

GOOD NEWS FOR THE POOR

Here are some early words of the **kingdom manifesto** Jesus proclaimed in the synagogue.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me
to **preach good news to the poor** - Luke 4:18

Many of the Old Testament prophecies said a mark of the Messiah would be that 'the Spirit of the Lord would be upon him.' In his book *Rise To Conquer*, Larry Poland states that he was a Christian for 20 years before he saw the significance of this. Here are his words....

During those years it didn't impress me that Jesus was able to do supernatural things like love enemies, turn the other cheek, and go the second mile. After all, I reasoned, he was God. It didn't impress me that God can perform like God. I am a man. But it was at this point that I was blind. The very point of the kingdom solution is that a mortal, a man, can have the Spirit of God upon him. The immortal, invisible Spirit of the Almighty can pulse through my veins, can excite every corpuscle, guide every thought, superintend every decision, motivate to right responses, and create God's character. Jesus was also a man, and when a man can live like God, that opens up a whole new world of solutions. - *Rise To Conquer* / Christian Herald Books 1979

Throughout his book, Poland refers to the Church and the church. The Church with a capital C represents the true believers in Jesus who have surrendered to Him and live for Him. The church with a small c speaks of that motley assortment of those who align with organized Christianity but who don't necessarily have a personal relationship with Christ. We will use the same model in our writings.

The gospel of the kingdom begins with the Spirit but continues with practical relevance to all areas of life.

The first group to be addressed with the good news of the kingdom manifesto are the **poor** —

Jesus said that the poor would always be among us. In our modern era we have something unknown to most societies in history, a middle class. Much of the world has lived in relative poverty midst a small group of rich elite who control most of the resources around them.

As Jesus read from Isaiah 61, it must have reminded its hearers of the **promised Jubilee** that God had promised to Israel centuries before.

Consecrate the fiftieth year and **proclaim liberty** throughout the land to all the inhabitants. - Leviticus 25:10

At the Jubilee year, there was **release** for slaves and those in debtor prisons. There was **return** of land to previous owners and its **renewal** through having a year of rest. When Jesus came, he was the fulfillment of Jubilee, he was the **God sent liberator** who would bring hope for all those under various types of bondage and oppression. Down through the centuries it has been the influence of Christ that has greatly influenced the poor through much charity work. It has also been the principles of the kingdom that lift people out dire poverty and into greater blessing. Political parties have different views about how government should spend money. Liberals want more money for **welfare** programs. Conservatives want more money spent on **warfare** through the military. Neither is willing to see cutbacks on their sacred cows even though there is much bloated bureaucracy and waste in both areas.

Helping the poor is important to God but the best way to do so is through wise stewardship. Years ago I read about the average percentage of money that actually gets to the people through various means. I confirmed it with this report.

Government charity: 30% gets to the poor, 70% goes to administrative bureaucracy.

Private charity: 70 % gets to the poor, 30% goes for administration etc.

Top Christian charities: 90% gets to the poor, 10 % goes for administration etc.

Source: The Costs of Income Redistribution and Private Charity by JR Edwards
in the Journal of Libertarian Studies 2007

When the Salvation Army has as their slogan...**doing the most good**, it is actually true. Charity Navigator rates charities from 1 to 5 stars. (The government would get a zero). Giver beware! There are even so called Christian charities that are not what they seem (a few TV preachers come to mind).

I recently read the numbers from a private charity foundation based on their 2014 tax records. Their total revenue was \$177 million. Their 486 employees were paid \$34.8 million. Their fees and expenses were \$91.3 million. They gave \$5.1 million to charity (less than 3% of their income). The name of this charity is the Clinton Foundation. It is not good news for the poor as it is not rooted in the principles of the kingdom.

Jesus was a giver to the poor as evidenced by the disciples reaction at the Last Supper. When Judas Iscariot the treasurer left them, the disciples thought he was going to spend money for the feast or give something to the poor be, for Jesus often did that. - John 13:29. Like me.... you may wonder, why did Jesus keep Judas as the treasurer since he was a thief? - John 12:6 There is a good article on this at desiringgod.org Perhaps Jesus was giving us a clear example of the danger of loving money exemplified by the final result of Judas' life. Despite the malfeasance of Judas, Jesus trusted his Father in heaven to provide the money for his roving band of up to 70 disciples plus have extra to give to the needy. Jesus had a purpose in everything he lived and taught.

Let us be alert to how we can be a blessing to the poor around us directly and to others around the world through wise charitable giving. Local churches are a good place to start. they have better stewardship oversight than some distant bloated bureaucracy in Washington, D.C., the District of Corruption. James, Peter and John gave some instructions to Paul and Barnabas as they were sent off to reach the Gentiles with the gospel message.

***All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor
the very thing I was eager to do. - Galatians 2:10***

Let us go and do likewise.

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