

# James (Quality: Average)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 February 1978

Preacher: Crowter, Harold (1923-2011)

[ 0 : 00 ] With the Lord's help, we will again this evening turn to the Epistle of James and Chapter 2 at verse 5. James Epistle, Chapter 2 and verse 5.

Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith? And heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.

Amen. Amen.

Who possesses God's grace. But it pleases God in the exercise of his sovereignty to bestow his grace upon the poor as well as the rich.

And if we may look at the balance of scripture and seek to discern the mind of God in these matters, we must say that to the end that he may be the more glorified, it has pleased God rather to single out for special favour the poorer members of society rather than those that are rich.

[ 2 : 20 ] James says, For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts? My friends, surely James' teaching is very clear to us, that what is a natural tendency to offer a special place, to the one who has the gold ring and the gay apparel, that this is not consistent with the mind of God.

And he goes on in the fifth verse to tell us, Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?

Hearken, my beloved brethren, don't be deceived, don't be carried away with your natural inclination and judgment. Don't suffer your approach to be so distorted and perverted by outward appearances, as to lose sight of God's sovereign choice in these matters.

Now, my friends, we would not infer in our teaching, nor would the scripture incline us to such a conclusion, that none of the rich of this world are saved, that God's sovereign choice from eternity is always fixed upon the poor.

[ 4 : 25 ] The apostle Paul says, Not many, not many, mighty, not many, noble, not many, doesn't say not any.

Now let us mark very closely the teaching of the scripture, the language of truth. there are some noble in heaven, there are some mighty there, there are some rich people in this world that are rich in the next world too, but my friends, they haven't trusted in their riches, they haven't sought a preeminence because they're noble, they're mighty, they're well-to-do, have they?

Where the grace of God is in evidence, those distinctions which exist in society lose their signification. And you'll find sweet humility, a great readiness to take the lowest place, to be the least considered by those that may, through natural ability and possession and position in life, merit, so to speak, the highest consideration.

My friends, the grace of God is the sovereign gift of God to unworthy sinners, whether it be among the rich or the poor, of this present world.

Let us look at James' teaching. Harken, my beloved brethren. He opened the chapter with my brethren. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

[ 6 : 25 ] Now he comes further and he says, my beloved brethren. He becomes more insistent. He brings an expression to bear which confirms the purpose of his heart, that they shall not be guilty of despising the poor, that they shall not be guilty of giving preference to those that are exteriorly improved.

improved. My friends, man says, the Lord, in Samuel's prophecy, man looketh on the outward appearance, that God looketh on the heart.

And if our judgment coincides with the judgment of God, we shall be concerned with regard to the condition of heart more than the appearance on the exterior, the gold ring and the goodly apparel.

Harken, my beloved brethren. And I will say this evening, harken, my beloved brethren. Let me have your attention.

Just consider what I'm about to say. because it's very important. It's important for the glory of God. It's important for the encouragement of believers.

[ 8 : 09 ] It's important for the unity of the fellowship that these things are put into practice because James' epistle is essentially practical.

Harken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world. Now the first thing we would consider is while James teaches that it's not wise for us to discriminate, he brings us face to face with discrimination.

Discrimination. Discrimination by God, which is lawful. Discrimination by us in matters spiritual is unlawful.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world? you see, this is the doctrine of election.

This shows to us the sovereignty of God, that God's chosen the poor of this world. He was free to choose whoever he was.

[ 9 : 29 ] Now if you and I were left to choose, we should choose the people of position, the people of possession, shouldn't we? Look how this runs through society.

Look how man makes his choice. He chooses the person of position and the person of possession. doesn't he? But not God.

Not God. But God has made a choice and that's his sovereign right. God was under no obligation to choose anybody.

Had the whole human race suffered banishment from God forever, the justice of God would in no wise have been violated and man would have had nothing to complain about.

My friends, God has chosen God has chosen of his own free mercy, of his own free grace, that any are to be saved is a matter of everlasting thankfulness and praise to God.

[ 11 : 08 ] All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none that doeth good, no, not one. Therefore, my friends, God is under no obligation whatsoever to sinful man.

