

Love Who You See

by Jackie Pullinger

Jackie Pullinger's sermon emphasizes the necessity of loving and serving the poor in our immediate surroundings as a reflection of God's heart for justice and compassion.

Duration: 1:16:18

Scripture: Deuteronomy 14:28, Proverbs 21:13, Jeremiah 22:16

Topics: "Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of loving others and treating them with justice and equality. They share a personal experience of witnessing the vast difference in income and living conditions between themselves and a worker in Hong Kong. The speaker highlights the need to use what one has for the benefit of others, quoting Psalm 82:3 which calls for defending the weak and oppressed. They also address the issue of modern-day slavery and child exploitation, urging listeners to be aware of the prevalence of these crimes and take action to combat them.

Transcript

Well, Keith asked me just to give a short introduction and just a welcome to Jackie and Jackie Pullinger. So, let's just kind of give her a warm greeting here. She's flown in from... There's only one person that has less of an administrative gift in the earth than myself, and it's Jackie.

And she did this wonderful job of double booking herself. So, she's literally flown in from London, England, this afternoon, after having spoken there for a couple days. And has just kind of come straight to us from the airport.

My good friend Bill Gregg, I think he's hiding in here. Oh, there he is over there, from Regal Books, drove her over. And we're so glad you got her here, because I think the flight was even delayed a couple hours or something.

And all the dominoes were starting to topple. So, it was like, ah, she made it. So, anyway, I do want to welcome Jackie here.

I think one of the things I keep just even seeing her tonight, we haven't seen each other for a little while. And her good friend Margaret is here with us. We were able to catch up with Margaret a bit yesterday.

She stayed over at our house and had a great time. And I was looking at Jackie, and this couple words just kept kind of rolling in my mind. And I really actually think it was maybe even God talking.

And I just kept hearing faithful friend. And I don't think of a better way to introduce Jackie than as a faithful friend to the Lord and a faithful friend to the broken and the poor. And Jesus had this nickname that would follow him around, the friend of sinners.

And I think that's a great title to carry and come here, my friend. So, we'll pray for you. Welcome.

So, Holy Spirit, as you already have been doing, we invite you to till the soil of our hearts, of our brains, that you would open our ears to hear, that you would touch our eyes to see. And Holy Spirit, we just invite your ministry of revelation and of truth. Jesus promised us that we wouldn't be like abandoned children trying to find our way forward, but that you would lead us and you would guide us into all truth.

We ask for truth to be released in us, through us, that you would speak truth through Jackie. And I pray in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, strength into your body and into your mind. Strength and wholeness into your being.

We'll let you fall apart after the meeting, but not now. We want to fill you with strength and courage to speak the heart of God to us. And so we bless you, Jackie, and we receive you in the name of Jesus.

Amen. I was at something called a church a couple of weeks back, and I was sharing on the poor, and for four sessions, which is the short version, and they had red lights which hurt my eyes. And just before the last session I asked them, would it be alright if we don't have the red lights? And what are they for? And they said, you have to make the speaker look good.

And that's one expression of something that is terribly hard for me. For some peculiar reason, people think big meetings are going to be better than small ones. And I don't like them.

I will suffer them sometimes. But I'm not remotely convinced that something called an anointed talk is going to help 5,000 people. Maybe one.

And I have a personal deep discomfort with the paraphernalia of meetings. I hate platforms, I hate lights, I hate microphones. And I'm very glad anyway that, where are you, Cindy? And who is the other guy, because I don't know you, who is leading worship? That you let a bit of interaction into your worship.

Because I think something's gone wrong when the worship leader has the microphone for a third of most meetings. And wherever I go I say to the worship leader, would it be alright if we looked at one another? Because some of my group may have gifts of the spirit during the worship, and it would be nice if you could interact, and this is good, wasn't it? So that's nothing to do with what I really want to talk about. But I've been to some missionary meetings that talk about percentages or numbers, and how more and more people are, percentage-wise, are believing in Jesus.

And it doesn't thrill me, because I always see it the other way round. The longer time goes on, the more people are dying. And more people are now dying than ever before.

