

This Bible study is provided to Good Works by two former Good Works staff, Matt and Beverly Hale, who now serve with The Navigators in the city of Detroit. This study was adapted for a workshop they conducted in November 2007 for Nav students.

A Bible Study in Righteousness and Justice

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The Navigators, Detroit, Michigan

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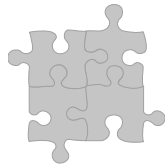
The LORD is known by his justice.
-Psalm 9:16

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy and so all went well.
Is not that what it means to know me?” declares the LORD.
- Jeremiah 22:16

Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.
- Proverbs 28:5

From the Old Testament...

- Genesis: Chapter 3, The Fall. Chapter 4, Cain asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Implied answer..."YES". From the beginning, we've been set up to help/serve/love one another - not to live only for ourselves. In God's design, our brother's well being is directly tied to our own.
- In Exodus and Deuteronomy God clearly sets himself up as a God of Justice, with special emphases on protection of the vulnerable and oppressed. He frees the Israelite slaves. Then he establishes a society with laws and practices that are carefully designed to meet the needs of the poor, weak, and outcast.
- As we read through the rest of the Old Testament we continue to see his concern for the poor. He uses dreams, edicts, prophets, and leaders to warn against greed and oppression. He brings wrath on those who ignore poverty issues. He identifies himself as the liberator and the redeemer of poor people. He repeatedly highlights the fatherless, the widow, and the stranger.
- Wisdom in regard to poverty and justice is all over Proverbs and Psalms. Almost every prophet explicitly condemns sins against the poor. Many times prophecies concerning the poor are directly tied to prophecies about the Messiah.



Into the New Testament...

- 1 in every 16 verses of the New Testament) deals with the subject of poverty or Mammon. 1 in 10 of the synoptic gospels.
- From beginning to end, Christ's ministry is deeply interwoven with the message of justice. (See section below, focusing on Jesus).
- In Acts we see the first church putting Christ's teaching into practice. They became known for their generosity. They eliminated poverty within the church itself. They bridged racial, economic, and cultural boundaries.
- The epistles include specific instructions on how Christ followers should live. They are peppered with guidelines on giving to the poor, avoiding favoritism toward the rich, serving those in need, and maintaining justice.
- Revelation brings the completion of this running Biblical theme. It looks forward to the time when justice reigns. In the kingdom described, all injustice is destroyed, all suffering is relieved, and every tear is wiped away.

*From start to finish, the Bible contains **THOUSANDS** of verses concerning poverty, oppression, discrimination, sharing resources, meeting physical needs, and other Justice issues.*

The Old Testament

Historical:

Genesis 18:20-21*
 *(see Ezek 16:49-50)
 Exodus 23:10-11
 Leviticus 23:22
 Numbers 26:52-54
 Deuteronomy 15:7-8,10-11
 Joshua
 Judges
 Ruth 2:2-3
 1 Samuel 2:8
 2 Samuel 12:1-6
 1 Kings 21:1-19
 2 Kings
 1 Chronicles 29:14
 2 Chronicles
 Ezra
 Nehemiah 5:1-12
 Esther 9:22

Wisdom:

Job 29:11-17
 Psalms 82:3-4
 Proverbs 21:13
 Ecclesiastes 4:1
 Song of Songs

Prophets:

Isaiah 1:17
 Jeremiah 5:27-29
 Lamentations 3:33-36
 Ezekiel 22:7,29
 Daniel 4:27
 Hosea 12:6; 13:6
 Joel
 Amos 5
 Obadiah
 Jonah
 Micah 6:8
 Nahum
 Habakkuk 2:9,12-13
 Zephaniah 3:19
 Haggai
 Zechariah 7:9
 Malachi 3:5

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.

The LORD raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

"...They have become rich and Powerful and have grown fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor. Should I not punish them for this?" declares the LORD. "Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?"