But blessed be God, though man according to his sin deserves the eternal frown and punishment of God to rest upon him forever, it has pleased God in the wonders of his grace to choose a people to elect to save a multitude that no man can number of every nation, kindred and tongue.

God and while we appreciate that the sovereignty of God is far above all our abilities to comprehend and delineate, my friends, the sovereign choice of God runs into most unexpected places and gathers out most unexpected persons.

Nevertheless, the Lord here gives us a glimpse, what I might term a very general glimpse of the exercise of his mind from eternity in making his choice and James by the Holy Spirit reveals to us wherein for the most part the sovereign choice of God settles, finds its expression often my beloved brethren hath not God chosen the poor of this world the poor of this world we might say in the exercise of divine sovereignty it has pleased God to ever keep before him the glory of his own name you know in all

God's works God's glory is the great end of that which he does therefore when we think of that which will the more glorify God it is the benefit as it settles upon the most unexpected and unlikely therefore my friends God hath chosen the poor of this world what a lot the poor of this world will have to thank him for as they realize he has taken them from the poor situation in this present world to inherit a kingdom in the world that is to come but he's not taken them from an earthly crown to a heavenly crown from an earthly palace to a heavenly palace from a mansion here into a mansion there but for the more part he's taken them from the poor situation upon this earth that he's taken them from the most unlikely circumstance and made them kings and priests unto God

[ 14 : 51 ] God hath chosen the poor of this world and my friends another thought concerning this teaching of James is this that if we judge the world and the people in it we would say that most of the people in the world would fall out among the poorer members of society therefore it seems that the gospel in the direction of it the sovereign choice of God as it unfolds in the text before us this evening would give more hope to more people if the Lord had chosen to save the rich there would be multitudes of poor people that must sink into despair if the

Lord had promised to bestow his sovereign favours to those people of position why there are many people that cannot make a clean position in this life who would inevitably despair of the benefit but no God has directed his word and promise particularly to those who are poor that it seems the multitude are gathered into the net of promise and may have hope of eternal life God has chosen the poor of this world one thing that is so clear in all the doctrine of the gospel to salvation is this that God did not consider the cost to himself in bestowing the benefit upon his people

I think of that word in Corinthians that runs something like this though he were rich yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich you know the Lord Jesus Christ was very poor in this world wasn't he did you ever think of that when you settle your head upon your pillow the son of man hath not where to lay his head so poor that even the foxes could be appreciated before him foxes have holes and the thirds of the air have nests but the son of man hath not where to lay his head and my friends why was

Jesus poor that the poor might be rich that the poor might be rich hath not God chosen the poor of this world and we may look at Jesus Christ in all the exercise of his poverty and say yes yes here's a confirmation that this is God's choice here's a confirmation that this is the great end of salvation that God has chosen the poor of this world do you feel thankful that he's chosen the poor oh how many souls have been encouraged who have nothing to boast of and nothing to claim in and of themselves who wonder sometimes why they are here because of the small contribution they have to make to this world while they are in it nevertheless they are encouraged that God's sovereign choice is directed toward the poor for they say yes I'm poor

I'm poor but hearken my beloved brethren hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith rich in faith not rich in money not rich in property not rich in stocks and shares not born with a silver spoon in their mouth oh no rich in faith where do you find faith look at the record of scripture where do you find faith in some very strange and unexpected places and unexpected persons but my friends the

[ 20 : 29 ] Lord makes his people rich in faith spiritual enrichment not temporal enrichment temporal enrichment as we said this morning is something that's going to fade something that's going to perish something that's going to die but spiritual enrichment is something that lives on lives on forever never dies rich in faith so the Lord bestows upon his people spiritual enrichment because that makes them rich not just for time that makes them rich for eternity rich to all the intents of bliss now if I was going to ask and I'm following up James theme if I was going to ask you to single out in our fellowship the rich people who would you where would you draw your lines of classification or you might say well so and so has a nice house and they have a nice car and they have a good position would that be your stem would that be your stem or might you not have to go into some humble cottage humble dwelling place with very few amenities very few comforts and there you might find a person with a real trust in God a real experience of the power of

