

## Dead Church Podcast Notes

### Acts Initiative

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### Ep. 26 – Proof That God Cares More About The Poor Than We Do

We've been discussing what love looks like and what it means to obey the commands of God. Perhaps you're like I was – I knew we were supposed to love, but I didn't realize how much the Bible defines love! I didn't realize how much the Bible talks about helping the poor, helping widows, helping orphans, helping those in need, making sure their needs are met, and not trying to profit off them. I didn't realize how much the Bible shows what true love is.

Even though we have referenced hundreds of verses throughout this series, in this video I want to demonstrate that the Bible (from the beginning to the end) does not just tell us to love one another – it tells us what love *means*. From cover to cover, the Bible taught the same message – God commanded us to love one another, and God told us what that looks like, practically. He taught us what real love is over and over again. And by telling us over and over again, he demonstrated that this is something he deeply cares about.

If it's something that God cares a lot about, then it's something we should care a lot about, too.

The point of this video is so that you can see just how often the Bible talks about this. I'm not including every verse in the Bible on this subject – I'm actually only covering a small fraction of them. But I want you to be able to get an idea of the full picture of what the Bible teaches about love.

We're going to look at stories about righteous people and what they did. We're going to look at things that God said he does. We're going to look at commands that we have. We're going to look at who the gospel was preached to, and who the kingdom of God is for.

I'm not going to get into any commentary with these verses, because we've been discussing these concepts throughout *Dead Church*. This video is meant simply for you to see many verses, all gathered into one place, that all demonstrate what God said he wants his people doing.

I highly recommend that you don't just skip over this because it's "just a bunch of Bible verses." Because if you're anything like I was, you probably don't realize how much the Bible talks about this! I didn't realize how much the Bible says we should be living the kind of life that we've talked about in this series.

So please listen to these verses. Think about what they're saying. Think about the examples set by those who lived righteously. Think about the commands God gave people and how they apply to you. Think about the significance of who Jesus said the kingdom of God is for, and who he was preaching the gospel to, and who the apostles were preaching to.

Think about how much the Bible addresses this topic, and whether or not you take it as seriously as God does.

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Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When Abraham saw them, he ran from his tent to meet

them. He bowed facedown on the ground before them and said, “Sir, if I have found grace in your eyes, please stay awhile with me, your servant. I will bring some water so all of you can wash your feet. You may rest under the tree, and I will get some bread for you so you can regain your strength. Then you may continue your journey.

The three men said, “That is fine. Do as you said.”

Abraham hurried to the tent where Sarah was and said to her, “Hurry, prepare twenty quarts of fine flour, and make it into loaves of bread.” Then Abraham ran to his herd and took one of his best calves. He gave it to a servant, who hurried to kill it and to prepare it for food. Abraham gave the three men the calf that had been prepared and milk curds and milk. While they ate, he stood under the tree near them.<sup>1</sup>

...Lot was sitting near the city gate. When he saw them, he got up and went to them and bowed facedown on the ground. Lot said, “Sirs, please come to my house and spend the night. There you can wash your feet, and then tomorrow you may continue your journey.”

The angels answered, “No, we will spend the night in the city’s public square.”

But Lot begged them to come, so they agreed and went to his house. Then Lot prepared a feast for them. He baked bread without yeast, and they ate it.<sup>2</sup>

The servant said, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, allow me to find a wife for his son today. Please show this kindness to my master Abraham. Here I am, standing by the spring, and the girls from the city are coming out to get water. I will say to one of them, ‘Please put your jar down so I can drink.’ Then let her say, ‘Drink, and I will also give water to your camels.’ If that happens, I will know she is the right one for your servant Isaac and that you have shown kindness to my master.”

Before the servant had finished praying, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, came out of the city. (Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham’s brother.) Rebekah was carrying her water jar on her shoulder. She was extremely beautiful, a virgin; she had never known a man. She went down to the spring and filled her jar, then came back up. The servant ran to her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

Rebekah said, “Drink, sir.” She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. After she let him drink all he wanted, Rebekah said, “I will also pour some water for your camels until they have finished drinking.” So she quickly emptied all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she kept running to the well until she had given all the camels enough to drink.<sup>3</sup>

Do not maltreat or oppress a foreigner, because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. Do not afflict a widow or an orphan. If you do, and they cry out to me for help, I certainly will hear their cry. And I will be very angry and kill you with the sword. Then your wives will become widows, and your children will become orphans.

