

God Helps Those Who Help the Helpless

I. Slide#1 Announce:

- A. Slide#2 Old Town Temecula Street Painting Festival. [Lee Rupp; Maddy Meyers] Sat watch artist; Sun Awards
- B. Slide#3 Haiti Teachers Team - 14 teachers. Leave Sun nite for a week.
 1. Actual Conf (Tues-Fri).
 2. 150 Haitian Teachers; representing 17 schools; who teach 4500 students.
- C. Slide#4 Marleen Van de Voorde (Cindy Arnhold) - Interview [Marleen runs an elderly in-home care facility]
 1. Marleen how has being a **registered nurse** helped you on the mission field?
 2. Slide#5 You are the **executive director** of the **Kenedi Foundation**. A humanitarian organization working in conjunction with the Korce Evangelical Church. How does that relationship work?
 3. Slide#6 What's new with your ministry?
 4. If you had one God sized dream for your ministry what would that be?

II. Slide#7 Intro:

- A. As with much Hebrew poetry, this psalm is structured as a *chiastic structure* (Key-astic)[literary device]
 1. **a** didactic(teaching) **introduction** & associated prayer of confidence (1-4)
 2. **b** **petition** of the psalmist (5)
 3. **c** words and behavior of the adversary (6-8)
 4. **c** words and behavior of the adversary (9-10)
 5. **b** **prayer** of the psalmist (11)
 6. **a** didactic **conclusion** and associated Temple worship (12)
 - a) The 13th vs. here functions as the **conclusion** to the 1st book of the 5 books of psalms, probably divided up by Ezra.
 - b) Note also the 1st book of Psalms **start & end** w/a **blessing** (i.e. Ps.1 & 41; also Ps.32).
- B. Slide#8,9 Title: *God Helps Those Who Help the Helpless*.
- C. Outline: Empathy, Mercy, Integrity.
- D. Catholic scholars coined the phrase "God's preferential option for the poor" to describe a phenomenon they found throughout both the OT & NT: God's partiality toward the poor and the disadvantaged. Why would God single out the poor for special attention over any other group? What makes the poor deserving of God's concern? Writer Monika Hellwig lists the following "advantages" to being poor:
 1. The poor know they are in urgent need of redemption.

2. The poor know not only their dependence on God and on powerful people but also their interdependence with one another.
3. The poor rest their security not on things but on people.
4. The poor have no exaggerated sense of their own importance, and no exaggerated need of privacy.
5. The poor expect little from competition and much from cooperation.
6. The poor can distinguish between necessities and luxuries.
7. The poor can wait, because they have acquired a kind of dogged patience born of acknowledged dependence.
8. The fears of the poor are more realistic and less exaggerated, because they already know that one can survive great suffering and want.
9. When the poor have the Gospel preached to them, it sounds like good news and not like a threat or a scolding.
10. The poor can respond to the call of the Gospel with a certain abandonment and uncomplicated totality because they have so little to lose and are ready for anything.

III. Slide#10 **EMPATHY (1-3)** [Empathy - your pain in my heart. Jess Lair]

- A. (1) This potential **Blessedness** is our for the taking. **It may be entered into at any time, any moment, & we may dwell in it all the days of our lives.**
 1. So don't beat yourself up, do something about it.
- B. God Helps Those Who Help the Helpless? - Not like God is a celestial vending machine..I put in my good deeds in the money slot & out comes my product.
 1. Yet, **sowing & reaping** are woven into the way our world is structured.
 - a) **Just don't understand it in a superficial way.** (just as sowing & reaping seeds aren't superficial)
- C. Slide#11 **Poor** (Heb. *dal*) - **5 main Heb words in OT.**
 1. [**ani** & **anaw** - denotes one who is *wrongfully impoverished or dispossessed*. **Ebyon** - *a beggar imploring charity*. **Dal** connotes *a thin, weakly person such as an impoverished, deprived peasant*. **Ras** - an essentially neutral term]¹
 2. The most common biblical connotation of "**the poor**", both OT & NT, relates to those who are **economically impoverished do to calamity or exploitation**.
 3. **Poor** - better translated **helpless** or **powerless**; the **needy**; those **taken advantage of**; **lowest in society** (Dalits in India - darkest of Haitians); those **aging out** of the foster care system; those **trafficked** (for either sex or work); the **illiterate** (just back in 2002 in India, of the 1.05bill, did you know 59% of the pop could read?); the **1.2 billion** in **absolute poverty** & the added **1.6 billion** who are **very poor**; the **refugees** through out our world & the **IDP's**; the **gypsy's** (2-12 million worldwide).

