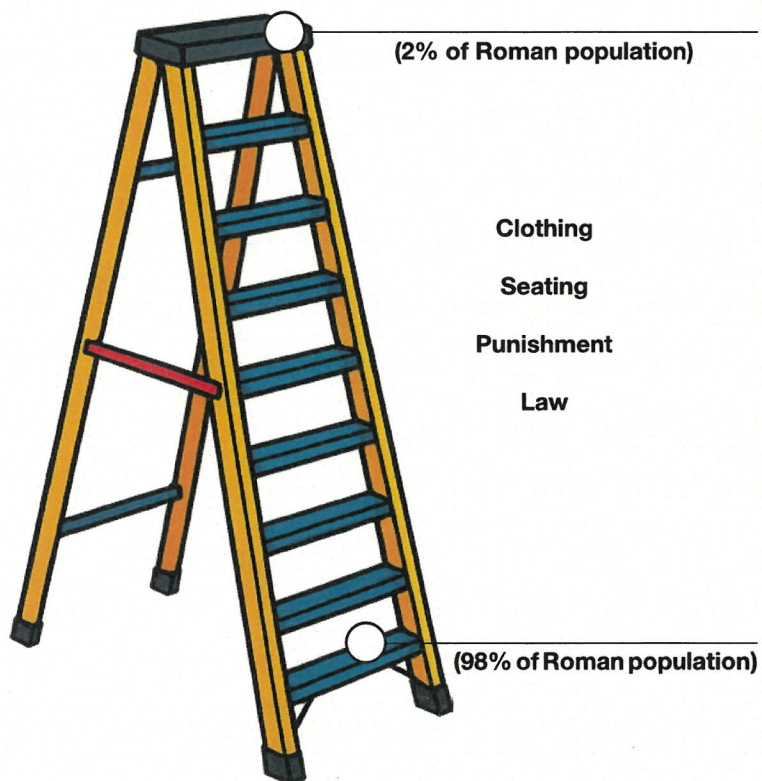


PT. 4: GOD'S FAVORITE

SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:9-11 & 1:27-2:17

MAIN POINT: REAL FAITH REFUSES TO SHOW FAVORITISM.

LADDER OF STATUS



THE NEW KINGDOM COMMUNITY

1. Elevates _____
2. Elevates the _____
3. Elevates the _____
4. Because God _____
 - *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us... (John 1:14)*
 - *The Son of Man... descended from heaven. (John 3:14)*
 - *...though he was rich, he became poor...so that you...might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)*
 - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*
 - *...God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus... (Ephesians 2:6)*

OTHER NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

PT. 4: GROUP GUIDE

THEME:

Real faith treats every person as priceless because God shows no favoritism.

SCRIPTURE:

James 1:27 - 2:17

ICE-BREAKER

1. What's the nicest or most unexpected welcome you've ever received? What made it feel meaningful?
2. If the American church had a "social ladder" like the world, what would the rungs be made of today? Money, influence, education, politics, popularity, something else?

REFLECT (Read James 1:27-2:17 TOGETHER)

3. James says we must not combine faith in Jesus with favoritism (James 2:1). Why do you think favoritism is such a big deal to God? (Acts 10:34-35)?
4. Read James 2:2-4. What does the "good seat" versus "sit on the floor" moment reveal about the human heart? Where do you see this kind of ranking show up in everyday life? (See also Leviticus 19:15)
5. James says God has chosen the poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith (James 2:5). What makes it difficult to value people the way God values them? (See also James 1:9-11)

6. James connects pure religion with caring for vulnerable people and staying unstained by the world (James 1:27). How does God's heart for the vulnerable reshape the way we see "important" and "unimportant" people? (Psalm 68:5)

TAKE ACTION

7. Ask yourself this week: "Who do I naturally notice first, and who do I naturally overlook?" What is one way God might be inviting you to grow in how you see people?
8. What is one concrete "down-the-ladder" move you can make this week? For example: sit with someone new, invite someone over, learn a name, help without seeking anything in return.
9. Think of a moment when you felt truly seen and honored by someone who had nothing to gain from you. What did they do, and how could you pass that same kind of welcome to someone else this week?
10. What would be different in our church if the rich and poor, strong and struggling, insider and outsider all felt equally wanted here? What can this group do to model that kind of community?

CLOSING CHALLENGES

- Practice: Practice the "Great Inversion" once per day this week: choose one person you might normally overlook, and offer a simple act of dignity. Learn their name, listen to their story, pray for them, or serve them.
- Prayer: Pray that God would remove prejudice and train our eyes to see the "Ming-vase value" of every person, and that our faith would become visible through love and action.