

## **A selection of biblical references relating to God's heart for the poor.**

God has always wanted to ensure that the poor and needy were protected and provided for – both those inside Israel and those outside it - including making special laws benefitting them in the Old Testament, making his heart known through the prophets and proverbs and through the life and ministry of Jesus, the apostles and early church.

### **Old Testament**

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. Lev 19 v 9. Lev 23v22

Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord you God may bless you in all the work of your hand. Deut 24 v19

Seek Justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. Is 1 v17

Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: To loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter. When you see the naked to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn and your healing will quickly appear: then your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help and he will say: Here am I.

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. Isa 58 v6-10

The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoner and to proclaim the year of the Lords favour. Isaiah 61 v1-2

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbour, come back later I'll give it to you tomorrow when you now have it with you. Prov 3 v28

Prov 28 v 27 – He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Prov 19 v 17: He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Prov 29 v7: The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Prov 31 v 8-9: Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Zech 7 v 9-10: Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor.

**Jesus is also concerned with us offering practical and caring assistance to other people in the New Testament:**

Come you who are blessed by my father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Matt 25 v34-36

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and Love your neighbour as yourself. Luke 10 v 25-27

Mark 12 v28-31 Which is the most important commandment? The most important one is this: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no greater commandment than these.

Who is my neighbour? Parable of the good Samaritan Luke 10 v30 –37 Go and do likewise.

Jesus shows us that we are to do good and go out of our way to help others because it is the right thing to do.

Matt 5 v 16 Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6 v27

**Apostles Teaching:**

Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (not exclusively) Gal 6 v9 – 10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2v10

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds. 1 Tim 6v18

They agreed that we should go to the gentiles and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. Gal 2 v 10

Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds Heb 10v24

Do not forget to do good and to share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Heb 13v16

Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1 v 27

Anyone then who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. James 4 v 17

God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Cor 9v8

Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Pet 2v12