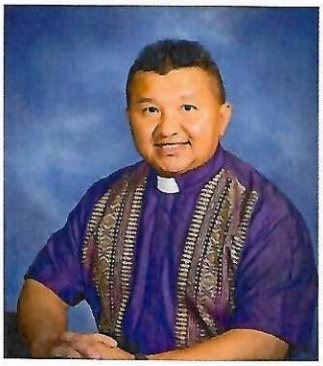


Sermon
Rev. Dr. Lang Yang

"Don't Show Favoritism."

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
St. Michael's Lutheran Church – Richville, Michigan
9-5-2021

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God, the Father, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

James 2:1, "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." (NIV). This is the word of God. (Cross-reference – Deuteronomy 1:17, Acts 7:2; 10:34, 1 1 Corinthians 2:8, Hebrews 12:2, James 1:16, 19; 2:9).

Illustration "Favoritism" (Show separation of men and women)

Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, we never want to see people show favoritism. Still, we see it every day. Certain people only like their kind – dress, talk, drive a similar car, and like similar things. A female may only like and choose what others like her. German people may only like to hang out with another German. Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, or specific ethnic only want to be with their kind. At any gathering event, we will see that a particular group of males/females is in their little area talking only to the people they know and associate with.

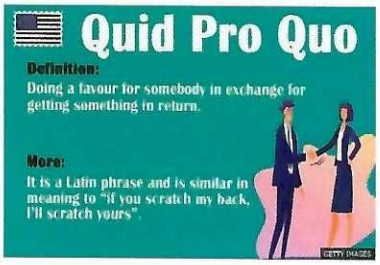
If you went to one of these events and no one came to greet you or talk to you, how do you feel? You probably said to yourself, "Don't they like me? How come they didn't invite me to join their group?"

I. I'm addressing how other people are showing favoritism, but often you show favoritism without realizing it. (Show separation)

We don't treat others equally. In the Hmong community, when an event is gathering, the men will usually be invited to sit at a table while the women are left out. The women wander around and see who they can talk to. My wife Phoua didn't want to go to many of the events because she feels like she doesn't belong there when she got there. Because other women only talk to the women they know, she can't wait for us to leave because she feels out of place. While doing short term mission work in Thailand, much of the Hmong people in Thailand still carry on the tradition of letting the men eat first, and the women will eat after the men. It is not fair for the women, but their traditions have been doing for generations. Looking at these from the outside shows favoritism because they divide the women from the men. (Show gender pay differences)

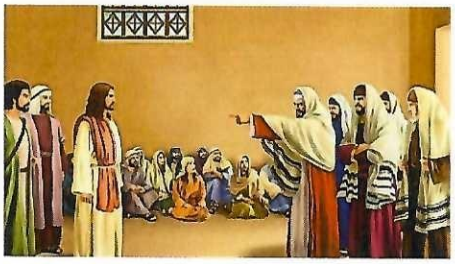
We see it in the workplace. Men get paid more for the same work that women do. Is this favoritism? Yes! Women can do the job as good or better, but they still get paid less because they are females. We see this in the workplace, church, organization, and government. If your skin color is not white but black, brown, or yellow and not of the same ethnicity, you

are less likely to offer the same opportunity for the position, equal pay, and or promotion. You may say, no! it can't be happening in today's world. It is happening all around us. Some of you are employed way longer than others, but the position is being given to someone else because it is not that the person is more qualified than you. After all, the manager or owner shows favoritism to the other person more than you. (Show Quid Pro Quo)



We do not only see it in the workplace, but we also see it in our government. The word "Quid Pro Quo" means if I do something for you, then you will do something for me." In a sense, it means, "If I scratch your back, then you will scratch mine." If our government trusts people to do equal justice for their contractors, it is often not equally done the right way. If a business were to bid for a job fixing the road, bridges, or other projects, the contract usually go or given to the people or company they know. The business owner usually related to one of their manager or employee, etc. In return, the business that got the contract will give the individual a discount or something that will benefit the person later because, through the connection, they remember the "Quid Pro Quo."