You trample on the poor... you deprive the poor of justice in the courts... Hate evil, love good, maintain justice...

Therefore, this is what the Lord, the LORD God Almighty, says: "...I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies... But let justice roll on like a might river, righteousness like a never failing stream!"

The Lord God told us what is right and what he demands: "See that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern, and humbly obey your God."

This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor.'

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Prophecy about Jesus is commonly interwoven with issues of justice. A quick look at a passage like Isaiah 40-66 (a Messianic prophecy important enough to be quoted from in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, and 1st Peter) reveals God's overwhelming desire for a just kingdom - an end to exploitation of workers, care for the disabled, restoration of desolate cities, free food for people without enough money

to buy it, concern for those who are frail, sick, or sad, an end to violence and freedom for oppressed people - all governed by the just king.

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY, LUKE 3

As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord ...

And all mankind will see God's salvation.'" ...

"What should we do then?" the crowd asked. John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

JESUS BEGINS HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, LUKE 4:18-19

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

REAFFIRMS THAT HE IS THE ONE, MATTHEW 11:4-5

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor."

HIS MAJOR TEACHINGS:

THE GOSPEL — also translated **GOOD NEWS** is almost always connected to "the poor" and/or "the kingdom" (which Jesus says belongs to the poor — Lk 6:20)

THE PARABLES — deal with poverty, possessions, outcasts, and people of low status. Think about the wedding banquet where homeless people are honored, the prosperous farmer who stores up extra (we might call him prudent, Jesus calls him a fool), or other instances where a beggar, or a servant, or a poor widow are made the hero of the story.

GREATEST COMMANDMENT, LUKE 10 - When a man appeared to have an understanding about the Greatest Commandment, Jesus pushes all his comfort zones by applying it across religious, economic, racial boundaries and focusing on a story of personal risk to meet physical needs.

SERMONS, MATTHEW 5-6, LUKE 6 — Jesus blessed the poor, hungry, weeping, and the excluded while warning the rich, comfortable, well-fed, and popular. He assumed we would give to the needy. He warned extensively against storing up material wealth or even worrying about the basic necessities.

JUDGMENT, MT 25:31-46; LUKE 16:19-31 — Our personal wealth and the way we treat those in need are bound up with our eternal judgment.

AND MORE...

Look at who he interacted with, how people of differing status tended to respond to him, what social boundaries he crossed, the fact that he spent so much time meeting physical needs (healing, feeding, touching), his own economic status (consider what God ordained concerning his upbringing, his experience as a refugee, no home as an adult, his common purse with disciples), and how he describes his kingdom.

JUSTICE IN FAMILIAR PLACES...

1. How did God describe Job? (Job1:8)_____

a) What do you think of when you imagine a "blameless and upright" life?

b) What are some of the things Job would include in his definition of righteous living? (Job 29:11-17)

2. How did Jesus announce his ministry (to John the Baptist's disciples in Mt 11 and to the synagogue in Luke 4)? _____

a) What do you think this says about him and about the kingdom he proclaimed?

3. What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah?_____

a) Why? (Genesis 18:20-21)_____

b) Which part of their sin does Ezekiel emphasize?(Ezek 16:49-50)

c) What do you think it looks like to be "overfed and unconcerned" in relation to "the poor and needy"? _____

JUSTICE IN FAMILIAR PLACES...

4. When asked what the greatest commandment is, how did Jesus respond?

a) In Luke 10, an expert in the law gives a similar answer. When the expert asks Jesus to elaborate on the meaning, what is his response? _____

b) Jesus ends this passage with the command, “Go and do likewise.” What are you doing in your life that resembles this Samaritan’s actions? What, if anything, hinders you from doing likewise?

5. Read Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission) and record your thoughts on it.

a) Now read the account of Peter, James, John, and Paul getting together to discuss this commission. (Galatians 2:7-10). Does this add to your view of the great commission? If so, how?

