

Addressing the Curse of Poverty - Part 1

by Jackie Pullinger

We are called to touch people with the kindness of the Lord, regardless of our circumstances or healing, and to share our own experiences of God's kindness with others.

Duration: 1:06:11

Scripture: Exodus 24:17, Exodus 33:13, Exodus 33:19, Exodus 34:6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 9:15, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "Poverty"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the kindness of God and its impact on our lives. He refers to the story of Moses in Exodus 24, where Moses enters into a fiery encounter with God and experiences intimacy with Him. The speaker emphasizes that God has chosen to work His purpose through mankind and invites us to participate in His plans. He highlights three battles we face in life: knowing the Savior, surrendering control of our lives to God, and determining our future purpose. Ultimately, the speaker emphasizes that our purpose is to touch people with the kindness and love of God.

Transcript

but what has happened through her ministry in Hong Kong and it's really hard to know how to do it when, you know, you have someone who can get money out of fish's mouths and things like that and God just continues to supply in marvelous ways but I believe there was something that the Lord showed me that we could do. Jackie's coming here is really in many ways for her a time of leaving Hong Kong at a very crucial time. In six weeks you know there will be a transfer of Hong Kong over to the Chinese government and for her to be there in in this city which she loves and with the people that she loves to leave them at this time and to be here there's a sacrifice in that that has taken place and I believe that what would be appropriate for us to do and just saying thank you to Jackie is for us to covenant to pray for Hong Kong over the next six weeks.

I would ask that you would give time each day to remember Hong Kong and its people as this transition takes place and we're gonna just, I'm just gonna pray a short prayer at this time but I would challenge you to do that to remember Hong Kong and to pray for God's protection, his peace and his kingdom to come to that city. So let's stand and pray together. Our Father in heaven we thank you that you have chosen to work out your kingdom amongst us as your people and it is in cities oftentimes father that that we see this played out as we see in scripture how village or town or city was impacted by your kingdom's presence and Lord it is our prayer at this time that your kingdom would come to Hong Kong in these days and Lord

in the days after the first of June or the first of July I ask Lord that you would bring your kingdom in greater measure in greater power and greater authority in Hong Kong and I ask Lord that your presence would fill every street, every shop, every apartment, every home, every place Lord that there is a person who is calling out in their heart to know you Lord come let your presence fill the street and let your love flow like a river down every street in this city so Lord we pray for Hong Kong and we thank you for your divine sovereign purpose for this city and we ask that your will for Hong Kong would be done and Lord let this happen we pray in your great name Amen.

Jack you're welcome. I want to put my heart in you I want you to feel what I feel I want to teach you how to love that's the aching in my heart that's also I hope and the love that I want to put into you I want you to teach you how to love with my broken heart that broken heart will make you whole as I come with my holiness you see my glory and your uncleanness it's like Isaiah you will cry out woe is me I'm ruined but when I show you my holiness I will also bring my kindness and it's my kindness that will move you to repentance and from there will flow my grace mercy and healing so my people call by my name you will humble yourself and pray and seek my face and there I will hear from heaven and I will forgive your sins and I will heal your land.

I can see someone very kindly bought me some new glasses that's really kind thank you very much I want to talk about what the kindness of the Lord will bring about in the world I think there are three great battles for our life and Gary was speaking this morning about the enemy delivering up the keys when Jesus vanquished him and plundered hell and the enemy tries and has tried by trickery to keep us from a knowledge of the Savior and when we have come to know the Savior when we know that we have eternal life through Jesus that's one battle there's often another battle which is an ongoing one which is that the enemy tries to persuade us that yielding our lives fully to the Lord means we gonna miss out on fun or what we think we need so there's a battle for control of our lives or who is

going to be Lord and then the third one which is really what we've been talking about the last few days and that is our functional future what are we going to do with the rest of our time here and actually there's only one answer because there's the same future for everyone who is still here on earth having known Jesus as Savior and the future of what we must all be about for the rest of the time that we're here is very simple it's about people that's all it's about people who've tasted the kindness of the Lord touching people with the kindness of the Lord that's all we have to do I have a friend he has a wonderful church in England and he has banned the use of the word evangelism at least for a while I expect the word will be redeemed quite soon but for the time being he's banned it in

case people's minds go down another track and he says the job of our people is to touch people with God's love that's all that's all so it's very simple and nobody has to be successful in doing this we only have to touch people with what we've been touched with that's all Romans 2 for says do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness tolerance and patience not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance it's the kindness of God that changes us the kindness of God which means his kindness as revealed in Jesus is stronger than anything we can imagine for it's knowing his kindness that changes us and will change the world and it's what especially these days the world is waiting for and it's what especially these days those who don't yet know Christ are watching