And there's a tension, I don't know whether you feel this, as to whether to say, Lord, come back quickly, or could you hold off for the sake of the lost? It is a fact that today in the world there are more people in slavery than there have ever been in the whole of history combined. And a large number of them are here.

They got here in containers.

There are something like a million women newly enslaved yearly. And the figures for the children are huge. Those are the ones who are actually child prostitutes.

But imagine in this country, for I suppose we must start here, how many websites are for watching porn? And how many can watch children on there? And just think, who let their kids be filmed? Who let them? This is a wonderful and an awful time to be alive. And it is a fact that there are millions of people who cannot free themselves. There's thousands in Sri Lanka, little boys.

And they are sex slaves, little boys. And some of them have been allowed by the orphanages they come from. But they don't get the money.

Just someone else does, as so often if you're a slave. It happens to be also that most of the people who've never heard about Jesus are destitute. That is a huge number in the Indian subcontinent.

That is the area where most of the hungry are. And they never heard about Jesus. And they will die for eternity without Him.

It just happens to be that the greatest number who need to be saved are also physically poor. Let alone those who are delinquently poor on drugs. Or imagine having been a child soldier.

I mean, imagine. This is not your choice. This is join or die.

And when they join, some of them have to kill their parents. I don't know if you're in a fellowship or in a group that prays for one another when you have problems. How many years would you need to pray for that kid? And there are tens of thousands of them.

Who after starting killing their parents, have to go on killing others. So this is actually a desperate world. It's completely possible to reach the world.

It couldn't not be. I mean, I don't think it's going to be more possible in 20 years than now. It's just we haven't started, most of us.

A few do, and they're much admired. It's not right. If we are supposed to go and reach the ends of the earth, it's possible.

Before the ends of the earth perish. And therefore there has to be in us a quickening. Because God is not pleased when he sees the injustice.

On the earth. Sometimes I would call it inequality, but of course you can't quite compare. When I first went to Hong Kong and watched people who were making plastic goods.

And the mother would spend the whole day doing that. And she got the equivalent of about one of your dollars. And then I would go, after having visited her and spent the day in the walled city, I would go and drink a cup of coffee.

And it cost me a third of what she spent a whole day earning. And, you know, when you're new, you just can't quite work that out. You just can't quite reconcile it.

In the end I could. Because it really isn't a comparison. It isn't how much have they got and how much have I got.

It's how do you use what you've got. This is what the Lord says. Psalm 82 verse 3. Defend the cause of the weak and the fatherless.

Maintain the rights of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

If you look psalm after psalm after psalm, and throughout Leviticus, Deuteronomy, particularly, you'll find God and Isaiah, God is continually expressing his heart for the poor. And particularly his heart for those who would have no other resource apart from him. Because in those days there isn't a government resource.

It's the people of God and God or nothing. There's not the government and the church. It was God.

So God says he's particularly concerned about the widow and the orphan because the widow would have no place, no identity, no defense, and no support, no providence, what do you call it? Provision. My head's in a Chinese muddle. No provision without him.

And then he goes on to say that's his heart and he will defend the cause of the poor and the needy. And then he says this is how we are to express his heart. And in Jeremiah 22.16 it talks about a king who was well known and it says he defended the cause of the poor and needy and so all went well.

Is that not what it means to know me? declares the Lord. As if that were the way you would know if somebody knew the Lord. Not how many foundation courses they went to or Bible study classes they graduated.

It's really what he is saying is if you have known me, you couldn't help, could you? It's spilling over. Could you? If it doesn't spill over to the poor and the weak and the oppressed, you may not have known a God. You loved them.

That's why he says if a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered. I'll read that again. It's in Proverbs 21.13. By the way, I do note, some of you may be able to remember all this.

Others of you, in the future, whatever group you go to, you must take your Bibles and you must check out your preachers. You must not believe your preachers. You must get your stuff from the book.

You must get your stuff from the book. Okay, here's what the book says. Proverbs 21.13. If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.

Now, what's this mean? This is my understanding. It's a little bit like, if you do not forgive others, you will not be forgiven. It's a little bit like that.

