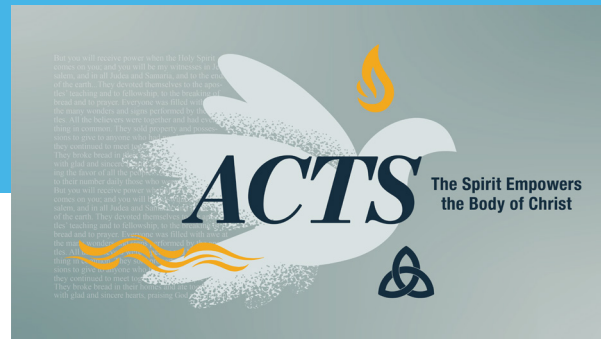


# Discussion Questions

February 25, 2024

## Acts 15: Remember the Poor



1. Read Galatians 2:6-10, Paul's recounting of the meeting with the Apostles in Jerusalem regarding his ministry to Gentiles.

- What is the one thing they demand Paul do as he takes the message of Jesus to the Gentile world?
- What does Paul's response to their demand tell you about Paul's understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this show us about how the early church understood the role of caring for the poor in relation to following Jesus?

2. Read Ezekiel 16:48-50.

- What do we primarily focus on today for the cause of the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah?
- In this passage why does God say he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah?
- Discuss what this shows about God's heart for the poor.

3. Read Isaiah 58:2-10

- What do the Israelites think about themselves?
- Why is God so angry with them?
- In 58:10, the literal translation is "offer your life/being," or "spend yourself" on behalf of the hungry. What does that practically look like for us today?

4. Read Jeremiah 22:16.

- Discuss the idea that to know God is to care for the needy and to neglect the poor is to neglect God Himself.
- How does this concept challenge your attitudes and actions?

5. Reflect on the Testimonies that were shared of how negative worldviews were confronted of caring for the poor and marginalized. If appropriate, share your awareness of any prejudices or biases you may hold regarding the poor or marginalized. How can we actively work to overcome these barriers in our pursuit of following Jesus?

6. How can we practically incorporate caring for the poor, marginalized, houseless, widows, orphans, single mom's, etc into our daily lives beyond a "mission trip?"

# Personal Meditation

February 25, 2024

1. This week during your times with the Lord read through the following passages focusing on God's heart for the poor, marginalized, widows & orphans, etc. Ideally, write down a summary of what each passage says about God's heart for caring for those in need:

Deuteronomy 15:4-11

Isaiah 1:10-20

Isaiah 58:1-14

Jeremiah 22:15-17

Zechariah 7:1-14

Matthew 25:31-46

1 John 3:16-19

2. Prayerfully reflect on where your own worldview, heart, and actions are out of alignment with that of God. Ask the Lord if there any fears, prejudices, biases, political views or experiences that get in the way of sharing God's heart?

3. Consider what practical ways the Lord might be speaking to you to move more towards "pouring yourself out on behalf of" the hungry, the needy, the widows, orphans, etc as He says in Isaiah 58:10.

**Acts 15:1 - 2 (NLT)**

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: "Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

**Galatians 2:10 (NIV)**

All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

**Luke 4:18 (NLT)**

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.

**Isaiah 1:11–17 (NLT)**

"What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?" says the Lord. "I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me!

...I want no more of your pious meetings. I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims. Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows.

**Isaiah 58:2–10 (NLT)**

They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me...

They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. 'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!'

"I will tell you why!" "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers. You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the Lord?

"No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people.

Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. Feed the hungry, [offer your life/being, spend yourself on behalf of] and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

**Jeremiah 22:16 (NLT)**

He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?" says the Lord.