JUSTICE / RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE PSALMS

This listing only looks at Psalms, but it's representative of the whole OT and the way in which these concepts are deeply intertwined with each other. (In the New Testament, *righteousness* and *justice* are combined into one Greek word - *dikaioisune*.) Some common themes that exist in passages where these two words appear: the poor and oppressed, love, knowing God, God's eternal character. What observations do you have when reading through these verses?

The LORD reigns forever;
He has established his throne for judgment.
He will judge the world in righteousness;
He will govern the peoples with justice.
The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble. 9:7-9

For the LORD is righteous, He loves justice; upright men will see His face. 11:7

The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of His unfailing love. 33:5

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. 36:6

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. 37:6

Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy. 45:6-7

He will judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
The mountains will bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness. 72:2-3

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. 89:14

Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. 97:2

The King is mighty, He loves justice—
you have established equity; in Jacob you have done what is just and right. 99:4

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise. 101:1

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. 103:6

Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right. 106:3

I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor
and upholds the cause of the needy.
Surely the righteous will praise your name
and the upright will live before you. 140:12-13

HALF OF THE GOSPEL?



INDIVIDUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

Focus on Jesus as God
Faith
The Gospel is the narrow way
Believing Correctly
Focus on personal choices
Leans toward right wing
Guilt and responsibility of each person
Get called Fundamentalists

CORPORATE JUSTICE

Focus on Jesus as Man
Works
The Gospel is for whole life
Doing Rightly
Focus on societal systems
Leans toward left wing
Guilt and responsibility of people group
Get called Liberals / Social Gospel preachers

ETC...



(Today's Western Christianity may tend to fall more on the "Individual Righteousness" side of this equation, but it's clear that neither side stands alone and that each is in real danger without the other).

GOD'S REACTION TO LEAVING OUT HALF THE GOSPEL:

Amos 5 – God says he despises our religious practices when we neglect justice.

Isaiah 58 – True fasting and Sabbath keeping must involve both personal righteousness AND broader justice.

Proverbs 21:13 – If we ignore cries for justice from the poor, our own prayers may be ignored.

Mark 3:1-6 – Jesus is *angered* and *grieved* by the people's hard hearts. They are so stuck on "proper theology" that they can't see what is obviously good and right.

James 2:14-18 – Intellectual faith that doesn't meet physical needs is pronounced **dead**.

1 John 3:16-18 – Christian love that doesn't result in self-sacrifice of material possessions is considered questionable at best.

Matthew 23:23/ Luke 11:42 – Woe to you Pharisees!...Jesus acknowledges that they tithe, but says that they still fail to display true justice, mercy, and love. Their theology strains out gnats but allows them to swallow camels.

James 1:27 – True religion is to keep oneself from being polluted by the world AND to look out for the vulnerable and disenfranchised.

HOLISTIC GOSPEL

MATTHEW 10:7-8 GIVES US A GOOD SUMMATION OF KINGDOM WORK:

* PREACHING THE MESSAGE

* MEETING PHYSICAL NEEDS

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM



JESUS' EXAMPLE

1) Jesus spends a lot of time and attention on a group of people who can be lumped together as “the least of these.” He speaks of them, identifies with them, or directly ministers to them in at least 16 of the 28 chapters in Matthew and 16 of the 24 chapters in Luke. Who are some of the people that make up “the least of these”?

Luke 21:2 _____

Luke 18:35 _____

Luke 8:27 _____

Matthew 18:5 _____

Matthew 9:35-36 _____

Matthew 25:37-40 _____

2) How/Why do you think Jesus ended up among the poor, the sick, the “harassed and helpless” so often?

3) Who do you think would be on that list if Jesus were living in America today?

4) Do you find yourself in regular contact with those people groups? Why or why not?

WHAT NOW?