Now, what comes first? Well, actually, of course, God forgiving us comes first. When I was in distress, in mercy, he found me and he forgave me my sins. Therefore, out of the abundance of the huge debt he has paid for me, of course I can forgive the little offense of my brother, or the rather big one, because comparatively with mine against God, it is small.

And if you have been in distress and called out to the Lord and he has heard you, you will be able to hear the cry of the poor. I used to live in a place called the wall city, where at night, well, it probably happens here, except your houses are spaced and some have fences around, but where we live, when children are being beaten up, or wives being beaten, you can hear it. And I wake up and think, where is the kid? Or where is the woman? In Chinese culture, they say, don't get involved.

But in biblical culture, you must. If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered. So you must try and find where that poor person is.

He might be being murdered. And would you not want somebody to rescue you when you cried? Would you not? And so he is saying here, do you believe in a God who hears your cry? If you don't hear the cry of the poor, you probably don't believe in a God who hears yours. So he doesn't.

I was in Taiwan a few years ago, and I don't know completely what you talked about this morning, but I gather you began some discussions on perhaps what something called church might look like. But in Taiwan, actually it's probably the same here. It used to be, if you had a conference on how to multiply your cell groups, you'd get absolutely millions of people, because everybody wanted something big.

And if they heard that this person in Singapore had a model that had grown to 30,000, they thought, if I can get this program, I too can have 30,000 people and multiply my cell groups every six months. I think that's the rule. Truly, truly.

And if you have a conference on the poor, of course no one comes. And I was sharing with these Taiwan pastors that I said, this is what I'm looking for. I'm looking for a man who will love one poor man, whether that poor man says thank you or not.

Let's suppose, and this has certainly happened amongst our people, let's suppose he sleeps in the street and he smells, and he may have some mental problems or drinking problems or something, and you visit him and you make friends with him, but he doesn't want to be friends, and he swears at you, and you still go and you love him. And I said, I'm looking for somebody who will go on loving one poor man, as if he's the only man on this earth, and love him whether he comes to Jesus or not. That's all.

And this Taiwan pastor came up to me at the end and he said, we have never heard this before. And I said, haven't you read the book? This is where I'm starting. I would like to ask you, if you, what you think about giving up our lives for one poor man, or is there a more efficient ministry? I'm supposed to facilitate this.

It's very easy to know where to start. Very easy. In Luke 10, Jesus told us how to start.

And he told the parable of the good Samaritan. And it was very interesting that the man he told the parable to wanted to justify himself. And it's very simple.

It's simply about loving the one you meet. That's all. There's nothing more than that.

If we try to take on a huge project before we've loved the one we see, we will fail. I look at that parable often, because we're in a land where there's every missionary organization you can think of, and every missionary organization you can think of wants to go to China too. But the simplest missionary strategy in the world, which costs zero, you need no pamphlet, no publicity, no money, no title, and just go to your neighbor.

I reckon if we all did that, we'd probably win the world in a few months. There are enough Christians. I'd be free.

It wouldn't cost... What? Well, I think we could talk about stewardship later. That's another subject. Okay, do you want to go on with this particular bit? Okay.

Any other response? I'd really like to take on the money issue in a minute, if we could just take that as another subject, because it's something I feel extremely strongly about. What's your spouse got to do with your neighbor? No, no, no. It's simple.

Okay, we're talking about your neighbor, not your spouse. Okay? This is really simple. Okay? Yeah, so there's no excuse for anyone.

For the kid, it's the other kid in the playground. For you, it's the lady in the supermarket. You don't have to go to the Goodwill store to meet them.

They're rooting around in the garbage trash can outside. When you learn to see them, you'll see them everywhere. Yeah, let's just stick with the brother right now.

Then we're going to move on. Okay? We're starting with your neighbor. Okay? Because ultimately, if that's how we start, and how our hearts are moved, that's how we're going to reach the poor one that nobody else has, if we don't start with this poor one here.

