

Sermon Notes

A Passion for What's Right and Fair

Great Ends of the Church: Promotion of Social Righteousness

James 1:27, 2:12-20; Amos 5: 18-24

The National Presbyterian Church

David A. Renwick, February 23, 2014

THEMES

1. Definitions

- Righteousness: *What's right, fair, or just in any given circumstance*
- Biblical Righteousness: (1) *What's right in God's sight, and (2) what's fair and just for our neighbor in any given circumstance*
- Being Biblically Righteous: not just (1) *Doing the right thing;*
but (2) *Being rightly related to someone (e.g., God or neighbor)*

2. Importance:

- Pursuing worship without social righteousness in a society in which much is wrong *is abhorrent to God*
- Pursuing social righteousness is a major theme in (i) the Old Testament, (ii) with Jesus, and (iii) in our Presbyterian heritage (Calvin)

3. Implementation: How?

- Escaping from political partisanship
- Maintaining a truly Biblical foundation
- Creating church community that is righteous

MOSES

Deuteronomy 15:11 Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the **poor** and needy neighbor in your land."

Deuteronomy 24:19-21 When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the **alien**, the **orphan**, and the **widow**, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

Deuteronomy 27:19 "Cursed be anyone who deprives the **alien**, the **orphan**, and the **widow** of justice." All the people shall say, "Amen!"

THE PROPHETS

Isaiah 1:15-17 Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen . . . cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, plead for the widow.

3:14-15 The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people . . . What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the **poor**? says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Isaiah 11:4 but with righteousness he shall judge the **poor**, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

Isaiah 58:6-7 Is not this the fast that I choose: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless **poor** into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Jeremiah 22:15-16:Are you a king because you compete in cedar? Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the **poor** and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the Lord

Jeremiah 29:7 Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile; pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Ezekiel 16:49 This was the guilt of Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the **poor** and needy.

Amos 2:7, 5:24 they who trample the head of the **poor** into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way; (5:24) BUT let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream

Micah 6:8 God has told you what is good; what does the Lord require of you? **Do justice, Love kindness, and Walk humbly with your God.**

Zechariah 7:10 do not oppress the **widow**, the **orphan**, the **alien**, or the **poor**

Malachi 3:5 I will be swift to bear witness . . . against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the **widow** and the **orphan**, against those who thrust aside the **alien**, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:10 **bring the full tithe** into my storehouse

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 12:40 They devour **widows'** houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Luke 4:18 Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the **poor**."

Luke 6:20 Jesus said: "Blessed are the **poor**: yours is the kingdom of God."

Acts 6:1 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their **widows** were being neglected in the **daily distribution of food**.

Romans 15:26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to **share** their **resources** with the **poor** among the saints at Jerusalem.

James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for **orphans** and **widows** in their distress . . .

RESOURCES

Steve Corbett, Brian Fikkert, John Perkins and David Platt, *When Helping Hurts*

Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*

Acton Institute, *Poverty Cure* (DVD Series)

Tom Cousins, web search *Miracle at Eastlake*

Bruce Wydick/Christianity Today, web search *Save the World, Sponsor a Child*