



For the Marginalized and Oppressed

Background

The marginalized of society are those that the dominant group has deemed less worthy, less important, less human- it is because of these things they are subject to oppression. Oppression sits like a weight on your chest; it takes away your ability to interact with society at large, silences your concerns, can restrict your finances, shackles your goals, and disempowers. The Primary Education Project works with marginalized communities in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The people we work with are religious minorities, ethnic minorities, females, and the poorest of the poor. They are told that because of what they believe in, the language they speak, the job they have, or the gender they were born with- they are not worth much. But at PEP we tell them a different story. We tell them they are deeply loved by God, created by Him, so loved that Christ died for them, and because of that worth everything!

Scripture

Psalm 12:5 “Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the Lord. “I will protect them from those who malign them.”

Psalm 82:3-4 “Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Isaiah 41:17 “The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.”

Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Matthew 8: 14 “When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Questions

How does being a minority group or in deep poverty oppress people? Have you seen this first hand?

How does God feel about the oppressed?

How do we contribute, at times without knowing, to the oppression in the world?

What did Jesus say his purpose was in coming to earth?

How did Jesus treat the oppressed?

What can you do today, this week, and this month to empower the marginalized and share God's love with the oppressed?



Giving

Scripture:

John 6: 5-8 “When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, ‘It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’”

Matthew 19:21 “Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’”

Mark 12:30-31 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

John 14:15 “If you love me, keep my commands.”

Thoughts:

Often times we place such effort in keeping goods for ourselves and it distracts us from seeking righteousness and justice around us. It is only after we stop lusting after the things of this world that God can use us to our potential. We may intellectually understand that we cannot serve both God and wealth, but it is another thing to give up one in recognition of the other. We must move from being curious with the idea of complete surrender and the *willingness* to give away our preoccupation with the things of this world--to a state of mind that is free to seek righteousness and justice because it is not weighted down with our worries of our belongings. Our abundance should convict us to be even more persistent in our advocacy and in our actions—even more insistent that we create a world where all our neighbors’ needs are met. The first step is giving God our loaves and fishes. By loving the Lord with all our hearts we love not only our neighbors that live next door, not only the neighbors we have yet to meet, but even those neighbors whom we name our enemies. Do we love Him? And if so, are we keeping his commands?

Questions:

What did the boy give up? How much did he have?

What are the commands Christ gives us?

What are your loaves and fishes?

How can you better love your neighbor today, this week, and this month?

Are you willing to give all that you have?