When people write to us and say, can we come and help you with your poor in Hong Kong, I say, are you helping your poor where you are? Please don't use ours to practice on. It's not fair. But if you begin where you are, there's an exercise of heart, and there's a breaking of the heart, and there's also an understanding of what it's like to be the person who's doing it, so you're less critical.

So I'll just go on a little bit, because it might help if I say some more things that you can go from. Very, very early on in Hong Kong, I learned a very special lesson, because there was an old lady that sent me to visit various families, and one of them was where there were a family living on what they call a bed space. Nowadays they put wire up.

There are probably three tiered bunks, so they turn into cages, they're cage homes. They don't have toilets or bathrooms, but they have a shared passage where they can cook. And there were 11 children, and the father was out of work.

No welfare. And then to a family where the mother was in a mental hospital, and the father had to give up his job to look after the three children. And then another family who lived in the walled city on a roof, because in Hong Kong our slums go upwards, and there's not enough space to build a shack on the bottom.

And there were five children, and the wife was 29. And when I went to visit them, all the children used to sit in a row, because they were shy. And they sat in a row with their back to me.

So they were just pretending they were not there. And I remember thinking, you know, so poor, nowhere to be shy. In this country, and Canada in particular, it's very hard for people to join us.

Because they want space. And my personal space, you know, these poor kids had nowhere to be shy. And the father was a drug addict, and the mother used to carry water up to, because there was no water

there, used to carry water on two wooden buckets on a pole, and she would get about a tenth of one of your dimes for a bucket.

But then she couldn't do it because she got rheumatism. And I saw they only ever ate something called congee, which is you boil rice for several hours, and it gets very thin until it's almost like water and starch. But there was never anything else, there was no protein.

And their whole family lived on a double bed. And they learned to walk on the bed, the children. And they did their homework on the bed.

And they cooked on the bed. And so I thought, well, what can I give her? And in those days, in God's mercy, I didn't have any money. And no group or organization behind me.

And when we talk about money, which we're not doing right now, we can think about that. But it was God's mercy to me, absolutely. I thought, if I buy a tin of food, the husband can sell it.

Because they can sell these things. So in the end I just bought a sausage, which was all I could afford. And you could chop it up and they could have some protein.

And then I prayed with her. Her name was Mrs. Jong. And she came to know Jesus.

And then after praying, I said to her, I am so sorry, Mrs. Jong. I have nothing else to give you. Just a sausage and a prayer.

And she was so sweet. She looked at me and she smiled and she said, that's all right, dear. Because when you've gone, Jesus comes and sits on my bed.

And I was so jealous of her. I thought, you know Jesus like I don't. To sit on your bed.

But I went to the lady who had sent me to all these people. Retrospectively, I believe she is an angel. I mean that.

And I said, I was frustrated. Very young, and I said, I've got nothing. I have no church organization behind me.

I have nothing. I have no influence. And what I can see in Hong Kong, is that there are plenty of groups that have got plenty of things.

And you can have Christian noodles. You can have Christian secondary schools, Christian universities, Christian hospitals. They're the most expensive, by the way.

And there's Christian something on every other building. And some of them produced brochures, colored brochures, which I've never understood. You know, if you've got the money to print a colored brochure, why don't you give it to the hungry person? I didn't understand then, it's a kind of business.

But anyway, that's another subject. So I said to her, why are you sending me? You know, there are groups downtown who are here to provide resources for people like this. And she said, I send you, dear, because you care.

And I think that was God's kindness to me, at the very beginning. Because this lady that told me this, she was poor. And she knew that although you need lunch, you need lunch from a heart.

Not just lunch. By the way, under this lady's bed, under the family's bed, was a huge barrel of aid from some group, with second-hand sequined evening dresses, soiled underwear, and it was riddled with cockroaches, and she wouldn't throw it away because it was aid. But the lady who sent me knew what the Jung family needed.

And I always try to share with people, they need lunch, they need food forever, but what they need most of all is the heart of Jesus. And if your heart is broken in going to them, that's great. Because as your heart is broken in going to them, you get Jesus' heart.

It's how it works. And it's actually irresistible. And when I come to this country, and people say to me about street sleepers and so on, they say, Oh, you know, it's not like that, everybody's heard the gospel here.

