

Why Is Serving the Poor So Important?

By Bob Sanders – Baja Christian Ministries

Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, is introduced to us in Acts 10. Who was he and why was he so significant? Cornelius was the first Non-Jew to be chosen by Jesus to be saved and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! So...why is that so important? Because... He was Jesus' first pick! Can we for a moment picture Jesus in Heaven saying, "I can't wait to bless this guy, I love him, I'm pleased with him, he's my first choice for salvation beyond the chosen children of Israel? Acts 10 has this to say of Cornelius: "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering to God." (Acts 10:4-NIV) Then again, "...Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor (Acts 10:31-NIV) Is God making a statement here? I believe He is! Along with fervent faith-filled prayer, I believe that serving the poor is very important to God! To further make my point... In the book of Galatians the key apostles Peter, John and James are in a church boarding meeting together with Barnabas and Paul...and the ministry agenda of great importance is then revealed: "All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, which Paul said, "was the very thing that I was eager to do (Gal 2:10—NIV)." Notice they didn't say, remember to teach in an expository manner or remember to fully immerse when you baptize! Indirectly this important verse reveals an important question: Is serving the poor very important to God, to the poor, to our own lives, to our families, to our churches and to our countries? I believe it is! Enclosed is a treatise I arranged from Scripture entitled "Why Serving the Poor is So Important!" Please take time to read through it and make your own determination. It's a topical scripture verse upon scripture verse study on this important subject. But before you read it... please let me share a few more prefacing remarks:

I believe that some of the most powerful promises of blessing, protection, and refreshment in all of the Scriptures are anchored in the faith-filled act of service and giving to the poor. The Father's good pleasure of giving us His Kingdom (Luke 12:33-34-NIV), which is righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit... (Rom 14:17--NIV) is largely grounded in these vital steps of obedience. Promises that our spirit and soul shall be greatly refreshed like a well watered garden whose springs never fail (Isaiah 58:11) are rooted in properly connecting to serving the poor. Yet, with all the amazing and incredible Scriptural blessings promised to those who respond, there is also a downside for those who don't respond, in which we should also take heed and learn from! In Ezekiel 16:49-50 it states that God judged Sodom because she neglected the poor. Zechariah 7:9-14 states that God judged Israel and scattered her throughout the earth because she didn't bring justice to the poor. King Nebuchadnezzar was forced to eat grass for 7 years in judgment because he refused to remember the poor when Daniel declared to him, "...Break off your sins by being righteous and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity" (Daniel 4:27) ... which indirectly suggests another vital condition of blessing! In the western world we've grown to love our prosperity. With that in mind, it's important to remember that biblical history shows us that prosperity not coupled with charity gradually heaps up God's reluctant judgment in severity. In many ways, it seems our country is in troubled times. Our land needs healing! Is it possible that embracing God's command to serve the poor might be a key to healing our land? Is it possible that the prosperity of this country could be lengthened as Daniel inferred, if serving and blessing the poor were to become a priority? What about protection against terrorism? Psalm 41:1-3 states, "Blessed is he that considers the poor. The Lord... will deliver him from the will of his enemies." Certainly terrorists are not friends. Does

this promise fit here? Could God's protection and deliverance from the will of unknown enemies in our future result from serving the poor? The noble Bereans searched the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-12)... let us also search the Scriptures regarding this important matter of serving the poor. Hopefully this treatise assist some to further jumpstart this process and offer some insights as to why the serving the poor is so important from God's Word? My prayer is that we as the modern day Church would make serving the poor a priority as did the early church and say as the Apostle Paul did, "that this very thing I was eager to do" (Gal 2:10)!

In the strong exhorting words of Heb 10:24-25—Let us consider how to stir up one another into love and good deeds as we see the Day of our Lord approaching (Heb 10:24-25). Thank you for reading through my introduction and the treatise that follows. May God bless you! Bob Sanders

Why Is Serving The Poor So Important?

Because...whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Pro 14:31—NIV) He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward him for what he has done. (Pro 19:17—NIV) A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. (Pro 11:25--NIV) ...then you shall take delight in the Lord...and ride upon the heights of the earth... (Isa 58:6-14—NRSV) ...And you will be blessed, because they can not repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke-14:13-14--NRSV)

Because...He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever (2Cor 9:9-NIV) ...not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. (2Cor 9:12—NIV)

Because...Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. (Acts 10:4—NIV) ...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me. (Matt 25:40) He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? Says the Lord. (Jer 22:16)

Because...you should not leave undone the more important things. (Luke 11:42-NLT) He that gives unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hides his eyes shall have many a curse. (Proverbs 28:27) ...give to the needy...and you will be clean all over. (Luke 11:41-NLT)

Because...Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I (Isaiah 58:9—NIV) ...God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. (Acts 10:31-NIV) Blessed is he that considers the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of sickness: You will restore him in his sickness. (Ps 41:1-3)

Because...the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I (the Lord) command you, saying, You shall open your hand wide unto your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land. (Deut 15:11) ...remembering the words of the Lord Jesus who said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35) ...give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. (2Cor 9:7)

Because...by this service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for your obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. (2Cor 9:13-14—NIV)

Because...The righteous considers the cause of the poor: but the wicked regard not to know it. (Pro 29:7) ...among my people are found wicked men...they have become great, and grown rich...they shine: ... they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not...the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy they do not judge. ...shall not My Soul be avenged on such a nation as this? (Jer. 5:28-29)

Because...the Lord Almighty says: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor... but they refused to pay attention...and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was angry. When I called, they didn't listen; so when they called, I would not listen, says the Lord Almighty. I scattered them with a whirlwind among the nations where they were strangers. (Zech. 7:9-14--NIV)

Because...this was the sin of ... Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. (Eze. 16:49-50—NIV)

Because...If my people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2Chron 7:14) ...break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity (Dan 4:27—NKJV).

Because...the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. (Ps 9:17-18) Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. (Pro 31:9)

Because...Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...(James 1:27—NIV) Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised to those who love Him (James 2:5—NIV) ...remember the poor...(Gal 2:10)

Because...What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. (Ja 2:14-17)

Because...In Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Gal 5:6--NIV) This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ...let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in His Presence. (1Jo 3:16-19—NIV)

Because...the Kingdom of God is... righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit... (Rom 14:17--NIV) Your Father's good pleasure is to give you the Kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the poor; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Luke 12:33-34--RSV) ...By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so they may take hold of real life (1Tim 6:17-19--NLT)

Because...If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (Isa 58:10-11—RSV) ...you shall be called Repairer of the Breach...(Isa. 58:12—RSV) ...and...ride upon the heights of the earth...(Isa 58:14—RSV)

Because...the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble plans he stands. (Isa 32:8—NIV) And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He...will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. (2Cor 9:7-10--RSV) only... remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do. (Gal 2:10—RSV)

Scripture verses compiled by Bob Sanders 4/8/04 www.bajachristian.org

All verses not from the King James Version are noted as: NIV—New International Version, RSV—Revised Standard Version, NASV—New American Standard Version, NKJV—New King James Version, NRSV—New Revised Standard Version or NLT—New Living Translation. In italics I changed some of the archaic words in the King James to more appropriate modern words and the thou's to you's for better readability. Also I shortened some verses to make the emphasis. I believe the context of each principle or point is correct, but I highly recommend that you open you study them in your Bible to test each context. Thanks! Bob Sanders