Christians for because there are many as they watch us who secretly hope that our God is God and they wait to see if we're kind well then they might know that he is and the world is waiting to see a kind God I want to look at three different passages of scripture which will illustrate what the kindness of God will do

for us in changing us and preparing us for the future look first of all at Exodus in Exodus 24 17 we see Moses disappearing I suppose you might say into a charismatic fire looking something like a volcano and smoking and Moses goes into that fire and disappears from view into intimacy with the Lord such as we've not known now this is a Moses who has known miracles this is a Moses who has authority from the Lord who has his staff who has been given power and has worked through

the Lord's mighty outstretched arm using his arm miracles 10 extraordinary ones and then the of the Red Sea and then water from a rock and now he disappears into a smoking mountain and he receives intimate instructions from the Lord and then we see him again because he walks down the mountain and in horror sees that his people have turned to the worship of a calf he breaks the tablets goes back up the mountain and we pick him up again in chapter 33 verse 13 if you're pleased with me teach me your ways so that I may know you and continue to find favor with you and then as we've heard he says Lord if your presence doesn't go with us don't send us up how will anyone know that you're pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us if you don't go we won't and then the Lord says to

Moses I will do the very thing you've asked because I'm very pleased with you and I know you by name now what more could Moses experience he's experienced miracles he's already been the cause of a nation's deliverance he's seen signs and wonders the like of which we may see but probably not yet have he's closer to the Lord than anyone he's speaking to him intimately on a mountain what more can he ask for in all of this glory in all of this power in this smoking quaking rumbling mountain he says show me your glory and the Lord said I will cause all my goodness to pass before you and he's asked to seek glory and the Lord says I will cause my goodness to pass in front of you and he goes on in verse 19 to talk about mercy I will have mercy on him I will have mercy I will have compassion on

him I will have compassion but then he said you can't see my face because it would be a bit strong for you down here but this is what I'll do there's a place where you can stand on a rock and I'm going to hide you in a crack and I shall pass by just my back view and I shall put my hand over you a very big hand and when I pass by my back a bit I will remove it and you can see my back and this is what happened he's asked to see his glory and he's going to catch but a glimpse of his back passing by and this is what he says in the next chapter verse 6 this is the glory of the Lord the Lord the Lord the compassionate and gracious God slow to anger abounding in love and faithfulness maintaining love to thousands forgiving wickedness rebellion and sin who would have guessed that on a quaking

mountain the God of the ten plagues and the mighty Red Sea would be speaking words about compassion slow to anger abounding in love maintaining love to thousands forgiving wickedness rebellion and sin is there not a one whose heart is warmed to hear strong words of gentleness to hear mighty words of warm compassion what an explosion as the Lord passes by an explosion of kindness an explosion of compassion an explosion of grace an explosion of forgiveness and the Lord says to Moses I've done my bit I brought you out of Egypt with a mighty outstretched hand and I'm going to lead you into the promised land and I will drive out the enemies before you but you've got to go and take it the Lord is the deliverer he is the Savior he is the one that will lead them in their life but he says you must

do your bit I'll drive out the enemy but you must drive out the enemy if you don't go forward and drive out the enemy I can't do my bit and it's strange to understand this but from the beginning of time for some strange reason God has covenanted to work his purpose with man and he will not work his purpose without man for he has covenanted to work his purpose with man which is why in all these bridegroom and bride songs we have in the last chapter of Revelation a joint invitation to those who are thirsty and in these

days of possible and hopeful and prayed for revival in these days when we sing and pray about God's glory in these days when we stand in churches and say more Lord I think what are we saying more to are we saying Lord will you do more what more can poor God do he already gave

his son and then he sent his spirit and we say more and he says I've given you my son I've given you my spirit now you do your bit then you'll see more and the more that we cry for is not Lord send more but Lord I'm ready to receive more of what you've already in mercy and kindness done for me for the cross is his historical he has died and I sometimes don't understand when people say show me your love God he did he did and I can live my life remembering that he did and living in the strength and the sureness of that but of course he's so sweet he he does keep anyway sending reminders because he's like that Moses after he'd asked to see glory and he beheld goodness and kindness and compassion came down the mountain and was so shiny he only saw a bit you know because that's what scripture

teaches God in mercy has stopped us seeing too much because we die but if we believe we can see a bit that's how you see by the way that's right people who don't believe can't see and he just saw a bit and he was so shiny that it says that when people looked at him they got blind so he had to wear one of those white hankies you're waving on over his head in case people looked at him and got blind and he just got the reflection of God's goodness so we see through this passage that it's God's kindness that was revealed to Moses in that glorious mountain that was to lead him on to lead his people on to lay hold of what the Lord had already prepared for them because it was a promised land all got ready in fact you could say it was a set up job if they would only do their bit.

