer? Don't let your preferences become your prejudices. Don't let your preferences become your prejudices. It's interesting, non-Christians tend to think that one of the big problems with Christianity is partiality. I'm working on a book, and I'd appreciate your prayers, it's the biggest project I've ever worked on. And we tried to find out from the unchurched and the dechurched, what are their primary objections to Christian faith? So did a big national survey and study and got all the research and data. The number six most popular issue for the unchurched, those that have never been to church and the dechurched, their primary objection to Christianity, number six was this, all people are not created equal in the Christian faith. That's not true. Some of you are here and you may think that Christianity is not a religion of equality. It is, I would submit to you it's the only religion of equality. Biblical thinking that we're equally made by God, we're equally fallen into sin and we're equally loved and saved and forgiven by God. And that God's a Father and He loves

all of His kids equally and He doesn't have favorites, and He doesn't have prejudices and preferences, it has really informed Christianity in such a way that apart from Christianity, the world is much different and much worse. I mean, it's the Bible that tells us that men and women are equal and they're equally made in the image and likeness of God. It's the Bible that shows us that Jesus befriended women which was very unusual for a religious leader in that day. And that Jesus taught women which was perhaps even scandalous in that day. And that part of Jesus' ministry team included godly women and they were the first at His tomb to see that He had risen from the dead. Go to nations where the gospel has not spread and see if women are treated as equals under the law. In addition, this has affected education. That it was historically the case that only the sons of the wealthy were given an education and taught to read, why? Because then they could win in court, they could own land, it gave them a preferential position in society. Well, as Christianity spread we're people of the book, we believe young and old and rich and White and Black and all people should have the ability to read God's Word. So wherever Christianity spread, education spread. The first schools, almost exclusively in the United States of America, were all Christian. Because of our view of equality according to the Bible, we believe that not just men should know how to read, but also women, and not just the rich, but also the poor because Jesus was poor and He knew how to read. And He knew how to read so that He could read the Scriptures. So wherever Christianity has spread, the sense of equality has led to education. And I find it fascinating that then education would argue that Christianity is intolerant and doesn't believe in equality because without Christianity, you wouldn't even have institutions of higher learning to argue against Christianity. Just something to think about on the way home. This has a profound effect, this issue of impartiality, on history. Racism is in large part, the result of unbiblical thinking, that people are part human and part animal. Can you get there from the Bible, yes or no? No. There are animals and there are image bearers of God and we don't believe that there are variations in between. This is why racism is completely antithetical, it's deplorable to the view of the Bible. This is why those who argued against slavery historically tended to do so from the Bible. It was very popular to have slaves in the early Roman empire. Many of the early Christians, first Christians were slaves. And once biblical teaching spread in the church the slaves became deacons, the slaves became elders, the slaves became leaders and they would have spiritual authority over their masters and this led the church to help bring the kind of transformation into the culture that the gospel had brought into the church. This is why in Great Britain, you have men like William Wilberforce who were arguing strongly and passionately and effectively against slavery and racism because of biblical conviction. This is why the Civil Rights Movement in the US was in large part, led by preachers from pulpits. Preaching that all people are made equally in the image and likeness of God, and that certain human beings are not partly animal, they're all image bearers. And these are our brothers and sisters and our Father doesn't play favorites, and if we do, we are sinning against Him. This is why you have men like Martin Luther King Jr. who was a preacher, and he worked from biblical imagery and thinking, This is why Jackie Robinson was not just a great baseball player and liberator, but also loved Jesus. And the situation we see here in chapter two of Luke is kind of like Rosa Parks. Because of her race, she's told to sit in the back of the bus. Just like the poor were being told to sit in the back of the church. Rosa Parks refused to do that and what they oftentimes don't tell you is that she was a Christian. Her thinking was from the

