Gospel with the Poor | Sermon Series

Intro: “All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do all along.” Galatians 2:10

As he sought approval to embark on the world’s first church-planting movement, the Apostle Paul recounts the one thing the key elders of the Jerusalem Church required of him. This sole consideration – did you remember the poor? – is a significant plumbline.

What do the poor mean to us? In the profound moment when Jesus says, “…Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matt. 25:40), he teaches us not just to see the poor as “underprivileged” or “needy,” but to see him. Jesus identifies himself with the poor and apparently takes how we treat them personally.

As a church, we can embrace a vision of the Kingdom of God advancing through “praying with those in need, preaching the gospel with those in need, helping each other meet physical needs, securing justice together, and helping each other realize our purpose in the world.”

Week 1: Discovering Our Roots (Intro) + Institution or Organism (Study 1)

- Central Text: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matt. 22:37-39

- Also: Luke 6:17-36

- Prompt: Many Christians confuse the church as an institution with the church as an organism. In other words, they really haven’t grasped how active the church’s role should be in the community. This distancing is rooted in the spirit of materialism that grips our culture and church, compelling us to race off after personal satisfaction and individualism.

- Many people are happy to take care of the poor at a distance. But when the poor turn out to be unstable and want what you’ve got, then you withdraw.

- Instead, God calls us to love our neighbor—our poor neighbor, marginalized neighbor, as God love us and as if it were us.
Week 2: Catch God’s Heart (Study 2) + Your Kingdom Come (Study 4)

- Central Text: Matt. 25: 31-46, James 2:14-16
- Prompt: What does the Kingdom of God look like? The whole kingdom and all that it encompasses? How do we live our day to day lives in such a way as to reveal the Kingdom of God. God’s heart is for the poor and you’re invited into the story of kingdom restoration. What does the Kingdom of God look like? The whole kingdom and all that it encompasses? How do we live our day to day lives in such a way as to reveal the Kingdom of God. What tangible steps do we take to spread the Kingdom of God to all of the corners of our neighborhoods, communities, the world?

Week 3: God or Mammon? (Study 5) + Justice and Justice Alone (Study 7)

- Prompt: We can’t serve God and mammon. We can’t listen to messages from the world which advertise extreme caution when the Bible advocates extreme generosity. The two are mutually exclusive. Either we follow one or the other. There is no middle way.
- When we choose to serve God, we discover God is a God of Justice and Mercy. We see the perfect expression of the Father’s Mercy and Justice how He sent His Son Jesus to deliver us from mammon and “the powers of this world.” How does living a life of justice and mercy affect our choices and our lives?

Week 4: Servant or Lord? (Study 9) + Over to You (Study 10)

- Central Text: John 13:1-17, Isa. 6:8
- Prompt: A servant serves. There is no room for selfishness, preferences, demands or rights. Are we really willing to be the servants that God has called us to be?

-Jesus doesn’t call us into passivity. We don’t just read about and admire His works. Our ultimate goal is to do them. When Jesus sent out His disciples they “did the stuff” that Jesus did. When He ascended, they, and now we, simply carry on doing it.

-“Remember the poor,” God says to you. It isn’t the responsibility of “everyone else” to reach out and help – it’s yours.