

# What are the most crucial issues facing the church today?

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- LGBTQ+ movement?
- Sexual immorality?
- Abortion?
- Denigration of the Scriptures?
- Ordination of women?
- Lousy church leadership?



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- Seeker-friendly churches?
- Health-Wealth 'gospel'?
- Youth leaving the church when they leave home?
- Youth ill-taught in the Scriptures?
- A biblical illiterate culture inside and outside?
- General encroachment of liberalism in the culture and within the church?



# Where should care for the poor rank?

- LGBTQ+ movement?
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- Lousy leadership in the church?

**Caring for the poor?**





**REDEEMER**

Presbyterian Church | PCA

»» PRESENTS ««

# COUNTER CULTURE

FOLLOWING CHRIST  
IN AN ANTI-CHRISTIAN AGE

Ministering to the Poor When There is so Much at Stake

# How do we view poverty?

A consequence of the Fall?



# How do we view the poor?

Society's unfortunates who are always with us?



# How do we view poverty?

God's judgment on indigent or undeserving sinners?



# How do we view poverty?

A test for the righteous wealthy?

**Matt 25:34-50** - *For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’*



# Why should it be a focus of the church?

‘From cover to cover in Scripture, we do not read of a God who is tentative toward the poor. Instead God is extravagant in his eagerness to hear, help, defend and demonstrate his compassion to them. Therefore God’s people must be nothing less....we must guard the truths of the gospel, but we must obey God.’



# What do the Scriptures say? – The Law

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**Deut 15:11** - *For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*



# What do the Scriptures say? The Wisdom Books

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**Psalm 41:1** - *Blessed is the one who considers the poor. In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him*

**Prov 19:17** - *Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.*

**Prov 21:13** - *Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself cry out and not be answered*



# What do the Scriptures say? The Prophets

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**Ez 16:49-50** - *Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.*

**Jer 22:16** - *He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? declares the Lord.*



# What do the Scriptures say? Jesus

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**Luke 12:33** - *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.*



# What are obstacles to ministering to the poor?

*Fitzgerald: 'The rich are different from you and me.'*

*Hemingway: 'Yes, they have more money.'*

- Conflicts in obedience to the scriptures?
- Suspicion about why they are poor?
- Because we are wealthy?
- Because it is a liberal cause and the world always does things, even seemingly good, for bad reasons?



# Would We Do This?

**Acts 2:45** - *They were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And they sold their possessions (both their landed property and their movable goods) and distributed the price among all, according as any had need.*



## Or This?

**2 Corinthians 8:1-4** - *We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, **begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints***





# Or This?

**Luke 12:33** - *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy.*



# An example of our struggle

Do we ask, *'Who are the poor and where do we find them?'*

We might as well ask *'Who is my neighbor?'*



# Our Legacy to our children?

- A church that lives sacrificially
- A church that pre-eminently believes that ministering to the poor is a primary declaration of obedience to God and a distinctive mark of his people



# Do we want this for our legacy?

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*1 Tim 6:17-19 - As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*



# Why do we care for the poor?

‘We don’t care for the poor because of some superficial sense that we have to, but because of a supernatural compulsion that causes us to want to.’



# How shall we judge?

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*'How shall a man judge what to do in such times?'*  
*'As he has ever judged... Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men.'*

It ain't the Scriptures, but even so it ain't bad.



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