



Good Works Inc.—A FAST FROM SHELTER

LORD, INSPIRE MY THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE (MATTHEW 5:6 & ROMANS 14:17). CAUSE MY UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR HEART FOR THE POOR AND OPPRESSED TO GROW AND INCREASE MY (OUR) PERSPECTIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

#1 – Read all of Isaiah 58. What struck you from this chapter?

#2 – JESUS MISSION AND OURS. Read Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:14-30. From these passages, how would you define the mission of Jesus? Why did the people’s perspective change from “all spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips” (verse 22) to “all the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this” (verse 28)? What did Jesus say to them to make them change their view of him so dramatically? (see I Kings 17:1-15 & II Kings 5:1-14 for further study and context)

#3 – THE DANGER OF TOO MUCH. Read Deuteronomy 8:1-20, Proverbs 30: 7-9, Timothy 6:17-19, and Hebrews 13:5. What is the warning here of Deuteronomy? What are the dangers of having too much or too little according to the writer of Proverbs? Summarize what Paul is telling Timothy in your own words. What are we to “guard our hearts” against? Are you “rich” or are you “poor?” What does it mean to “love money?”

#4 –WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO GOD? Read Isaiah 1:10-17, Micah 6:8, & Matthew 23:23—What from these verses does God consider important? What seems to be the problem that God is speaking to in Isaiah and Jesus is speaking to in Matthew 23?

#5 –WHO IS IMPORTANT TO GOD? Read Matthew 25:31-46, Psalm 10:14-18, 68:5, Deuteronomy 10:18 & 14:28-29, 26:12, Proverbs 15:25, & 23:10, and James 1:26-27. Then read Romans 12:16 & Matthew 9:9-13. WHO are the people God is concerned about? What does God want us to give them? What other insights or observations do you have from reading and reflecting on these verses?

#6 –JOB’S LIFE Read Job chapter 1, Job 29:1-17 and Matthew 7:24-28. How did Job describe his life and what does he attribute his prosperity to? What does Job’s stability in the midst of adversity have to do with Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:24-28?

#7 – WHAT CAUSES POVERTY? Personal choices? Read Proverbs 6:9-11, Proverbs 10:4, Proverbs 11:3, Proverbs 13:18, Proverbs 14:23, Proverbs 20:4, Proverbs 21:25, Proverbs 24:33-34
Systemic “sin” –Proverbs 13:23, Proverbs 14:20, Proverbs 19:3-4 & 7, Exodus 1:8-22, Psalm 10:8-9, Isaiah 10:1-2*, Amos 5:11-12, Luke 15:14*, Ecclesiastes 5:8-9 (The River). What observations do you have from reading these verses?

#8 – GOD’S VIEW OF SUFFERING PEOPLE. Read Exodus 6:1-9. Then read Act 20:35, Romans 14:1, Romans 15:1, I Thessalonians 5:14, I Corinthians 9:22, Psalm 41:1-3, Psalm 82:3-4, Proverbs 14:21. What must we first recognize in people before we can expect them to respond to our message of hope? If knowing God and knowing the suffering of others is inseparable, why do you think knowing God is so closely associated with “defending the cause of the poor?” See Jeremiah 22:16 & Philippians 3:10-11, Proverbs 31:8-9. What are your reflections on these verses?

#9 – A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS. See Proverbs 31:1-9, Proverb 24:11-12, Proverbs 14:31, Proverbs 13:23 Psalm 82:3-4. What does it mean to be a voice for the voiceless? List a few observations from these passages. Can you share an example of someone who was a voice for the voiceless?

Proverbs 19:17 - He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.

Proverbs 28:27 - He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Proverbs 28:5—Evil men do not understand justice but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.

FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY

THE MISSION. Read Exodus 3:1 – 4: 14. Can you find the 5 questions that Moses asks God in chapters 3&4? What is God’s response to each of Moses’ questions? What observations can you make from reflecting on this section of scripture?

THE MULTITUDES. See Matthew 9:35-38. Who are the “multitudes” in Jesus is referring to here? Who are the multitudes (people on the fringes of your life) that God wants you to look upon with compassion? Who are the sheep without a shepherd in the routines of *your* day in *your* community? In what ways might you consider them “harassed?” Who might be harassing them? In what ways are they “helpless?”

THE PARTY. See Luke 14:12-14. What is “the party” in 21st century terms? Who are we not encouraged to invite to the party? Who should we invite to the party and why? Where is a modern day example of this going on? Be sure to read the whole context of this chapter and record your observations.

LAY DOWN YOUR SOCIAL LIFE. See Matthew 9:9-13 & Romans 12:16. Where and with whom would Jesus hang out? Where is Jesus in the Matthew passage and what is he modeling to us? What does it mean to for us to ask Christ to be LORD of our social life?

COMMUNITY. See Acts 2:44 & 4:32. Why and how was the early church able to release their possessions to those in need? How does being in a secure community where you are loved accepted and where you have a place to serve empower us to release our ‘stuff’ to those in need?

THE GOOD WHAT? Read Luke 10:25-37 Who is *your* neighbor? In what ways can you identify with the man beaten up on the side of the road? Have you ever been abused or abandoned in this way? Can you identify with the Priest or Levite in the story? In what ways to you understand the perspective of the Priest or the Levite?

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. Read Matthew 5:43-48 & Luke 6:32-36. What kind of *perfection* is God looking for in us? Do you have enemies? If so, why do you think you have enemies? Are they people who don’t like you because of your bad behavior or because you live out your convictions? What is Jesus saying about the kingdom here? List some observation you have.

THE POOR YOU WILL HAVE WITH YOU ALWAYS? Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8, Deuteronomy 15:1-11 Does the Deuteronomy passage change the meaning of the gospel passage for you? What can we learn about God’s heart for the poor from these passages?

DOING GOOD: Doing good works is the door thru which we can understand justice: Matthew 5:16, Acts 10:38, Psalm 41:1-3, Psalm 34:14, Psalm 37:3, Luke 6:27, I Timothy 6:18, Titus 3:1, 8 & 14, Ephesians 2:10. What are the “good works” God has called you to do? What examples from others have inspired you? Share an example from your own life of good works you have done as “the outward expression of the inward change.”

*“All they asked was that we would continue to remember the poor,
the very thing I was eager to do.” Galatians 2:10*

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***Good Works exists to connect people from all walks of life with the poor so
that the kingdom of God can be experienced.***