



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS

THE POOR AND NEEDY! WHO ARE THEY REALLY? AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT THEM? WILL GOD DO ANYTHING?

I will share towards the end of this article who I think ARE the true poor and needy, as there are quite a few definitions in the Bible.

I think there will be quite a few Bible verses in this week's edition, and I pray they will feed us and encourage us with their Truth, praise the Lord.

Jesus said: The poor you have always with you; Matthew 26:11, Mark 14:6 and even John 12:8

God and Jesus were always and will be concerned for the poor and needy! They made provision and instruction in the Bible about how to treat such people, and how by treating them well, you were also pleasing God.

The wicked on the other hand, are the exact opposite! They mistreat the poor and needy. I will come to that shortly.

The poor and needy are people who have been (i) brought up poor, (ii) later became poor through various means and events and circumstances (iii) or who were abused and robbed and forced in to that situation; and you may be able to think of other reasons if you wish, to this short list. They would be people who LACK the necessities of life, like food, clothing and shelter in many cases, their poor children along with them of course.

God commends people who treat(ed) the poor with love and compassion. Job is an excellent example of this, as well as Cornelius in Acts Chapter 10!

Let's start with 10 verses about the 'Poor and needy'

Deuteronomy 15:11

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Deuteronomy 24:14

Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:

Psalms 40:17

But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Psalms 74:21

O let not the oppressed return ashamed let the poor and needy praise thy name.

Psalms 82:3

Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

Psalms 109:22

For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. (spiritual suffering)

Psalms 113:7

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

Proverbs 31:9

Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Isaiah 14:30

And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. (The day is coming when the poor will be safe and their enemies perish)

Psalms 35:10

All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which

deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

Well, there is plenty of food for thought in just these few verses above. We understand that in essence, the poor just 'are'. They are there, all around us, and whenever we want to we may do them good as Jesus said .

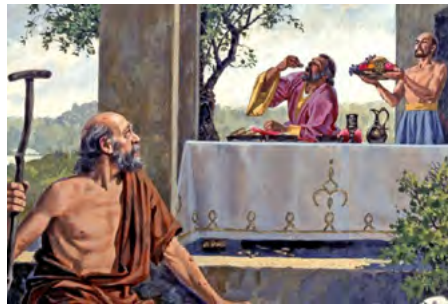
My son has been doing good to the poor for some years now. He tithed his savings he has had since birth (Birthdays, Christmas and other 'funds!') That's about 11 years' worth. He went down to the 'Salvation Army' a couple of years ago and handed it in to the Major lady there! She was very touched by his act of love to the poor. I was glad for this, because on his mind and heart, it makes an impression that he is doing something to help 'the poor and the homeless in our city'. He likes to give a £1 or £2 each week to young homeless people where we live. Some Saturdays we do a weekly shopping and there is always some young person outside this particular supermarket, and he gives them that, and also a tract as well. Some of them are much moved and you can see the spiritual uplift they get at times. Of course we don't give to everyone, as we would go broke that way, we just give as the spirit guides us or at least we trust He is guiding us!

HOW THE WICKED TREAT THE POOR!

Well, that is a whole other ball game, and is a game or sport for some of the wicked.

I feel the most shocking example is in Luke chapter 16:19-31. I will only describe the condition of the poor man in this story primarily, but hope you will read the full section later

Jesus is speaking:



19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

So the rich, in this case, the wicked and selfish rich treat the poor with no feelings for them at all. The fact of having or seeing daily the poor and needy around them, has zero impact on their own spiritual condition. They are focused entirely on their own profit and fleshly needs. They are fools as Jesus said in this other parable!

Luke 20: 15

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a

certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Here are some amazing individual verses which show us more about this:

Job 24:14

The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

Psalms 37:14

The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

Psalms 109:16

Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

Proverbs 30:14

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

Isaiah 10:2

To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of

my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! (The wicked use laws to persecute the weakest in society)

Ezekiel 16:49

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Ezekiel 18:12

Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

Ezekiel 22:29

The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

Amos 8:4-7

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,

5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?

7 The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

There is nothing the wicked, the capitalists and the greedy love more than to trade and make wealth at the expense of others! God will not forget this, as He says directly above.

Prophets and great men of God

understood the importance of helping the weak and the meek. Daniel suggested to King Nebuchadnezzar, for example, that if he spent some time helping and being merciful to the poor, it could prolong his days of peace.

Daniel 4: 27

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

It seems though, that King Nebuchadnezzar, just couldn't make that leap to do that consistently enough, and he ended up in the wilderness for seven years!

Again, like we do in many of the WCF articles, we are just scratching the surface and hopefully opening a door for you to research and think and pray about these important matters even more!

WHAT IS GOD GOING TO DO ABOUT THE POOR AND NEEDY?

Well, believe it or not, God is doing a great deal for the poor both now and in the future!

Firstly for now, He is trying to use us to help them and reach out to them, give them food, clothe



them, visit them in prison and also especially give them the wonderful news that Jesus loves them and cares for them! He is

going to use us now and also He will take care of them in the next life, (Like Lazarus) and also in the coming Millennium, 1,000 year rule of Christ on earth!)

Psalms 72:4

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. (Now and in the Millennium)

Psalms 72:12

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

Psalms 72:13

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

GOD IS MINDFUL OF THE NEEDS OF THE POOR AT ALL TIMES, MAKE NO MISTAKE!

Isaiah 41:17

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

Jeremiah 22:16

He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.

WHO ARE THE MOST POOR AND NEEDY IN THIS LIFE? AND WHO SHOULD WE BE HELPING WITH OUR PRAYERS AND RESOURCES THE MOST?

This are the key questions. And

in my humble opinion this is the answer, which I perceive from Scripture:

The answer is two-fold.

Firstly, we should offer our help to our poor brethren in Jesus Christ, (Christian) widows, orphans and the Christian poor who attend or wish to attend our fellowships. Those who cannot make it to our fellowship because of their poverty-stricken conditions, and those who are hungry for the Word of God.

James 1:26

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household

of faith.

Secondly: we should offer the key to escape from poverty to the poor of the whole world.

We can, and should, do this in combination with physical and material help, but the churches have made so many mistakes with this. You should do the first of helping physically but you should never forget the second which is giving people the salvation message of receiving and knowing Jesus Christ.

If you only feed the worldly poor, food and clothing, you will have to repeat that next week and next year, but if you can offer them the Key to escape from poverty, Jesus Christ Himself will take them under His wings, they will become born- again and therefore a part of His inheritance in the Saints; as they then begin to follow Him, poverty will be AUTOMATICALLY erased from their lives in quite a short time.

This is a definite fact of Scripture

and will be fulfilled in their lives.

Praise the Lord.

Until next week,

Jerry for the WCF Team.

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LUKE 6:20

AND HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES ON HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID, BLESSED BE YE POOR: FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.