God a sweet faith in the promises of God and a blessed hope for the world that is to come now is this where you would settle as far as the rich in our congregation those that are rich in faith in faith this is James assessment of the situation he says the poor of this world rich in faith faith is an enrichment that doesn't lose its value whatever occurs those that are enriched in faith by God's own hand remember faith is the gift of God and he gives it to whom he will my friends those people are rich they're rich in life they're rich in death they're rich to all eternity rich in faith hearken my beloved brethren has not

God chosen the poor of this world the poor of this world rich in faith we have scriptural record some poor characters rich in faith we might look at the apostle Paul and say to some great degree he was poor in this world rich in faith you think of him when he penned that letter to Philemon which we read as our lesson this evening a prisoner at Rome a prisoner all the aged unjustly accused suffering as it were the privations of that journey from

Judea to Rome you remember the terrible storm that he was the subject of as he lay a prisoner in the bottom of the ship as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles eventually he arrives in Italy and he's taken to Rome and there he is a prisoner awaiting trial there the Lord gives him Philemon there the Lord gives him Onesimus as a son in the faith wonderful this slave who's been guilty of robbing his master had sought to lose himself in the great metropolis of Rome and somehow he finds his way into prison whether he'd been apprehended for some misdemeanor in Rome we leave but the Lord in his sovereignty brings this slave this sinner into contact with the apostle Paul and the ministry of the poor in that prison poor

Paul a prisoner Paul the aged a prisoner but nevertheless in the prison the Lord brings Onesimus to Paul and Paul preaches the gospel to his fellow prisoner and there Onesimus is made a son in the faith and Paul has such a confidence in the reality of his conversion that he can now commend him to his former employer who we would judge had been robbed by him had proved him to be an unfaithful servant but he writes to Philemon he says don't receive him as a servant receive him now as a brother beloved you see my friends hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in peace and when we think of

[ 27 : 06 ] Peter the great apostle when Peter and John come to the beautiful gate of the temple and see the beggar sitting there asking alms Peter says silver and gold have I known poor poor but rich in faith rich in faith you see my friends the rich people are the people that are blessed by God with the faith of God's elect Peter appreciates this in the opening verse of his second epistle just look at the language that he adopts in that opening verse of the second epistle

Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our saviour Jesus Christ like precious faith with us they've obtained it God hath given it to them God hath enriched them with it that they become rich and rich forever now my friends hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith I'm going to ask you a question not to see I've raised a standard with regard to riches have I I've dismissed possessions I've dismissed positions I say that they all carry the hallmark of dissolution they're going to perish but what I ask you is this are you rich in faith if not you're miserably poor whatever you've got in this world you're miserably poor unless you're rich in faith are you rich in faith where's your heart where's your trust where's your confidence has

God blessed you with the spirit to believe the spirit to believe in Jesus Christ the spirit to trust your soul upon the finished work of the Son of God are you looking to the Lord are you resting in the Lord are you trusting in the Lord are you rich in faith my friends this is the riches which James under the holy spirit is directed to put his finger upon and to bring to the notice of these scattered Hebrews to whom his letter is addressed rich in faith hath not God chosen the four of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom heirs of the kingdom kingdom just think of it the four of this world heirs of the kingdom not a kingdom among kingdoms but the kingdom the eternal kingdom the everlasting kingdom the kingdom of God and of his dear son

