

The Problem of the Poor

Mark 14:6-7

Introduction:

- A. Jesus taught three great principles about the poor.
 - 1. They will always be with us.
 - 2. They give us opportunity to do good.
 - 3. They are not our most important concern.
 - a. Jesus did not declare a “war on poverty,” but a war on sin.
 - b. Jesus did not seek economic and social equality, but spiritual equality.
- B. Let’s notice three areas of New Testament teaching concerning the poor.
 - 1. The Place of the Poor in our priorities.
 - 2. The Individual Christians duty to the poor.
 - 3. The Church’s duty to the poor.

Discussion:

I. The Poor and Our Priorities.

- A. The poor get top priority with the social gospel — feed, relieve, then teach.
- B. The lost get top priority with gospel of Christ (cf. John 6:27).

II. The Poor and Personal Duty.

- A. Work to avoid personal poverty (1 Tim. 5:8,13; 2 Thess. 3:8-11).
- B. Work to have the means to help the poor (Eph. 4:28; cf. Jas 2:15,16)
- C. Find time for personal service besides mere gifts (cf. Gal 6:10; Jas 1:27)

III. The Poor and the Church’s Duty.

- A. NT churches relieved poor saints. (Acts 2:42; 4:34; 6:1; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor 8:4).
 - 1. A difference in church and individual action (1 Tim. 5:16; cf. Matt. 18:15-17).
 - 2. No authority in 2 Cor. 9:13 for church aid to sinners — “all” same as Acts 2:44,45.
- B. NT churches cooperated in relieving poor saints (Acts 11:30; Rom. 15:25-28; 1 Cor. 16:1 2 Cor 8 & 9).
 - 1. Sent it directly the church in need.
 - 2. Did not sent it through a “sponsoring church.”
 - 3. Did send it to or through a human organization (cf. Acts 11:27-30)
 - a. Human organizations displace God’s organization — the church.
 - b. Human organizations do what church could and should do in the first place.

Conclusion:

- A. Let us be concerned about poor, but more so about the lost.
- B. Let us help the personally poor as we have ability and opportunity — saint or sinner.
- C. Let us let the church relieve only those with whom it has been charged.