ONE OR TWO CLEAR STEPS I WILL TAKE TOWARD SEEKING JUSTICE:

Some helpful areas to think through:

- what you want to learn more about
- how you spend your time
- your finances / spending
- who you interact with
- your major, future career, and goals

AT LEAST ONE PERSON WHO MIGHT JOIN ME:

-
-
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-
-

**“FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP EVEN
WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE WHOLE
STAIRCASE.”**

– MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

BONUS MATERIALS...

RECOMMENDED READING:

LIFESTYLE / POSSESSIONS:

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH – ART SIMON

FREEDOM OF SIMPLICITY – RICHARD FOSTER

UNFETTERED HOPE – MARVA DAWN

RICH CHRISTIANS IN AN AGE OF HUNGER – RON SIDER

RACIAL/CULTURAL ISSUES:

DIVIDED BY FAITH – EMERSON & SMITH

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CROSSING CULTURES – PATTY LANE

MORE THAN EQUALS – SPENCER PERKINS & CHRIS RICE

THE HEART OF RACIAL JUSTICE – MCNEIL & RICHARDSON

BEING WHITE: FINDING OUR PLACE IN A MULTIETHNIC WORLD
– HARRIS AND SCHAUPP

POVERTY / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

BEYOND CHARITY - JOHN PERKINS

RESTORING AT-RISK COMMUNITIES – EDITED BY JOHN PERKINS

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING POVERTY – RUBY PAYNE

AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A CHRISTIAN - ROBERT LUPTON

PRISM MAGAZINE

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES:

MOST BOOKS BY TONY CAMPOLO

IRRESISTIBLE REVOLUTION – SHANE CLAIBORNE

POLITICAL:

GOD'S POLITICS – JIM WALLIS

GENERAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCE / STUDY:

FOR THEY SHALL BE FED – EDITED BY RON SIDER

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

LOOKUP JUSTICE CENTERED MINISTRIES IN YOUR AREA AND GET INVOLVED (CCDA.ORG)

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

**SEEKING JUSTICE, ENDING HUNGER - THROUGH FOCUSED
ACTIVISM (BREAD.ORG)**

**SOJOURNERS
FAITH, POLITICS, CULTURE (SOJO.NET)**

**WORLD VISION
SERVING CHILDREN IN POVERTY AROUND THE GLOBE.
(WORLDVISION.ORG)**

**THE ONE CAMPAIGN
JOIN THE MOVEMENT MAKE ELIMINATE EXTREME POVERTY
(ONE.ORG)**

**HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT
SOME FAMILIAR PASSAGES WHERE WE MAY HAVE MISSED THE JUSTICE ISSUES:**

THROUGH THE LENS OF BIBLICAL JUSTICE:

JOB

Job is described as “blameless and upright”.

What does that look like in some practical terms? In chapter 29 Job says he rescued the poor, cared for the fatherless and dying, made the widow joyful, aided the physically disabled, was a father to the needy, defended the stranger, wore justice as a robe, and smashed the fangs of injustice!

THE SIN OF SODOM

This was their sin...excess of food, prosperous ease, but they were not concerned for and did not help the poor. Ezekiel 16:49 (ESV/NIV) There are many people fighting hard against gay marriage while simultaneously “committing sodomy”.

MOSES –THE PROMISED LAND

As he sends the people into the Promised Land he reminds them about:

- * God’s special concern for the alien, fatherless, and widow, and that out of their tithe they should provide any necessary food, clothing, living space, and protection from injustice - their first-fruits or top priority. (Deut 10:17-19; 14:28-29; 24:17)
- * The dangers of excessive wealth. (Deut 8:10-18; 17:16-20)
- * Kind and dignified lending to those who are impoverished (Deut 24:6, 10-13)
- * Protecting workers from exploitation (Deut 24:14-15)
- * A debt-forgiveness system designed to protect against generational poverty and limit wealth (Deut 15:1-11)
- * Openhanded lending / giving and a kind attitude toward those who are (Deut 15:1-11)

THE LAW

Large portions dedicated to maintaining justice for the oppressed, limiting excessive wealth, providing for those in need.

