

# THE GOSPEL DEMANDS PASSIONATE URGENCY AND PASSIONATE SACRIFICIAL GIVING

**Alan Hirsch Clip -<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9u2JM4DQ38>**

Last week we addressed the passionate sacrifice it takes to be a Disciple and the passionate compassion we are ten to demonstrate. It takes many forms and Toon's testimony is an example as the Morgan's cared for and provided for him. This morning we're going to continue taking a look at what it means to be a Passionate Disciple and we're going to see the reality that Christ's Gospel demands a Passionate Urgency and Passionate Sacrificial Giving.

## Let's Pray...

Father, we need to hear from You. We need to hear from Your Word. We need to hear from Your Spirit, Father, I pray that as we look in the riches of Your Word that You would begin to open our eyes up to the urgency that You have, God, that urgency You desire for us to have and the generous sacrificial Spirit you want to release in us as well. I pray this morning that You would speak to us clearly. Let us walk forward, God, with this truth. I ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

In both sections of my message today I want to bring a simple Bible reading and then cross reference some other Scriptures as we go.

*John 4 (NIV) 27-42 Just then his Disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"<sup>28</sup> Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,<sup>29</sup> "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"<sup>30</sup> They came out of the town and made their way toward him.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile his Disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."<sup>32</sup> But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."<sup>33</sup> Then his Disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"<sup>34</sup> "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."<sup>35</sup> "Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe (white) for harvest."<sup>36</sup> "Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together."<sup>37</sup> Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true."<sup>38</sup> "I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour."<sup>39</sup> Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did."<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.<sup>41</sup> And because of his words many more became believers.<sup>42</sup> They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."*

# **PART 1 THE GOSPEL DEMANDS PASSIONATE URGENCY**

If we're going to get the picture of what the Gospel demands in passionate urgency, we're going to have to look at how God's Word sets this up.

Our chapter begins with the statement that the Pharisees heard Jesus was gaining and baptizing more Disciples than John, although, in fact, it was not Jesus who baptized, but His Disciples. When the Lord learned of this, He left Judea and went back once more to Galilee, to do that He had to go through Samaria.

So Jesus and His Disciples are moving out of Judea heading north to Galilee.

Jesus doesn't seem interested in a contest over converts with John the Baptist, nor does He seem to be interested in a political fight. These would be distractions from His purpose.

They'd been walking north, Jesus and the Disciples, and they're on the high road (v4). They had to go through Samaria! Now, this is not just any region, but through the region of what the Jews called the despised half-breeds.

The Pharisees in John's Gospel refer to Jesus as a Samaritan - this was not a compliment!

Let this text travel. Let it travel from the Middle East to us, to Perth, Western Australia - don't we have despised ethnic groups with us, despised socio-economic groups, despised racial groups subject to people's stereotypes, our prejudice? But Jesus shows something different. He shows a passionate disregard for the opinions and prejudices of men. There is no room for any of these in the Kingdom of God and His church.

Jesus goes through there, stops there, probably on purpose!

What if your external appearance, your ethnicity, or your language, your social background, or even your fresh breath or good smell! What if all that had stood in the way to Christ's urgent obedience to the Father on our behalf? We'd be lost. We're in our seats this morning because of His grace. We would be lost without it.

**It's like C.S. Lewis says when he talks about the three surprises in heaven:**

**Who's there? Who's not there? That you're there!**

Jesus is tired (v6), and he sits down by the deep well of Jacob. It was near mealtime (v7) and it was near midday, His Disciples had loaded up. They had gone into town to get some food (8).

They were taking care of their physical needs - natural enough.

Meanwhile, Jesus has positioned Himself in the place where ministry occurs and, by the way, this is wherever Jesus Christ is positioned.

That's a word for us - for wherever you're positioned this morning, wherever you're positioned tomorrow, it does not need a sign out front that is where ministry occurs.

