Scripture Reading and Paraphrase

James 2:1-6, 8-9

1: My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Savior Jesus Christ?

2: My sisters and brothers, do we with our acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Savior Jesus Christ?

1: For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a person in shabby clothes also comes in...

2: For if a white person dressed much like ourselves comes into church or store or court, and if a person of color dressed much the same or very differently also comes in...

1: And if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please." While to the one who is poor you say "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet..."

2: And if we take notice of the one who is white like us and say "Oh, we are so glad you are here! Let me introduce you to some friends and help you find a nice seat near one of the fans." Or "Thanks for coming to our store, may I help you find something?" or "Well ma'am, we had to take you into custody, but here's a phone to use..." While to the person of color we say, "Here's a bulletin, sit wherever, there's a balcony upstairs..." or we stalk people of color as they shop in our store or we ignore the cries for mercy from people of color as they are arrested, "I can't breathe..."

1: Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

2: Have we not made distinctions among ourselves becoming mired in a toxic racism and white privilege which perpetuates harm and systemic evils?

1: Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has God not chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kin-dom that God has promised to those who love God?

2: Listen, my beloved sisters and brothers. Has God not chosen the marginalized of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kin-dom that God has promised to those who love God?

1: But you have dishonored the poor.

2: We have not acted as if "Black Lives Matter."

1: Is it not the rich who oppress you?

2: We have benefited from the privilege of being white even when we do not recognize the privilege for what it is.

1: You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

2: We do well if we follow the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and "Love our neighbors as ourselves."

1: But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

2: But if we show partiality, we commit sin and are convicted of sustaining a culture of oppression and racism.