And I say, no, very few people have heard it at all. They've heard phrases about Jesus, mostly cliches. And I would teach on the Good Samaritan.

Because what I like about the Good Samaritan is this, when he saw the man who was stripped and naked, he went to him. He had compassion on him. And compassion, I'll talk about in a minute, is a very gutsy word.

And it's a moving word. It's not a standing still having a feeling word. It's in movement.

And the Samaritan went to him. He had compassion on him. And then he bandaged him with oil and wine.

I mean, everything that Christians have got. Nobody else has got oil and wine. Nobody else has got what we've got.

And then, if you look at the scripture, and it's a great one to read, it's Luke 10, it says he put him on his own donkey. The scripture says his own donkey, not the church donkey. And I strongly believe that if you use your own donkey for the poor man you meet, it's absolutely irresistible.

The likelihood is he will believe in Jesus. But you're going to use your own donkey anyway. And one of the reasons that people have become hardened to the gospel is that they have a handout in Jesus' name, and it's not his heart.

There's no such thing as heartless ministry. And a packet of food doesn't do it. It simply saves a life for a day.

And in Hong Kong, definitely the handouts, without the heart of Jesus, harden the heart towards Jesus. Because in the end you get a welfare mentality. You know, you Christians are supposed to help us.

You're Christians, aren't you? Well, the Buddhists do the same thing on Fridays. Yes. And the Red Swastika Society does it on Saturdays, you know.

So, what's different about Jesus? It's Jesus. It's going yourself. Sharing the little you've got, which may just be your tears.

That's it. It's just going for one man. That's how we start.

That's the exercise of trying to reach the whole poor world. The whole world starts with the one poor man we meet. So maybe I'll share a couple more things on that parable while we're there, and then you can

throw back your comments on that.

I always think about the Samaritan in that story as being, in my mind, he's a commercial traveler. He's on a business journey. And he is interrupted.

It's a nuisance. Because he has something to do. So, actually, it disturbs us.

And it does disturb us. And I think one of the reasons that the Levite and the priest, what could have been why they passed by, was they might have had another agenda. Now, the priest and the Levite in this story, if you've read the story, the awful thing it says was that they saw him.

It would have been better if they hadn't. But in the time of Jesus, the priest and the Levite are the ones that had the resources, should have had the resources. They had the treasury of what had been given to God.

But maybe they said in their mind, this is not my ministry. I often think that one of them actually said, my ministry is having boys clubs, helping people not to get into trouble. But whatever the reason was, the whole parable is about starting with our neighbor.

That's all. You might not have to do the whole bit. You might not have to take him to the inn.

You might not have to go as far as the Samaritan went. But that's where we start. So, can we talk about that for a minute? Not the money right now.

There was something said this morning about relationships and friendships and about knowing somebody's name. Right, David? We talked about knowing their name. His grace is sufficient, and His power is made manifest in our weakness.

I met a young man about eight years ago on the street. I saw him for about six months, and I didn't see him for eight years, and I saw him a couple of months ago. And I got out of my car to serve some guys on the street, and he walks by me, and he looks at me, and he goes, Hey, I know you.

And I said, I know you. And he says, Well, if you know me, what's my name? Because when you know somebody, you must know their name. And I must tell you that I'm very, very poor at remembering people's names.

That's my confession. But here's where His grace is sufficient, and His power is made manifest in my weakness. The power of the Holy Spirit came and gave me His name, and I said, Your name is Richard.

Got his attention. He stopped. He looked at me, and he goes, You're right.

He came. We talked. People tried to drag him away, and he said, Leave me alone.

This is important. So I got to pray with him. Two weeks later, he shows up at my door, and I hear that Richard's here to see me.

I go outside, and I sit on the front porch with him. And he said, David, I just want to tell you what's going on. I gave my life to Jesus.

I'm sober. I've made up my mind to follow Christ, and I want to say thank you to you. He said, Because there's people that touch your life.

And he used the shelf at my porch. It had a little dust on it. He rubbed his fingers through it, and he says, There's a mark.