Now to our text - v27 the Disciples notice He is talking to a woman - no Rabbi did that if the Husband wasn't present let alone a Samaritan woman. So what we see is this ...

**Christ's Passionate Urgency for the lost person trumps all our cultural, all our religious traditions.**

This thought is also echoed in another place...

*Colossians 2:8 (NIV) See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*

So the Disciples are still there, they're watching the Samaritan woman at the well, at the absolute wrong time of day. She leaves her clay water pot sitting there and she walks quickly away, back toward town. She's headed out with an urgent purpose.

Now this is pretty straightforward isn't it? Meet Christ, leave water jar, begin public ministry now. That's what she does. How simple is that? What, no course, no Bible College, no doctrine? What was she thinking? There's something there for us.

You see Christ's Urgency becomes our Urgency. His passionate disregard for the traditions of men, for the prejudices of men becomes our passionate disregard for the same.

Listen to what John says later on...

*John 17:3 (NIV) Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

That's what we want. We want to know God.

**Passionate urgency does not come from what we know. It comes only from who we know!**

So in the meantime, you've got the senior ministry team - Mmmm, I mean the Disciples, and now they are closing their open mouths as He has completed talking to this lady. And what do they do? They begin to urge Jesus to eat something.

Right then, Christ gets their attention. He says... "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his Disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. At this point they didn't understand how or what Jesus was talking about.

Where does this come from? It comes from doing the will of God. It comes in the conforming of our life to His life.

Where's the will found? It's found in the Word of God.

*Matthew 4:4 (NIV) Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Quote from Deuteronomy 8:3*

*Psalms 40:8 (NIV) I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart."*

Now remember, while Jesus was teaching the Disciples in the foreground, in the background this Samaritan woman is in town telling everyone she sees about Christ. She's met Him and she's been stunned by His truth and His compassion. She's thinking that He is the one. He's the one that Samaritans and Jews have been looking for.

Now in verse 35 Jesus says, "Do you not say there are still four months and then the harvest?" What does that mean? Remember in Matthew 9 last week we saw that the harvest was a clear picture of judgment, the settling up of the accounts.

*Joel 3: 13 (NIV) Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow— so great is their wickedness!"*

This is a prophecy. It goes on to talk about the valley of decision right there. It's a prophecy of coming judgment.

*Revelation 14: 15 (NIV) Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."*

In this context, in the Matthew 9 and the John 4 context, Jesus' words about harvest also signifies something else. They signify the gathering of good fruit, the fulfilment of the blessings that have been awaited.

*Isaiah 9: 3 "You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder."*

Jesus is saying: "Don't you have this old Jewish proverb, this pat answer for everything when work is involved with it, when spiritual stirring is involved with it? You can kick back. You can enjoy your time, because it's at least four months and then the harvest. So just relax."

Oh, I'm just going to work for another couple of years and then we can enjoy our retirement! Or maybe its then I can give more time!

Jesus' passionate urgency flies in the face of our devotion to our career plans and our personal life schedules. "Don't you say, 'Four months and then the harvest.'? Behold, I say lift up your eyes and look."

The urgent message from Christ is harvest NOW! The Disciples a little confused maybe saw that he was talking about food and now He's talking about eyesight! Jesus is basically saying, "If you see with my perspective, you see with something new."

**A little insight for you at this point. This well, is located near the foot of Mount Gerizim. They would have probably been able to look down the plain, and they would have probably been able to see an entire village, light coloured clothing of the day in that region walking toward them. So when the text here says that the field is ripe for harvest, and the other versions of the text translate it as white for harvest, what they were seeing was probably literal, white for harvest.**

And why are these people coming to Christ and to the Disciples? They have been urged by the testimony of the woman who just started her public ministry. Seeing with the urgency of the Gospel results in action.