¹ Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, Ronald Sider, pg.41.

- D. **Slide#12 Considers the poor** - obviously more than just *mental activity*. The result is **action** on behalf of. Action that actually helps the **poor/helpless/powerless**. Which of course **includes** thoughtful consideration.
1. The blessing is not for those who close their eyes and throw money in any direction.
 - a) **Illus:** Theater Sun, rt before Superman, trust the theater to pick **where** your generosity will go, & trust **their spending** of it?
 2. Those who are hurting need different things and we won't know what those things are unless we **consider** it.
 - a) **Do they need medicine? a job? training? education for their children? capitalization for a business? debt forgiveness? What do they need? Consider it, and to consider** it biblically is to act on it.
- E. There are **7 things** God will do for the one who shows mercy:
1. **Deliver him; protect, preserve, bless him on earth, not deliver him to his enemies, strengthen him, & restore him.**
 - a) List goes from General to specific. God cares about the Christian life in **specific** ways.

IV. **Slide#13 MERCY (4-10)**

- A. (4) Pleads for **mercy** - 1st because he's sinned. 2nd, because he had previously made a point of extending it.
1. **Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.** Mt.5:7
 2. So he's remembering the times when **the crises** was someone else's & **he** was the benefactor.
 - a) **Slide#14** I like the illustration: **A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death.** "But I don't ask for **justice**," the mother explained. "I plead for **mercy**." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be **mercy** if he deserved it, and **mercy** is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.
- B. **Slide#15** (8) Serious illness of the king are always watched w/interest.
1. You can imagine the ambitious scuffling that takes place with the courtiers, plotters, & heirs apparent.
- C. (9) **David** speaks of **Ahithophel**, his friend that betrayed him & was also **prophetic** of **Judas** with **Christ**.
- D. **Lifted up his heal** - the way an animal in a stall kicks the one who feeds him.
- E. (10) This **isn't** talking about **settling personal scores**; **remember**, David was **king** & a **public person** on behalf of **God** & God's country **Israel**.
1. Jesus did not strike down His persecutors when they taunted Him at the cross. And He could have; He could have summoned legions of angels.

- a) **But** He did not refrain because this was the **wrong thing** to do; He refrained because it was the **wrong time**.
- b) When judgment came to Jerusalem in 70 A.D. **the time** was fulfilled **and** the **fullness of wrath** fell on that generation.

V. Slide#16 **INTEGRITY (11-13)**

- A. (12) **Integrity** - means to have character. It is the opposite of **duplicity**.
 - 1. A person who practices **duplicity** is a **hypocrite**, a **pretender**.
 - 2. Integrity **means** to have **one heart & one mind &** to serve **one master**.
 - 3. It means **not** being **divided**, **not** always **changing**.
 - 4. **Read vs.12 again**.
 - a) **Slide#17 God** knows us by our **character**; **whereas people** know us by our **conduct**.
 - b) When we become more worried about our **conduct** than about our **character**, our **conduct** starts to go down **the wrong road**.
 - c) **Conduct & reputation** are closely related, **but** neither one guarantees good **character**.
 - (1) **Eg.** the **Pharisees** had a great **reputation**, **but** their **character** was evil.
 - (2) **God sees** us. He **know** about us, and He says, "**Put Me first in your life.**"
 - 5. Not only does God see, **we also see Him**. 12b
 - a) **Slide#18 That is what gives us integrity folks...**knowing that we're **walking, living, thinking & speaking** before the face of God.²
 - 6. **Slide#19 Let's walk in integrity!**
 - a) A Christian man was hired by a bank. He was young, new, and just learning the business. One day his boss told him, "If Mr. _____ calls for me, tell him I'm out." The new employee replied, "Oh, are you planning to go somewhere?" "No, I just don't want to speak to him, so tell him I'm out." "Let me make sure I understand - Do you want me to **lie** for you?" The boss blew up at him. He was outraged, angered. The young employee prayed and God gave him a flash of insight. "You should be happy, **because if I won't lie for you**, isn't it safe to assume that **I won't lie to you?**"
 - 7. **Let's walk in integrity!**

² Warren Wiersbe, Prayer Praise & Promises, Day 103.