- * Sliding-scale price for offerings (Lev 5,12,14)
- * Highly involved Jubilee system - radically different from our concepts of legal justice, ownership, and wealth. (Lev 25)

DANIEL / NEBUCHADNEZZAR

When Nebuchadnezzar faces God’s wrath Daniel gives him a prescription for finding favor: practice righteousness and show mercy to the oppressed. (Daniel 4:27)

PETER, JOHN, JAMES, PAUL, BARNABAS, TITUS

Galatians 2, the first leaders of the church meet to discuss the Great Commission. They agree to go to take the gospel to both the Jews and Gentiles, and part ways with only one recorded directive...*remember the poor!*

THE FIRST CHURCH

The church began with a cross-cultural mission (Acts 1:8) and a multicultural makeup (2:5). In Chapter 4 we see the believers share everything, even selling personal property in order to ensure that there would be no needy people among them. Historians note that the Jerusalem believers were known for taking care of the needs of both Christians and non-Christians.

THE GOSPEL MOVES TO THE GENTILES (CORNELIUS)

Acts 10. What is mentioned 3 times about Cornelius, described as God-fearing and devoted?... his generous gifts to those in need! Also in v22 (He is a Just/Righteous and God-fearing man).

| THE INJUSTICE AROUND US | WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS |
|---|---|
| <p>At present, American Christians give away around 2% of their income. If we gave a full 10% it would free up as much as \$150 billion / year. Experts estimate that for around \$70 billion we could cut extreme global poverty in half and also meet the basic hunger, medical, and educational needs worldwide. (see millenniumpromise.org)</p> | <p>Deut 26:12 – When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce...in the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat...and be satisfied.</p> <p>Ezekiel 16:49 – Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: she and her sisters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy.</p> |
| <p>Predatory lending - a common practice of giving deceptively high interest rates to low-income borrowers. (see <i>Dollars and Sense</i> article: www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2000/0100bradley.html)</p> | <p>Prov 28:8 – He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another who will be kind to the poor.</p> |
| <p>Even in the US, the average worker is making \$7.39/hr (<i>less</i> than the average pay in 1965!) while the average CEO makes - \$1,566.68/hr. Women and minorities still receive significantly lower wages on average for the doing the same jobs as white men.</p> <p>In many parts of the world, factory workers and farmers who produce the goods that we buy are paid despicably low wages, held in indentured servitude, and otherwise mistreated.</p> | <p>Is 58:3 – You do as you please and exploit all your workers...</p> <p>Deut 24:14-15 – Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy...pay him his wages... because he is counting on it. Otherwise he might cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.</p> |
| <p>Many of the millions of incarcerated Americans are locked up because they are too poor to pay fines or to afford quality lawyers. Defendants in criminal trials are more likely to be convicted and more likely to receive a harsher sentence if: they are poor, they are a minority, or the case involved a white victim.</p> | <p>Proverbs 22:22-23 – Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case.</p> |
| <p>We are part of the richest 20% of the world's population who control 80% of its assets and consume 86% of its resources and goods.</p> <p>On the other side of the fence, 1.3 billion people survive on less than one dollar a day; 3 billion on less than \$2.</p> | <p>Ephesians 5:3 - But among you there must not be even a hint...of greed, because (it is) improper for God's holy people.</p> <p>Luke 12:15 - Watch out. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.</p> |
| <p>In America, 13.9 million children live in households where people need to regularly skimp on food or skip meals to make ends meet. (That's 1 in every 10 households). Globally, 800 Million people are going hungry and 30,000 children die each day from hunger or hunger-related causes. (see bread.org)</p> | <p>John 3:11 – The man who has two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.</p> <p>Matthew 25:42 – For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.</p> |