If you lend money to one of my people who is poor, do not treat him as a creditor would. Take no interest. If your neighbor gives you his coat as a promise for the money he owes you, you must give it back to him by sunset, because his coat is the only cover to keep his body warm. He has nothing else to sleep in. If he cries out to me for help, I will hear, because I am merciful.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 18:1-8

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 19:1-3

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 24:12-20

<sup>4</sup> Exodus 22:21-27

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You must not mistreat a foreigner. You know how it feels to be a foreigner, because you were foreigners in Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

When you harvest your crops on your land, do not harvest all the way to the corners of your fields. If grain falls onto the ground, don't gather it up. Don't pick all the grapes in your vineyards, and don't pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. You must leave those things for poor people and for people traveling through your country. I am the LORD your God.<sup>6</sup>

You must not keep a hired worker's salary all night until morning.<sup>7</sup>

Do not mistreat foreigners living in your country, but treat them just as you treat your own citizens. Love foreigners as you love yourselves, because you were foreigners one time in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.<sup>8</sup>

When you harvest your crops on your land, do not harvest all the way to the corners of your field. If grain falls onto the ground, don't gather it up. Leave it for poor people and foreigners in your country. I am the LORD your God.<sup>9</sup>

If your brother becomes too poor to support himself, help him to live among you as you would a stranger or foreigner. Do not charge him any interest on money or try to make a profit, but fear your God; let the poor live among you. Don't lend him money for interest, and don't try to make a profit from the food he buys.<sup>10</sup>

Keep the Sabbath as a holy day, as the LORD your God has commanded you. You may work and get everything done during six days each week, but the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the LORD your God. On that day no one may do any work: not you, your son or daughter, your male or female slaves, your ox, your donkey, or any of your animals, or the foreigners living in your cities. That way your servants may rest as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there by his strong hand and extended arm. So the LORD your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day.<sup>11</sup>

The LORD owns the earth and everything in it – the heavens, even the highest heavens, are his. But the LORD stuck to and loved your fathers, and he chose you, their descendants, over all the other nations, just as it is today. Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer. The LORD your God is God of all gods and Lord of all lords. He is the great God, who is strong and wonderful. He does not show favoritism, and he will not be talked into doing evil. He helps orphans and widows, and he loves foreigners and gives them food and clothes. You also must love foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of every third year, everyone would bring one-tenth of that year's crop and store it

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 23:9

<sup>6</sup> Leviticus 19:9-10

<sup>7</sup> Leviticus 19:13

<sup>8</sup> Leviticus 19:33-34

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 23:22

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus 25:35-37

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 5:12-15

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 10:14-19

in your towns. This is for the Levites so they may eat and be full. (They have no land of their own among you.) It is also for foreigners, orphans, and widows who live in your towns so that all of them may eat and be full. Then the LORD your God will bless you and all the work you do.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of every seven years, you must tell those who owe you anything that they do not have to pay you back.<sup>14</sup>

If there are poor among you, in one of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be selfish or greedy toward them. But give freely to them, and freely lend them whatever they need. Beware of evil thoughts. Don't think, "The seventh year is near, the year to cancel what people owe." Your eye might be evil toward the needy and not give them anything. Then they will call out to the LORD about you, and he will find you guilty of sin. Give freely to the poor person, and do not wish that you didn't have to give. The LORD your God will bless your work and everything you touch. There will always be poor people in the land, so I command you to give freely to your neighbors and to the poor and needy in your land.<sup>15</sup>

If a poor person gives you a coat to show he will pay the loan back, don't keep it overnight. Give the coat back at sunset, because your neighbor needs that coat to sleep in, and he will be grateful to you. And the LORD your God will see that you have done a righteous thing.