Scriptures and she was right. Dear friend, if you want to argue for equality and somebody said, I think he's trying to hijack a cultural value. Now it's been hijacked, I'm trying to get it back. Biblical thinking alone leads to dignity, value, equality, among all people and nothing else accomplishes that. Do you understand that? Because this is what Christianity brings into existence through the clear instruction of the Bible. It's why even as Christians we value those who are born and those who are not yet born. We believe that all people are valuable. We believe that all people are equally loved by their Father, our Father. We believe that they all have rights and worth and that to show partiality is to behave in a way that is evil. Do you understand that? For those of you who are Christians, next time somebody is arguing equality, equality, equality, ask the two-year old kid question, why? And if they say, "Because," ask why again? What we have here is not only a moral condemnation of partiality, but an entire worldview that helps us not only to see ourselves, but to see our neighbor and to see our brothers and sisters, as God sees them. Now, here's what's going on in James 2, the problem is partiality and here's God's prescription for partiality. "My brothers," so what he's talking about is seats, okay? And what we've established is that different seats give the impression of different value, okay? Where should you sit? Where should your seat be? Where should my seat be? He says we're brothers, what he's saying is we're family. So think of it like this, think of it like dinner at my house. And I ask my kids often, do I have any favorites? And if they ever say yes, then I've done something terribly wrong. God's a Father has no favorites. Here's the deal, He's glad that you would sit at His table. He loves all of His kids. It really doesn't matter what seat you sit in. The Father's gonna serve you the same meal, He's gonna love you with the same affection, He's gonna give you the same embrace. Your dad loves you. Who cares whether you're on the left side of the table, who cares? 'Cause I'm here with my brothers and sisters and we're here with our Father, what a great place to be. And then he transitions, in the most magnificent way. And he talks about the only seat that really matters, okay? So I'll get off my seat and what we're talking about, ultimately here, we're talking about the glory seat. 'Cause what they understood wrongly was that certain seats come with different glory. Certain seats come with different glory. And so their fight over the seat is ultimately a fight over the glory. "No, I wanna be up front?" Who deserves to sit in the seat of glory? That's the battle. What does he say? "Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." What he's talking about is the glory of Jesus Christ means that His seat alone is the seat that matters. That you and I shouldn't be particularly concerned about our seat even in this life. And we shouldn't be arguing that people like us should get a better seat. I'm arguing for the rich, I'm arguing for the poor, I'm arguing for the Black, I'm arguing for the White, I'm arguing for the urban, I'm arguing for the ruler, I'm arguing for the single, I'm arguing for the merit, and what we do is we want people like us up front, even in the church. We need more women, we need more poor, we need more ardy, we need more young, we need more old, we need, get more people like me up front, more glory on us, more attention to us, more authority for us, more focus on us, more concern for us, more open ears and open hearts and open wallets and open minds to accommodate, to tolerate, to prefer us. James says, "That's the wrong place for the glory." Glory's a mega theme of the Bible. Augustan, the church father rightly said that when the issue of glory is settled, I'm paraphrasing, the other issues are all settled. That all issues are ultimately glorious, he said all conflicts are ultimately glory conflicts. This theme of glory appears about 275 times in the Bible. It's a massive theme. And it means a

number of things, splendor, beauty, magnificence, radiance, heaviness, weightiness, prominence, preeminence, luminescence, splendor, majesty, holiness, purity, worthiness. What everybody is saying is, "Hey, give me the glory seat. Put me up front high and exalted, everybody can see me and bring people like me around because we're more valuable. We want the glory seat." Jesus is saying "No." And He's saying it through His brother James. Jesus is the only one who deserves to sit on the glory seat. It doesn't matter where you sit, it doesn't matter where I sit, it only matters where He sits. One of my favorite images, perhaps my favorite image in the whole Bible is a chair, it's called a throne. You can study it for yourself, there are various thrones that appear in the Bible and Kings sit upon them and they rule over kingdoms and some are evil and some are godly. The last book of the Bible, it's about the Kingdom of God. It's the book of Revelation. And really the tension that they're