Let's look at Ephesians 2 and we will see an identical passage this is the famous passage which we often read and it was certainly in my first six salvation package verses which taught me that I was not saved by doing good things but this passage teaches me that although I am not saved by good works I am saved to do good works so he says in verse 3 how we were unredeemed and how we were dead how we were nature by nature objects of wrath but because of his great love for us God who is rich in mercy made us alive even when we were dead in transgressions by grace you've been saved and God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus for what?

Here again in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus and then he goes on in this passage which we know so well to remind us that we've been saved by grace not by what we've done but certainly to suggest that having been saved by a kind God this will be expressed in good deeds which have been prepared in advance for us to do if we'll do them just like the people of Israel this is our choice and this is the part of our life which we can choose to do or not and the good works which we are to be about are very simple and they're the same for every single person and that is to touch people that's all to touch people with the kindness that we've been touched with that's all it doesn't matter if we bring

them to Christ or not you see that bringing people to Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit and we can't make people come to Christ but we can touch people with the kindness of the Lord which they're waiting for and they might then come to know our Savior but we'll touch them anyway Titus 3 this is the third passage just so we see scripture backs up scripture Titus 3 verse 1 remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities to be obedient to be ready to do what's good and kind and then the chapter traces the same progression we were unregenerate and he saved us how verse 4 when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared he saved us not because of the good things we've done but because of his mercy he saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit and

then he goes on to say but don't waste time don't get caught up with arguments and words which turn you into circles don't be consumed with things that are unprofitable and useless keep away from people that cause division verse 14 our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good that's it that's all in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives we are to be about touching people with Jesus now that's possible for everyone that's not difficult and he doesn't say oh by the way uh you might need to spend a few years getting healed yourself and then you can do it you see we are going to be fully healed when the kingdom fully comes in that day and we're not here on earth to get slowly healed in a twinkling of an eye all will be made well

in a moment our new bodies our hearts with no scars somehow somehow somehow in heaven no regrets though i don't understand that in the twinkling of an eye the kingdom will come perfectly now we know in part and now we hasten the kingdom by stretching out our hands to bring it closer but we are not here to get slowly healed we are here to touch people that was the ministry of Jesus and if you believe that your ministry is books that's fine but you must touch people we are all here to touch people because God loved the world and this is for every man and in this week particularly we are considering touching the poor the materially poor the hopeless poor the poor in spirit those who are in bondage in shame in despondency and we can all do that while we're getting healed now i'll tell you uh

what getting healed here what the effect is every time i get healed a bit in my heart every time i get healed a bit in my mind every time my body is touched i can share that with the people i'm touching which means i long to get more healed because then i've got more to share which means that the sickest people have the most to share get it which means that when God said he has chosen the poor when God says he has chosen the weak it's because they have the most room for him and certainly the most gratitude and certainly the most knowledge of our deficiencies and our need and so we will receive more of what he's poured out and therefore we have more to share see that's how it goes that's why we get healed but you see it's touching people as we go that's why there's that wonderful scripture

that says God of all comforts i can comfort you with the comfort that i've received that's why the prostitute was the one that he said loved the most because she was forgiven the most you see the more awful it's been before the more we may realize his kindness and his sweetness and his love and as soon as we receive it we touch other people with it and we we we don't come up with clever answers we don't say God changed me he can change you people don't relate so well to that we can say God's comforted me let me share that comfort and i was hopeless he still loved me let me share that with you when i failed him time and time again he still held out his hands towards me i'll hold mine out to you that's what we offer so that's why strangely strangely the gospel writers and the epistle

writers write these strange passages about counting it joy when we're having a tough time and about a year ago somebody came and prayed for me and they prophesied that i was going to have a really difficult trial it's the only time ever i could hardly wait honestly because i just done the bible study on it and i actually understood the more i'm going through means the more i will understand his love and his kindness and then i've got much smarter share than i had before because you see i could have lived off my testimony when i wrote my book and that was in 1980 a bit stale so he's so kind he says Jackie i'm still gonna work things in your life and in your heart and he sends along a few agitators and i don't cope too well with the agitators uh i'm very slow at getting this message but

after about eight months of agitation i suddenly realized oh it's because he loved me it's because he wanted me to understand better his love for me his kindness to me his comfort how else would i know how