Look at the text. The words are specific, "Even now, already the reaper draws his wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal.v36"

Here in v36 it says that we get paid wages now. He is really speaking of himself here. That's what Jesus is saying. In other words, want to see the results? They're walking this way right now. But he's also talking about us. After all, it's His garden. We get rewarded now. We get rewarded in the life to come. It's His garden. He performs. We participate in His harvest.

I don't want you to miss this. In addition to the judgment there's celebration. Not just judgment, not just gathering, there's a joy that comes from each other. As we work in the harvest, it is readiness for a celebration with those in the ages before us, who have given their very lives so this harvest goes on.

So the question right now that I need to pose to you, the thing that we need to think of is: What is the pattern of our urgent sowing, our urgent reaping? Or is it urgent?

**The reality is that we all frequent the farm, but most of us rarely pray for God to put us to work in it!**

And it's not persecution that stopped the urgent heartbeat in us. It seems to clearly be our affluence. Maybe it's our ease that has dulled our senses to the reality of the harvest.

**John Stott says this, "Perhaps the greatest single hindrance to evangelism today is the secret poverty of our own spiritual experience."**

What are we urgent about - The cricket score? The bank account? Our good taste? Our sporting prowess? So what we often do is get caught up in the stuff. We hurry, we load up and we spend up! We stand in line. We even camp out overnight to get an iPhone or iPad or Finals ticket. We wait at the Shopping Centre with their doors locked on a Boxing Day so that we can be the first ones in to spend our money at the counter.

Look at this picture - the ministry teams, the professionals, the Disciples, they're standing on the sideline watching while the real ministry occurs. You know who's doing it? The Samaritan woman. She begins the harvest. She's sharing her simple mustard seed faith in a great God. She's doing the work of ministry. Off she goes. It's ridiculously simple, eternally urgent.

Christ Himself is doing the ministry through her. Look at this picture, "The one who sows and the one who reaps rejoicing together."

**2 Illustrations - University Students in  
Philippines 1975...**

**My Jewish Girl Friend - 1968...**

Four months! 'No John, Harvest time is right now!' Christ says...

## **PART 2 - THE GOSPEL DEMANDS RADICAL GIVING**

Before we read our second major passage in Luke 16, I want to show you who Jesus is speaking to. Luke 14 - Discipleship call - the hard words; then you get to Luke 15 - The lost son, lost sheep and the lost coin - you'll remember at the very beginning, the sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus, but the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were muttering, '*This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.*' The lost are a priority.

Jesus is confronting their ideas about the fact that their lives are supposed to be lived for the sake of these people, and that's what He talks about in these parables in Luke 15, His love for them.

We have seen the need for a Passionate commitment to Christ, Passionate Sacrifice, Passionate Compassion and Passionate Urgency for the Lost...

Now Christ shifts - like we're shifting now, to look at possessions.

What happens in Luke 16: 1 is Christ starts speaking to His Disciples, and He tells a parable. Basically the point of this first parable in Luke 16 is that we should use our money not to serve ourselves, but to serve the Kingdom, and our resources and our possessions and our money are intended to be used for the advancement of the Kingdom, not for the indulgence of ourselves.

And again, He's confronting the religious establishment there. Look at

*Luke 16: 14 (NIV) The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.*

Look at Christ's response...

*Luke 16: 15 (NIV) He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.*

So here's the context; please don't miss it; pay attention - Jesus is speaking to religious people, who are so blinded by their affluence, the love of money, that they justify their affluence in the middle of their religious devotion.

Is this a word for us today or what?

*Luke 16: 19–31 (NIV) "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. <sup>20</sup>At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores <sup>21</sup>and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup>"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup>In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup>So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' <sup>25</sup>"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup>And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' <sup>27</sup>"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, <sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup>"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' <sup>30</sup>" 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup>"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "*

I need to pray again...

Father, I pray that you would help us not to respond this morning like the Pharisees responded. Father, that You would help us not to sneer at Your words or to justify ourselves when we hear them. Help us to hear them truly and to obey them quickly. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

## 1. GOD RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF THE POOR WITH COMPASSION.

He responds to the needs of the poor with compassion.