experiencing in James and the tension that we experience is that we live in the world, the world that has fallen and corrupted, and it has chased glory that it does not deserve. And we belong to the Kingdom of God. And the way things will be is not the way things are. And in the middle is the church and the churches is to represent the Kingdom in the world but sometimes what the church does is the church brings the world into the church and dishonors the Kingdom, and that's what's happening in James 2. And so the answer is to always be looking to the Kingdom and the key to the Kingdom is who's the king? The key to the Kingdom is always this, who's the King? And we know who the King is because the King is the one who sits on the throne, that's how you know who the king is. And as you unveil the book of Revelation and the curtain of history opens up, in 17 of the 22 chapters, the last book of the Bible that gives us a glimpse into the Kingdom. The throne appears, some 45 times, if my memory is correct, in the book of Revelation, it explodes. There's the throne, there's the throne, there's one seat, there's one glory seat and there's only one who's sitting upon it. Who is it? It's Jesus Christ, He's king of Kings, He's Lord of Lords and His throne, His glory seat, it's the center, it's the center of all creation, it's the center of all history. It's His throne that's high and exalted and He alone sits upon it, and He alone is worthy of it. And around Jesus are all the nations and all the tribes and languages, the rich are there, the poor are there, the Black are there, the White are there, the highly educated, the uneducated, they're all there. The men are there, the women are there, everybody who belongs to that King and is a citizen of that Kingdom, they're there. And they don't care where they sit. All they care is that they're around His throne because He's the one who gets all the glory. And the angels fall down, and the leaders fall down, and the people fall down. And the picture in Revelation is not that you and I would be seated on the seat of glory with Jesus, telling everyone all of the things we've done, and all the ways we've given, and all that we've accomplished and all that we become, and all that we are, that we would bask in our glory, and that others would sing our praises. The only imagery in Revelation is this, everybody gets off their chair, and He sits on His throne and we fall down, and we give Him glory that He loves us, that He saves us, that He seeks us, that He forgives us, that He gives us His inheritance, that it is all about Him, it is not about us and praise be to God. Praise be to God when the glory is removed from us, glory friends means heaviness and weightiness, and those who pursue it are crushed by it. He alone is worthy of glory. He alone can shoulder glory. He alone can endure glory. And we get to bask in His glory, which is our joy. We were made not to sit on a throne, but to fall before a throne. We were made not to be worshiped by God in our glory, we were made to

worship God in His glory. And the more that we understand this, the happier we are, the freer we are. We're liberated from worldly thinking into kingdom thinking. We realize it doesn't matter where I sit because nobody's looking at me anyways. It doesn't matter where I sit, as long as I am seated around Him and His throne, high and exalted, He is the Lord of glory. He is high and exalted. He is seated on a throne, angels are singing His praises, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of His glory. The departed brothers and sisters in faith are around His throne and they are crying out, "Worthy, worthy, worthy to receive glory, glory, glory." And child of God, if you belong to Jesus, that is where you are going and that is what you will be doing. And it does not matter today where you are seated because when you're in His presence, you won't even be seated. You'll be face down, full of joy, basking in His glory, Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- So we need to worship now, Amen? And so Lord Jesus, I thank You that You came in humility, but I thank You that today You are the Lord of glory. Lord Jesus, I thank You for this incredibly practical Word from from Your brother, James. And Lord Jesus, I pray that we would not turn this into yet another economic class warfare, conflict between the rich and the poor. That we'd let this be about partiality and glory, that it's about who gets the glory. Lord Jesus, may You get the glory in our lives. May You get the glory in our church. May You get the glory in our eternity. Lord Jesus, I thank you so much that You are so worthy of all glory. When we worship ourselves, we worship someone who is unworthy. When we worship anyone else, we worship someone who is unworthy. And when we worship You, we worship the only one who's ever worthy of all glory. And for that we say thank You that You made us to enjoy You and we come now to enjoy You as your people together equally, made in Your image and likeness equally, fallen into sin, but equally loved and saved to the glory of God, Amen.