else would i know how to comfort a lady who when she's five years old sees her mother hanging and her father sleeping with his sister and brother and every combination you can think of and she grows up gets engaged to somebody when she's 17 who sleeps with her and the father throws her out so she becomes a prostitute for 50 years 50 years she ends up in a brothel which is in the dark and nobody knows that she exists because she has no card therefore she isn't anyone you see she isn't anyone and i i used to pass by her in the street and she used to pull on my sleeve and she used to say

oh please please please let me come and live with you i'll do your ironing she'd say and i learned that she had witnessed two murders in her brothel one was a young girl who was pregnant and was told to sleep with a man while she was pregnant and because she was disobedient they put a hose pipe in her mouth and filled her up until she died and they never reported the death because if you don't exist nobody will miss you and then there was another old lady that they pushed she was also in her 60s still as a prostitute they pushed her and she died too and my friend was so afraid that that would happen to her she was just afraid that she would die and no one would know that's all no one would miss her no one ever been kind to her i'm so glad that god is sweetly revealing his heart to people

in this country i'm so glad that it's accompanied by signs and wonders i'm so glad that there is a shaking of our hearts which may manifest itself in our bodies but how would she know how would that shaking get all the way to her how you think she's free to buy a ticket to the stadium she just wanted someone to be kind and when in god's mercy he allows a shaking of a different kind in my life mark apart from the charismatic hop which is my version of your kick the most that ever happens to me is mild tremble in my right leg but i've known other shakings and i'm more or less prepared to welcome them now i mean more or less i i can count it joy without feeling it joy because you see if in his mercy we've been shaken and we've reached out and found him there in sweetness and found that

he's compassionate and slow to anger and abounding in mercy we have something for that lady we have something she will understand it's harder for her to understand the victorious guitarist though maybe one day she'll join in so we don't get healed first but we get healed on the job and as we get healed we share the love and kindness with which he heals us which means whether it's physical or emotional or social or whatever until we come to that great day when the kingdom comes in full we cry out for more and more signs and touches of his kingdom that we have more to share and more touch people with along the way now us god said to moes it's now your bit through the epistles that we've read he says i've saved you for a purpose which is to be kind and not unproductive let's look at what

jesus did with his disciples in matthew 9 36 it says he saw the people and had compassion you know i think one of the reasons i often have trouble with my eyes and my glasses is that i'm always talking about eyes and it starts with seeing we know that the lord sees the whole earth and his eyes go across the whole earth and he sees everybody who is in despair and poverty and hopelessness he sees all that are lost and when he was a man here on earth a son of man as well as son of god he saw that the sheep were without a shepherd and he said the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few pray therefore to the lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest and then in the next chapter 10 he called the 12 to him and gave them authority to go out now we know that jesus healed

everyone who came to him but when he was here on earth he spent nearly all his time in a tiny area and he saw many people who were harassed and he had compassion and therefore he recruited 12 men and he said i'm going to give you my authority and my power now i want you to go and touch them which is proclaiming the kingdom touch them the good news for the poor let them see the kindness of god by

healing the sick casting out demons jesus saw those who were harassed without a shepherd and i suppose because he was the son of man while he was here on earth he could only get around those ones because he was here as the son of man as well as the son of god but he did touch all who came to him but he was to say it is better for you that i go away because if i go away then i'm going to send my

spirit and with my spirit more of you can touch more of them strange and we cry out god touch the world and he says you touch the world i'll touch the world but you touch the world with my hand and that's how it works and we so often ask god to do what he's told us to do i think it's all right because that's prayer but there is our part which is now you go and all you have to do is touch people with the love that you've received that's all you don't have to be successful it doesn't matter whether people say thank you it doesn't matter if you've got a great report for your missionary prayer letter it doesn't matter at all it only matters that you touch those that you see with what you know of him so where are we going to start this is the the last night of the conference so we're going to

have a look at some ideas about where to start i would suggest that we start in our touching people with him which is obvious but let's look at mark 14. in mark 14 there's a story about a woman who came and broke an expensive jar of perfume on jesus head and it says in many of the gospel stories that it filled the the house with perfume now the disciples and one of them in particular immediately got out their calculators and you'll find that once we begin to start about ministry with the poor people immediately get out their calculators put them away i've said this many times and i will say it again the last thing we need is money i'm not saying we don't use it i'm saying it's the last thing we need money cannot buy hearts and the disciples calculated especially judas and you wonder when