What you've got here is something very interesting in this story. The rich man and Lazarus, and he is named. It's the only parable like this that Jesus tells where you've actually got somebody named in it, which points us to its significance. Lazarus is named for a reason. His name means "**One whom God helps,**" or "**God is my helper.**" That's what his name means.

This scripture here is not teaching, nor should we equate what Luke 16 is saying with the idea that if you have material poverty you automatically go to heaven, or you have material wealth you'll automatically go to hell.

At the same time, the scripture is teaching that God is passionate and compassionate about caring for the needs of the poor. He is their helper.

This is the picture here in Luke 16. It's all over the Book of Luke. It's all over scripture. We don't have time to turn to all of the Scriptures, but I want to encourage you by giving you a list of some texts in scripture for you to go back and look at. They show us that God shows His greatness by His concern for the poor. I'll read just one from the OT you can look the others up...

*1 Samuel 2:8 (NIV) He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honour.*

Now this is contrary to what we would picture is greatness in other world religions then or today. You go to some of the poor countries in the world today and you will see religious systems that despise the poor, and God shows His greatness by showing compassion for the poor. (cf. 1 Samuel 2:8; Job 34:28; Psalm 22:26; Psalm 35:10; Psalms 68:10; Psalm 82:3; Psalm 113:7; Psalm 113:7 & Luke 4:17-19 - Jesus' ministry; Luke 6:20-21).

That's the picture we got all over the Old Testament. God is known as the God who cares for the poor. This is the God of the Bible. The disadvantaged, the poor, the impoverished, these are who Jesus came for.

One NT reference - there are heaps more!

*Luke 7:20-22 (NIV) When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' " ...<sup>22</sup>So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the **poor.**"*

Jesus picks up on the picture, God's compassion, the needs of the poor in the Old Testament, and He carries it into the New Testament.

## 2. GOD RESPONDS TO THOSE WHO NEGLECT THE POOR WITH CONDEMNATION

Now here's the contrast that we see in Luke 16. God responds to the needs of the poor with compassion. God responds to those who neglect the poor in a very different way. He responds to those who neglect the poor with condemnation.

Now I want to emphasize that picture of neglect of the poor. The scripture is not teaching here that people go to hell because they have money. We know this man had money in Luke 16. We know from the way he dressed and the things that he ate that he lived in luxury. But what's the reason he's in hell in Luke 16?

Not because he had money. We're going to talk about this in the days to come. Money in itself, possessions in and of themselves are not inherently evil. Wealth is not inherently evil. That's not the picture we're seeing here.

I want to point out at this juncture what I believe is obvious as we study this text together. Ladies and gentlemen, we are the rich man. It's a mirror. Here's the scene in this room. We have gathered together in our fine clothes, in our multi-million dollar building, outside in our car park today there will be literally several million dollars worth of cars. After we have finished our morning together, we will get in our cars, perhaps pay thousands of dollars on the way home for food, then we return to our homes worth literally hundreds of millions of dollars, where we will be safe the rest of this week, and many of us living in some of the wealthiest parts of the Perth, in the wealthiest country in the world per capita.

Meanwhile, there are poor at the gate. They are here in our neighbourhoods like Karawara, Kwinana, Mirrabooka and around the world. In just the time that we have gathered together in this room, approximately 1,000 children have died either of starvation or a preventable disease.

I believe many of us are ignoring these realities. We are in a sense throwing scraps to the poor outside the gate. And while millions of these people, powerless and silent hover on the edge of starvation, we live like they don't even exist, and the God of the Bible cares for the poor and He condemns the rich who neglect them.

These warning passages to the religious affluent are all over Scripture. We need to see this. We need to see this honestly. I want to show you what scripture teaches about how God responds to those who indulge themselves and ignore the poor.