Jesus Christ the kingdom my friends heirs of the kingdom that is that kingdom is their inheritance it's going to be their possession shortly they're looking for it they're expecting it they're hoping to possess it at the end of life the Lord has promised it to them heirs of the kingdom we may say of our prince of wales that he's an heir of a kingdom when at length our queen shall lay down her throne a successor will be appointed to follow on in the administration of that most high dignified and respected position and naturally speaking if the will of the Lord be so and the life of our prince is preserved the prince of wales will ascend the throne and continue the monarchy of our country i might say that the kingdom that the prince of wales shall at length attain to is the is very remarkably changed from the kingdom that some of us or some of his ancestors attain to the throne of england i can remember when george the sixth followed on when after the abdication of edward the eighth we saw george the sixth of the duke of york attain to the throne my friends the situation of our country and empire was vastly different from what our prince can expect to inherit what a change situation in a kingdom and this is so with earthly kingdoms they don't remain static there are changes radical changes but my friends we're talking of the kingdom in our meditation this evening there's no change there abel by the grace of god by the faith of god's elect he inherited a kingdom and he went to that kingdom when he died nearly six thousand years ago he went to a kingdom are you expecting to go to a different kingdom are you expecting any change in your inheritance from that inheritance which abel took possession of when abel died and went the way of all the earth no change at all the kingdom is the same and it's the same forever and forever and forever eternity will see no change no diminution no inherent weakness in the constitution or position or possession of that inheritance my friends have not god chosen

the poor of this world rich in faith heirs of the kingdom the kingdom let me ask those that have a hope in their hearts this evening is there anybody you change places with is there let the rich man boast of his possessions would you change places with it would you sacrifice the hope of your heart upon the altar of his position oh no no no no no why we're looking for a kingdom we're looking for a kingdom rich in faith heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him not because he hasn't promised it to them because they do love him but they love him consistent with the promise that he's made to them you see the lord gives faith and where he gives faith he gives love and where love and faith are a kingdom is prepared and it is promised and at length those that are possessed of this faith and this love which god by his spirit works in the hearts of his chosen people my friends they will take possession of that glorious kingdom that glorious kingdom which god hath promised to them that love him do you love the lord do you love the lord if you love the lord you won't love this world and the things of it your heart won't be set upon the perishing things of this present time the love of the lord my friends is a drawing influence that will draw us heaven more where that love to the lord is found there will be a comparative detachment the stronger that love the more detached from this world you will be i don't know anything that can loosen our hold upon the things of this world and loosen the hold of the things of this world upon us like the love of god shed abroad in our hearts by the holy god when the lord sheds that love abroad in our hearts my friends we shall willingly leave the things of this world that we can be in possession of the things which the lord has promised to them to them that love him of you have you ever tasted of the love of god in your heart to such a degree that you'd fly to the bosom of your lord if you could you'd gladly leave the things of this present time if only you could enter into the fullness of that love we sang this

[ 39 : 06 ] morning had i a glance of thee my god kingdoms and men would vanish soon vanish as though i saw them not as a dim candle dies at noon hearken my beloved brethren hearken listen pay due attention hath not god chosen the poor of this world rich in faith heirs of thee kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him of course he has of course he has james raises the question does the answer to the question afford comfort and hope to your heart my friends god hath chosen the poor of this world you can't be too poor for christ can you you can't be too poor for christ now in his sovereign choice he dismisses all those things which tend to which tend to promote rejection among men in society he gathers together his people his chosen this people have i formed for myself they shall show forth my praise what does he give to them well he gives to them faith he gives to them love he gives to them a precious promise that at length they shall inherit a kingdom that they are heirs heirs of god and joint heirs with jesus christ now my friends in closing tonight what is what has james been saying to you and to me today well he's been saying to us don't be deceived by things on the surface look deeper look deep who are the rich upon the earth to whom has god granted the favour of his grace well to some great degree not exclusively but to some great degree and for his own glory he's chosen the poor of this world but he's made them rich he's made them rich with a possession that far excels any possession that this world can communicate he's made them rich in faith you can't see their possession yet but there's a possession awaiting them they're heirs of a kingdom they haven't yet taken possession of it but at length they will assure as god has promised and promise it to them that love him my friends they shall inherit it a kingdom which shall ne'er decay a kingdom that shall be forever and forever in the glory in the

blissful and blessed place of the heavenly paradise have you listened have you listened oh if you've listened as i asked you to listen i'm sure this desire will be found in your heart Lord give me faith whatever else i'm denied however poor i am in this world Lord give me that faith give me that love to whom the promise is directed Lord i want faith and love and my friends if we go away from the service this evening begging God for faith and love i say the service has been spiritually beneficial for i'm sure that where the Lord quickens in the heart that desire so to be enriched he will not leave us to perish in our poverty