He said, People make a mark in your life. He said, But if it's made in dust, he said, you can rub the mark off. It is no longer an influence on your life.

He said, I want you to know you touched me with indelible ink. You influenced me to know Jesus. Now, sometimes when we think about His grace being sufficient and His power being made manifest, we think of something high and lofty in the sky kind of power.

I'm telling you, the power of the Holy Spirit is what gave me His name. And I'm sharing this story with you because Jackie has touched my wife and my family with indelible ink. She has given us encouragement to serve the poor with our life and to look at the one at a time.

And I can look at one, and I can serve one, and then when I turn around, I can see another and serve that one. I'm not overwhelmed by what I see of all the vast poverty and poorness and where all the help is needed. So if you serve one at a time, you're doing the stuff.

And I've served people for years and years and years before they ever even let me pray for them. And here's something else that I was encouraged with by Jackie. She told Christine and I both this sitting at the dinner table.

What's the key to serving the poor? One key, besides love, is endurance. You've got to endure through this. You've got to just walk it out.

It's life stuff. I mean, so many of us will look for the one that manifests the power of the Holy Spirit, and that's the one we want to go and pray for. But if we prayed for this one and he didn't vibrate or something didn't happen, we're going to pass him up.

Our endurance is short. Enduring love with people and loving them into the kingdom is what it's all about. Thanks.

You must go for the poor. You must go for the poor. You must make the rich jealous.

We can't persuade them they don't have enough. We had a man in Hong Kong who saw our guys. You know, I mean, we got 15 guys living with us, one leg, because the other one's been sawn off, and about six teeth between them, between about a hundred of them.

He saw our guys some years ago, and he said, you know, I am so jealous of them, because they love God more than I do. They've got more of Jesus. And we found that it was seeing what Jesus did in the poor that showed the rich their poverty.

When people say to me, well, I'm going to the rich or the businessman or whatever, that's not a problem. But I think any ministry that is exclusive is a problem, because Jesus is inclusive. And if we as Christians who have the heart of Jesus and all the resources of Jesus, we're the only ones in the whole world that can actually help the poor.

And I mean the direst poverty ones. So if we are to go to businessmen or have video ministries or whatever, don't do it instead of. Do it as well as.

The poor should be part. What do you think? I wanted to talk about this next, because in talking about compassion, I always remember David teaching about this, but compassion, when they translated the Bible, the King James Bible, it wasn't a word in English. They actually had to find one.

It's talking about the heart of God, and what you will find is it also is connected with the bowels. So it's a physical gutsy thing, which means that when it says Jesus had compassion on the 5,000 and fed them, he was churned up physically. And every time the word compassion is used in the Gospels about Jesus, you'll find there was an action.

It's not a feeling. It's not, oh, those poor people over there, what a pity, so many people are dying in India. It's not that at all.

It's actually being physically churned up. But every time he had compassion on the leper, and he cleansed him. He had compassion on the 5,000 and he fed them, or he healed them.

He had compassion on the two blind men, and he opened their eyes. He had compassion on Jerusalem and he died. So there's always an intervention.

It's not a, I'm so sorry for them. And I had a friend in Hong Kong, he was a doctor, and he came to me once and said, can you pray for me to have compassion on the poor? And I said, I don't think I can do that. I don't think you get it here.

But I will pray for you. And I used the 1 John 3.16 bit where it says, if you see a poor man in need, if you have anything at all, and so on, so on. And the old version says, if you do not open the bowels of your compassion, how can the love of God be in you? I mean, that's a startling verse.

If you've got anything at all, not if you've got a lot, by the way, if you've got anything at all, and you see your brother in need, and you do not open the bowels of your compassion, how can the love of God be in you? So I put my hands on him and I said, dear Lord, open the bowels of his compassion. And he had diarrhoea for three days. And I think quite right.

The church is constipated. We say more, more, more, more. We want more.

Even Holy Spirit meetings. But more of the Holy Spirit is supposed to be so we can go to the poor. At least that was the first thing Jesus said the Holy Spirit anointed him for, was to preach good news to the poor.