*Deuteronomy 15:7–8 (NIV) If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. <sup>8</sup>Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need... <sup>10</sup>Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. <sup>11</sup>There will always be poor people in the land. **Therefore I command you***



*to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land. (cf. Isaiah 3: 13-24; Jeremiah 5: 26-31; Ezekiel 16: 48-50<sup>1</sup>; Amos 2: 6; 4: 1; 8: 3).*

*Luke 6: 20–24 (NIV) Looking at his Disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup>Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh... <sup>24</sup>"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.*

Do you see this picture, this contrast with how God responds to the needs of the poor and those who neglect the poor to indulge themselves? The neglect of the poor infuriates God and condemns man to hell. That's what scripture is teaching. This is a warning to us. This contrast leads to consequence, an eternal consequence.

This reversal doctrine is being displayed here. There's coming a day when this upside-down world will be turned right-side up, and for many, the conditions we've lived in, in this world will be completely reversed. That's the whole picture here in Luke 16.

There comes a day, ladies and gentlemen, when neglect of the poor, when indulging ourselves and ignoring the poor is punished. Does this cause me / us to tremble? Can we really look at our lives and our culture and our community, our religious community? Can we really look at it and say that we are being totally obedient to God's command to care for the poor and not to indulge ourselves? Absolutely not, we cannot say that.

So I think that I / we need to wrestle with the question of 'How can we believe that we will spend an eternity under His love instead of eternity separated under His judgment?'

I know that at this point some of us are getting really uncomfortable thinking, "Well are you saying that my salvation is dependent on how much I give to the poor?" That's absolutely not what the Scriptures teach. It is teaching that there are 2 choices...

## **CHOICE 1. WE CAN CONTINUE IN HOLLOW RELIGION AND NEGLECT THE POOR.**

This is an option that is before the hearers in Luke 16 and it's an option before us in this auditorium. Continue in a hollow religion that neglects the poor. Don't miss it. This is a religious man in hell. He calls out, "Father Abraham." Abraham says, "Son." This is a man who thought he was in the people of God. He thought everything was okay.

Now the mistake we'd make at this point is to think that if he would have given this much to the poor then he would have been in heaven, because that would make heaven dependent on how much you'd given to the poor, and that's not what scripture is teaching. Don't miss it.

Caring for the poor is not an optional extra in salvation. Spending our money and our possessions for the sake of the lost and the poor is not an optional extra in salvation.

Instead, caring for the poor is a necessary evidence of salvation.

2 examples are Luke 19: 1-10 Zacchaeus and Matthew 25: 31-46 Jesus and Judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the strongest judgment - Sodom was not condemned for its sexuality as much as it was for its treatment of the poor.

Zacchaeus is not a mature believer - but he's giving away his possessions. This is the first thing he does, because it makes sense. It's obvious. It's obvious evidence of his salvation that he would do this.

It's the same in Matthew 25 - those who do not give to the poor and the hungry are obviously not followers of Christ, and will obviously be thrown into eternal punishment.

Here's my problem - we live in a community and we are a part of a religious culture that by and large ignores these things. This is not basic for us. We indulge ourselves and we turn a deaf ear. There's clear disconnect here between claiming to have this Christ in our hearts and indulging ourselves and ignoring the poor.

I'm saying this morning this can't go on.

You say, "John, I am justified by grace alone, through faith alone." And I say absolutely you're justified by grace alone, through faith alone, but it is a faith that radically transforms a heart, that transforms desires, where desires are not for stuff and for selfish pleasures. Desires are for Christ and the lost and the poor. It's a passionately, radically different change, and you will be able to tell if that faith is real in us by the way we live.

*James 2: 14–17 (NIV) What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup>Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

And this is the choice that we have. We can continue in hollow religion that by and large ignores the poor or

## **CHOICE 2. WE CAN TURN IN HONEST REPENTANCE TO CARE FOR THE POOR**

This is where the dialog shifts at the end of this passage to the rich man talking about his brothers. He's got five brothers. Don't miss this. This is hell crying out for us to listen to this text today.

