

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

THE UPPER CRUST

By Jeff Sweeten

During the Industrial Revolution, English society was quite stratified. There were sharp lines that divided social standing, even in individual households. One status indicator was related to daily meals. When bread was distributed, lowly workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and the top was saved for social guests the family was trying to impress. Hence, the socially elite were the “upper crust.”

Not much has changed when it comes to special treatment and the motivation often behind this bigotry. Impressing someone carried with it some anticipated or assumed benefit. Cliques continue to exist in nearly every organization conceivable, from bureaucratic companies to non-profit associations, public businesses to private clubs, and on down to our personal peer group. As a Christian, one should break the mold.

James draws a sharp distinction between a Christian attitude and a worldly view, citing God’s perspective. *“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?”* (James 2:1-4). The point is clear. In Christ, there are no status levels, no color bars, and no special castes. In fact, to make unwarranted distinctions such as those in the preceding verses is sin: *“but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors”* (James 2:9). Economic status, physical characteristics or various other artificial dividers are indicators of a superficial, unjustified judgment based upon appearance, which is at odds with righteous judgment (John 7:24).

The lesson is two-fold:^[1] be vigilant to avoid giving value to such distinctions, and ^[2] be wary of those who do. Unity in Christ is based upon following God, not on our status; those who clump up in cliques will eventually cleave Christian communion. Being in the Lord’s church means working to change the hard and crusty, not accommodating or romancing the “upper crust.”

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130