So I would like to ask you, when people talk about something called a mercy ministry, I loathe it. And I understand in Romans that it refers indirectly to that as a way of doing things. It mentions mercy.

But people have, for some reason, have coined this term mercy ministry, usually in their mind connected with funny ladies who do mercy ministry. And once it's got a label, mercy ministry, it seems to have become optional. This person has a music ministry and that person has a mercy ministry.

And I believe that we're all called. This is absolutely not optional. I believe that we are all called to go to the poor.

And as we go, we will have compassion. What do you think? Are we going to change the world here? Well, let's talk about money. In the Old Testament, you will find that the people of God, that was the people of Israel, were supposed to give 10% of everything they had.

That's herbs and crops and animals and everything. Now what did God do with what they gave him? Deuteronomy 14. This is just one scripture.

Verse 28. 14? Okay, 29. At the end of three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns so that the Levites, who have no allotment or inheritance of their own, and the aliens, the fatherless, and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied and say that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

This is how it worked in the Old Testament. There are three kinds of people that shared in what was given to God. One was what you would call the priests.

And that is because they had no inheritance of their own. So everybody else had a fixed piece of land and then they could raise things and feed themselves and support their family. But the Levites did not.

Then were the poor. That's the fatherless and the widows. Because there would be no other place, no other source of supply for them.

And the third lot of people who were to benefit from what was given to God is the aliens. And I would call the aliens refugees or missionaries. People who are out of their country for a difficult reason or out of their country on God's business.

Now we've got three kinds of people who are to benefit from what is given to God. And today what has happened? Actually what's happened for the last 19 centuries? Someone called the pastor and the staff and the church building get it all. What do the missionaries get? Mostly nothing.

And the poor? Sometimes a bit left over. That is if we're talking about general distribution. I always prefer to talk about giving individually.

We very strongly believe that God will provide for us. And I don't know if David's ever been to any conferences I've been at, but if I find out they're going to take a collection for me, I stop them. If I can.

And they say, we want to honour you, we want to bless you. And I do understand that. It's not that we don't need the money.

It's quite likely we've got nothing at all when I'm trying to stop them. Honestly. And I think, Jackie, what are you doing? Well, one of the reasons that I do try to stop them giving at that point is that if their response to my talk on the poor is to give to my poor, I don't want them to not minister to their own poor.

And the only reason I go anywhere in the world is to get people to find out how wonderful it is to serve the poor where they are. Not to give to money in my poor country. Now, if I leave and they decide afterwards that was really helpful, and we can see scripturally that it would be good if we weren't on helping those aliens over there, I wouldn't mind a bit.

But I don't want an emotional response or a guilt response. Because I've told them what God has done in our poor. I want the response to be helping their brother.

That's all. So I'm now talking about two things which you may not be able to reconcile. One is something's wrong with the church generally.

Because people of God do not give to the poor and they do not help missionaries. But the pastor and the building get an awful lot. And the second thing is that I'm in talking about collections, which I don't like anyway, really.

When Paul talked about one lot of money collections, he said, maybe you could pray about it before I come. He says that when I come, no collection will have to be made. So what he's really saying is don't out of emotion on the spot, which might be guilt or it might be God, I mean, who knows.

But he said pray about it before. So I think praying for the people of God to pray together and discuss together how to use what they've been given individually or corporately is a very healthy thing to do. And it's probably not done at all.

I went to Blaine Cook's when he'd just started his vineyard. And that day I'd come from Anaheim and they'd made a collection for me and I was weeping. And one man prayed for me and he knew exactly why I was weeping.

He said, I'm so sorry they bought you off with money. Of course it wasn't quite like that. We were very pleased to eat for three weeks.

My heart intention in speaking is never to get money. But I do think, on the other hand, the people of God should be talking and praying much more about how to use what they've got. And in response to what you've said earlier, I'd like to pick that up.

Margaret might have a word or two to say because on the other end, I mean, we've got groups not just in Hong Kong but in various other Asian countries. We have noticed that when foreign churches do send money, they somehow seem to think they might have a right in all kinds of rights, actually. Well, two sides of the coin, really.