**“THE WORDS OF JESUS ARE NOT OBSCURE, BUT THEY SCARE US, DEFY OUR
IMPULSES, AND ARE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE, SO WE TEND TO IGNORE THEM
OR INTERPRET THEM THE WAY WE WISH THEY HAD BEEN SAID.”**

- ART SIMON, *HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH*

| SCRIPTURE | POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p>Luke 12:32-34 Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.</p> <p>(Also Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22; Jas 2:15-17; Lk 3:10-11; Mt 25:35-36)</p> | |
| <p>Proverbs 31:8-9 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.</p> | |
| <p>Romans 12:13,16 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.</p> <p>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.</p> | |
| <p>Matthew 25:37-40 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'</p> | |
| <p>Deuteronomy 10:17-19 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien... And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.</p> | |

Quotes on Display:

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly...

I must make (an) honest confessions to you, my Christian ...brothers. I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a "negative peace" which is the absence of tension to a "positive peace" which is the presence of justice...

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people...

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter From Birmingham Jail

“Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.”

- Augustine of Hippo

“If you read the Scriptures with total integrity you have to come to one conclusion: God has favorites. And God’s favorites are the poor. Over and over and over again he says, ‘If you bless the poor, I will bless you. If you don’t care about the poor, a curse on you.’”

-Rick Warren (Author of Purpose Driven Life)

I choose kindness...

I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone.

Kind to the rich, for they are afraid.

And kind to the unkind,

for such is how God has treated me.

-Max Lucado

"If we are members of a privileged group that profits from structural evil, and if we have at least some understanding of the evil yet fail to do what God wants us to do to change things, we stand guilty before God."

-Ron Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger

"We know that man's basic need is spiritual.

But natural man does not perceive his need as being spiritual...Natural man perceives his need as being natural things. So we love him around those natural things. And then we share with him his real need of spiritual things. That was Jesus' method."

-John Perkins, Author, Speaker, Founder of CCDA

"I have three things I'd like to say today. First, while you were sleeping last night, 30,000 kids died of starvation or diseases related to malnutrition.

Second, most of you don't give a shit.

What's worse is that you're more upset with the fact that I said shit than the fact that 30,000 kids died last night."

- Tony Campolo

You will have no reward in heaven for what you lay up: you will for what you lay out. Every pound you put into the earthly bank is sunk: it brings no interest above. But every pound you give to the poor is put into the bank of heaven. And it will bring glorious interest; yea, and such as will be accumulating to all eternity.

If I should die with more than ten pounds, may everyone call me a liar and a thief for I have betrayed the Gospel.

- John Wesley

"The Kingdom of God is Justice. I can no longer proclaim the cross and the resurrection without proclaiming the complete message of the kingdom which is justice for all."

-Billy Graham

"There are not two separate compartments for religion and economics. The two are woven together into one cloth in the Jubilee model. Experiencing God's grace results in economic change. Refusing to participate in economic turnover is considered sin and flagrant disobedience. Pulling the two apart prostitutes Biblical truth."

-Donald Kraybill, The Upside-Down Kingdom

"The great heresy in America in the 20th century, was the privatizing of faith...

... the idea that faith is private, and we're all in this only for ourselves. I think what really matters in life is how we care for God's children, both in this country and around the world.

God is personal, but never private"

- Jim Wallis on Fresh Air & in Detroit Free Press

“I asked participants who claimed to be “strong followers of Jesus” whether Jesus spent time with the poor. Nearly 80% said yes. Later...I asked this same group...whether they spent time with the poor, and less than 2% said they did.

I learned a powerful lesson: We can admire and worship Jesus without doing what he did. We can applaud what he preached and stood for without caring about the same things. We can adore his cross without taking up ours.

I had come to see that the great tragedy in the church is not that rich Christians do not care about the poor but that rich Christians do not know the poor.”

- Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution*

If our goods are not available to the community, they are stolen goods.

- Martin Luther