This is people in hell crying out for us to heed these words. Don't ignore these or miss these words. "And the rich man says, 'Send something miraculous, something extravagant so they get it. They're sitting there and they don't get it. My brothers don't get it.' He said, 'Send somebody to raise from the dead. Just do something miraculous.'" And Abraham says, "They've got the power of the Word right in front of them and this is how they will know, if they hear this Word."

So we might ask "How do you respond in repentance?"

One major things here... - **Hear the Word humbly.**

Not like the Rich man's brother - He says, "Their hearts are so hard and this is the reality."

I see in my own life the hardest part of dealing with our materialism is the fact that we are so blind to it. We don't know what it's like not to be materialistic, and our bent is consumed by it, and it leads to a hardness that hears these texts, hears words like this and says, "That's not for me."

The attempts to justify ourselves, our mechanisms go up. They're going up all across this room. They go up in my heart when I read. What about this? This is not me. This is other people. I'm okay.

It's so easy to justify ourselves in the eyes of man. However, the reality is that God knows our hearts and He knows what's really going on, better than you know it and I know it.

What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. The ways of the world are detestable in God's sight. The wisdom of the Word, hear it humbly. Do not listen to this Word and justify yourselves. Hear the Word humbly and obey the Word quickly. We're going to talk more about this next week, but we must act. Sentiment is not enough here. Here, this is a repentance. It's a change. We need to change.

We as a church need to change the way we budget and the way we live and the way we spend, if this is true. We have some ministry being offered to us that concerns the poorest of the poor in our city. I believe we have to do something about it.

If what we have looked at today is not true, we go on. We continue with business as usual. But if this is true and if this Word determines our life and determines the church, we need to hear these warnings, not only for the sake of the lost and the poor, but for the sake of ourselves and our own souls.

Twenty thousand children today die without food or of a preventable disease. Millions of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world do not have food today. We must obey the Word quickly.

Church, where are we going to stand? This is the question. Where are we going to stand, with the poor and starving or with the overfed? Are we going to stand with the poor man on his way to heaven or with the rich man on his way to hell? Are we going to stand hoarding our treasures, or are we going to give ourselves, abandoning our treasures for the sake of the lost and the poor?

Where are we going to stand?

Now as I close I want to be very, very careful here. This is the most important point, the most important moment in light of this text. Please do not miss this. It's the bottom line.

### **We are not motivated to care for the poor by guilt.**

People will say, "Do you want to do this or change this in your life because you feel guilty?" No. We are not motivated to care for the poor by guilt. Follow with me. We are motivated to care for the poor by the Gospel.

*2 Corinthians 8:9 "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."*

This is the picture of the Gospel. We need to see the warnings in the Old Testament. We need to see the warnings in Matthew 25 and Luke 16. We need to see Jesus speaking strongly about these things.

But don't miss it. Please don't miss this. If you walk away thinking, "Well that was quite a guilt trip. How do I recover from that?" You missed the point. That's not the point which scripture is teaching. I pray that if anything I've said has communicated that, I pray that you block that out. That's not the point.

The point is to see the gravity of these things, and then to realize we obey Christ, not because we are guilty, but because we are saved. We obey Christ because we're new creatures and we're redeemed, and we don't need to indulge ourselves because we're living for another world.

We gladly invest our lives and our possessions and our everything in the lost and the poor, and we forsake the treasures of this world because we know there's coming a day when this upside-down world will be turned right-side up, and the Gospel guarantees us this. This is why we obey these words.

So today, I want to urge us all to repent. We need to repent. If this is the God of the Bible and this is what He says, then we are in danger and we need to repent.

Then as John the Baptist taught we need to *'produce fruit in keeping with repentance!'*