I mean, we sent a team to the Philippines and I said to them, God bless you on your way and just don't forget to ask God for what you need because we actually had nothing to share with them. So for the first five years, they prayed and saw God provide miraculously for them and later they said, although it was really tough, it was really good that it happened because they learnt how to lay hold of what God's promised for them and for their people. The other side of the coin was there was a group of people that gave them money regularly to feed malnourished kids.

Of course, they were happy to receive it but the downside was they thought they could appear at any moment unannounced and make pronouncements on how they should be doing it and were quite offended when their advice was not taken. What does money buy? I think I think this ministry, Lovingly Flourish, is you've put sort of yeah, that's a mouthful. Now, if you trust me, that's OK.

I don't trust any ministry. You know, the boss changes. There's a new board next year.

Who knows if somebody's gone off with somebody else's wife. I don't know about ministries flourishing. I think you trust a person and you see, do I agree with their values? Because we live in missionary land and I can tell you that everybody, all Christians agree with preaching the gospel.

But the problem is when you get onto the mission field is you don't like the people you're doing it with. And that's where the fallout is. And ministry with the poor is the same thing.

We all want to help the poor. We just don't like the people we're doing it with. And we have different values, especially about money.

you know, in one Asian country, which was previously closed, such a pain. There was two couples from California whom we knew. They, well, who went.

And this was what they had in mind. We're going to go meet street children, take them into our home, worship, maybe teach them a trade or something. And we're going to walk from village to village, plant some wells, pray with the sick, sit under a palm tree and read the Bible and see.

That was it. And they were together with a national from that country who spent time in this country. But in a stream of church, which was completely different.

So they got simple, you know, I'm going to walk from village to village praying for the sick and take street kids into my home. He had a different mentality, because he learnt in a certain church in this country. This was his vision.

His vision was get an American evangelist over at enormous cost, but it doesn't matter because people here would pay. Hire a stadium, have a crusade, and from the people who believed, build physical churches. And that's what they did.

So they parted company, of course. So it would be your job to decide which one do you want? Do you want to send money to the mass crusade? Or do you trust the people who want to take the kids in? Now, some people may think that both are valid. But I think it's our responsibility to find out.

I would rather trust individuals than any ministry. And you can't believe the literature either. They don't mean to lie, but if we live in missionary land and we've read their missionary letters and they're just not true.

I mean, not quite true, you know. I used to live next door to a missionary who spent two weeks every month preparing photographs for her newsletter. And the other two weeks sending it out.

And it was... And it was all about... I mean, she took beautiful photographs of sweet looking kids. And everybody said, what a wonderful ministry. Well, you know, I've never seen her with one kid.

If you understand what I mean, what a wonderful ministry. Well, you don't know. So find out.

Find out. I would say, support someone you believe in. And I think it ought to be individuals.

It's very, very easy to whip up sympathy by printing magazines with poor kids and you may not have touched one. I'm not God. I simply can't answer for your life.

But if you're exercised in your heart and you understand that you start here and you love people and you'd love to be there, you'll probably get there one day. Because there are timings. And particularly if it concerns families and kids, I think.

When we've got a lot of people and some foreigners join us and sometimes they say, you know, but I'm called to, one of them said, Bethlehem. And we said, well, stay here for a couple of years because what you learn with how to help the poor here will help you anywhere because the principles and the heart is the same. So there are things that you can learn here which will help you in South America or Bethlehem

or anywhere.

It hasn't got to be, I'm supposed to be in that place, I must go. Because if you think you're supposed to be in that place and you go, you might hurt them. If you haven't yet learnt the things that are going to be helpful.

So what you say sounds absolutely wonderful. Practice and weep. And pray.

And go on yearning. It sounds good. And maybe you will take people with you.

Maybe it won't be just you. That might be even better. But do take people you like.

I mean it's extraordinary what seems to happen is mission agencies sort of put that one with that one with that one with that one just because they've all got the same vision. It's absolute calamity. It looks good on paper though.

So it sounds wonderful what you've been through. It sounds wonderful where you are. It sounds wonderful where you're going to go.

Let's stand and weep. Do some praying.

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