you read this story because in the john version it says he was the keeper of the money bags and he used to help himself and you think how long did they know that and they let him go on being treasurer anyway i don't know but uh he said this is a year's wages and this could feed and help so many poor people and it sounds great because people are interested in volume and in numbers and that would look very good on the bulletin how many and jesus said leave her alone she did what she could that's all that's what tonight's message is about she did what she could what did she do she blew everything on jesus she wasted her life on him in one go and that's what we're going to do for the rest of our lives you know i was involved with people in the world city for several years and at the same time

i had a teaching job at the very beginning and uh it was quite funny because the teachers at my proper school they didn't really know what i was doing in the world city and i was uh i was a musician i used to teach woodwind instruments and choirs and orchestras and things like that and uh when all these teachers at my proper school found out what i was doing they thought i was having choirs in the world city and people say to me now do you use your music as they know what a waste no i shall have a perfect embouchure in heaven and i know i'll be able to extemporize you see we we're very mean because we think god hasn't quite got enough and because we think he's a bit mean in giving out talents we say i've got to be very careful with this one i've got and he says use it or waste it and i

can waste my life on jesus if she used her music think of what she could do never mind never mind it got me into hong kong i put it on my passport maybe china will like it i don't know it doesn't quite work like we think and we have quite a lot of young people that work with us and sometimes their parents say you're wasting your life some of the parents not all because you see we don't pay our people anything nobody gets a salary so they don't count it as a job and they say when are you going to do a proper one meaning when you're going to be paid now i'm not suggesting you all throw up your jobs and come and join us but

what i'm saying is we can spend our lives if you like first of all on jesus and it just doesn't work like people think i was telling you a couple of days ago about this

funny old man lumber this funny old man who's strange in the head jesus spent his whole life with this man whether he changes or not i can spend my life on him because i think he might be jesus i mean i think he might if you look at matthew 25 sort of get a hint of what jesus might look like occasionally about sheep and goats and if you're chinese you know that it's very important uh the length of your hair because in chinese we don't have a different word for sheep and goats we have short-haired sheep and long-haired sheep and the goats are the long-haired sheep so you see in this story it's very important to have short hair and jesus tells the story about that day when he comes in his glory which might look as if it's the day when we celebrate kindness it's a blinding kindness of course

it's a very shiny kindness but he comes and there's a reckoning and he says to the right-hand lot who are short-haired i was hungry and you gave me something to eat i was thirsty you gave me something to drink i was a stranger you invited me in i needed clothes when you clothed me i was sick and you looked after me i was in prison and you came to visit me and the righteous will answer him lord we i don't remember seeing you hungry when did i feed you uh when did we give you something to drink i don't remember seeing you when did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you and the king will reply i tell you the truth whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did it for me this is all to do with seeing he comes to the next lot who are on the left and he says

depart from me you who are cursed i was hungry and you didn't feed me i was thirsty you didn't give me anything to drink i was a stranger and you didn't invite me in and you did clothes and you didn't clothe me most of these things are so simple i was sick and in prison and you didn't look after me and they answer lord so they think they know him said lord i mean if we if we'd seen you we'd have fed you if we'd seen you thirsty wouldn't we have given you something to drink when did we see you and he said whenever you didn't do this for the least one now the least one could be the least grateful one or the least nice looking one and it says they go away to eternal punishment i don't want to make too much comment about this but it does say they go to eternal punishment maybe this suggests

to us that if we ever ever have been touched by a kind savior we will of course be kind and maybe if we don't touch the hungry and the thirsty and those in prison maybe it's because we were never touched ourselves because how could we have been touched by a kind god and not extend kindness to those that we see a man in hong kong came to see me once and uh i was talking about seeing and he said he said jackie there's this street sleeper that i see most days on my way to work and i was wondering if if you could send somebody to see him and help him and i said he's your street sleeper and he said but i belong to a church which has raised money for a youth club i said yes but he's your street sleeper i mean i sometimes think it actually might be jesus do you do you understand what i mean

supposing it's a plant supposing it actually is him and the man goes by saying my ministry is to raise money for youth well at least he found me at least he found me that was good but the trouble is in hong kong everybody finds us as if the poor are our job and you know it's not fun when it's institutional it's wonderful when it's your neighbor and that's what it was always supposed to be like wasn't supposed to be a few special called mercy ministry christians who do this wonderful work over there in hong kong it's supposed to be all god's people touching the ones they see with kindness that's all might not be able to do a whole lot but i mean a cup of cold water is not much is it i mean that's not much is it and you don't have to sit down and share the plan of salvation i mean i used

to think you did but a cup of cold water apparently would do and maybe that will reveal the plan of salvation if you were thirsty

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