II. Christians should not show any favoritism toward any person. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ never show bias toward any person. He didn't choose only the Jews because he was born into a Jewish family. During Jesus' ministry, he didn't choose the Pharisees, Scribes, Teacher of the Law, or those in high authority to be on His side so that he could have their favor. (Show Jesus and Pharisee)



Even when those in authority were against Jesus' teaching, Jesus never said anything that would try to please them to gain favoritism. When Jesus sees their wrong, He points it out what they did is wrong. If it is a sin, then it is a sin. He didn't try to sugarcoat to make it look good, so they don't feel too bad. The truth is the truth, and as Jesus continue his ministry, it makes more of the leader angry because they thought that Jesus would help them what they did is right in the eyes of the people. But Jesus condemned them for their wrong. Jesus loves the poor, sick, and those who cannot help themselves. Jesus eats with the sinner, heals all manner of disease. Jesus rebukes the disciples when they did wrong and praises them when they did right.

Before Jesus' ascension, some believers argue if they should go and proclaim the Gospel to other nations? The Jewish want nothing to do with the Gentiles because Gentiles are considered unclean. They feel that the Messiah belongs to them only and not to other people. But the disciples correct them that Jesus is the Savior for the whole world. Whether you are Jews or Gentiles, Jesus came to save all people (Show Acts 10:34-35)

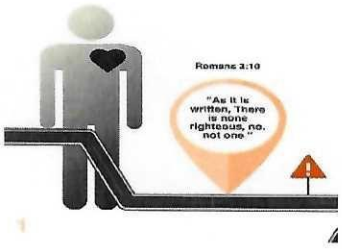
The Apostle Peter said, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right." (Acts 10:34-35). The Apostle Paul writes to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28). (Show Jesus our example in)

Jesus is our example because he shows no favoritism. The Apostle did not show any favoritism. You and I, as Christ's disciples, will not show any favoritism. We accept all people, whether they are rich or poor, or

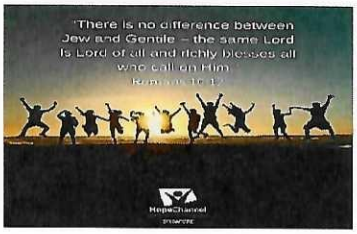
whatever ethnicity they are. All people are equal in God's eyes. Treat all people with respect and dignity. When you show no favoritism, you are following Christ's examples of caring and loving all people.

III. You and I will show no favoritism because God does not show favoritism.
(Show God does not show favoritism)

All humans are sinful. Even though God calls you to faith, you can't go around and telling that you are better than those who have no faith in Jesus Christ. You can't say God loves me more because I'm a Christian. God wants all people to come to repentant and believe His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the only way to salvation. Even though your faith and trusting Jesus allow you to have life, you must not claim that you are better or more holy than the non-Christian. (Show Romans 3:10)



When Christians claim that God's show was more favorable to them, they don't understand God's love to all humans. God created humans, but God let people make their own decision. Humans cannot demand that God show us more favoritism because we believe in Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor. You are still all sinful human beings. Scripture writes, "There is no one righteous, not even one." (Romans 3:10). (Show Romans 10:12)



Even though we are all sinful, God's word promises us that His grace saves us. Jesus came and died for all people. The Apostle Paul writes, "For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him." (Romans 10:12). God blesses everyone who calls on His name and will be saved.
(Show Romans 2:11)

It doesn't matter who you are or what tribe, language, and people. You will be at peace because God does not show favoritism. It doesn't matter how big of sin you have committed, repent and God's promises to forgive them. God is the True God for all nations, and if you believe in any other god than Jesus Christ, you have accepted the wrong Savior of the world. Turn to Jesus. No matter what stage of life you are in, God loves you and wants you to come to His grace of forgiveness. Don't feel that God will show favoritism to others. For God does not show favoritism because He love you and already set an example for you. Jesus came and died on the cross for the whole world. He didn't die for the righteous, rich, or Jew only. Jesus is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29); whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16). Christ didn't show favoritism to the righteous but all nations, and it is your task to go and show no favoritism to others. Learn, live, and share Christ. Go and don't show favoritism to anyone. Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Jesus is the Savior of the world so that they may believe and be saved through His name. Amen.

May the peace of God, which passed all understanding, keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.