Don't exploit hired servants who are poor and needy, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in one of your towns. Pay them each day before sunset, because they are poor and need the money. Otherwise, they may cry out to the LORD about you, and you will be guilty of sin.<sup>16</sup>

Do not be unfair to a foreigner or an orphan. Don't take a widow's coat to make sure she pays you back.<sup>17</sup>

When you are gathering your harvest in the field and forget a bundle of grain, don't go back and get it. Leave it there for foreigners, orphans, and widows so that the LORD your God can bless everything you do. When you beat your olive trees to knock the olives off, don't beat the trees a second time. Leave what is left for foreigners, orphans, and widows. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, don't pick the vines a second time. Leave what is left for foreigners, orphans, and widows. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt; that is why I am commanding you to do this.<sup>18</sup>

Anyone will be cursed who is unfair to foreigners, orphans, or widows.<sup>19</sup>

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go to gather grain for yourself in another field. Don't even leave this field at all, but continue following closely behind my servant girls. Watch to see into which fields they go to cut grain and follow them. I will warn the young men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, you may go and drink from the water jugs that the young men have filled."<sup>20</sup>

At mealtime Boaz told Ruth, "Come here. Eat some of our bread and dip it in our sauce." So Ruth sat down beside the workers. Boaz handed her some roasted grain, and she ate until she was full;

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<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 14:28-29

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 15:1

<sup>15</sup> Deuteronomy 15:7-11

<sup>16</sup> Deuteronomy 24:12-15

<sup>17</sup> Deuteronomy 24:17

<sup>18</sup> Deuteronomy 24:19-22

<sup>19</sup> Deuteronomy 27:19

<sup>20</sup> Ruth 2:8-9

she even had some food left over. When Ruth rose and went back to work, Boaz commanded his young men, “Let her gather even around the piles of cut grain. Don’t tell her to go away. In fact, pull out some full heads of grain for her from the bundles and let her gather them. Don’t tell her to stop.”<sup>21</sup>

Those who were well fed now hire themselves out for food, but people who were hungry are hungry no more... The LORD raises the poor up from the dust, and he lifts the needy from the ashes. He lets the poor sit with princes and they inherit a throne of honor.<sup>22</sup>

The LORD defends those who are oppressed; he defends them in times of trouble.<sup>23</sup>

Proudly the wicked chase down the poor... they watch in secret for the helpless. They wait in hiding like a lion. They wait to catch poor people; they catch the poor in nets and drag them off. The poor are crushed and thrown down; they are defeated because the others are stronger. LORD, rise up and punish the wicked. Don’t forget those who are oppressed. The helpless look to you for help. You are the one who helps the orphans. LORD, you have heard what the poor people want. Do what they ask and listen to them. Protect the orphans and the oppressed so they will no longer be afraid of evil people.<sup>24</sup>

But the LORD says, “I will now rise up, because the poor are being hurt. Because of the moans of the helpless, I will give them the victory they want.”<sup>25</sup>

The wicked frustrate the plans of the poor, but the LORD will protect them.<sup>26</sup>

LORD, who may abide in your Holy Tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? Only those who are innocent and who do righteousness. Such people speak the truth from their hearts and do not tell lies about others. They do no wrong to their neighbors and do not gossip. They do not respect hateful people but honor those who fear the LORD. They keep their promises to their neighbors, even when it hurts. They do not charge interest on money they lend and do not take money to hurt innocent people. Whoever does all these things will never be moved.<sup>27</sup>

The wicked borrow and don’t pay back, but the righteous give freely to others.<sup>28</sup>

Blessed are those who care for the poor. When trouble comes, the LORD will save them. The LORD will protect them and spare their life and will bless them in the land. He will not let their enemies take them. The LORD will give them strength when they are sick, and he will make them well again.<sup>29</sup>

God is in his holy Temple. He is a father to orphans, and he defends the widows. God gives the lonely a home. He leads prisoners out with joy...<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ruth 2:14-16

<sup>22</sup> 1 Samuel 2:5,8

<sup>23</sup> Psalm 9:9

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 10:2,8-10,12,14,17-18

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 12:5

<sup>26</sup> Psalm 14:6

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 15

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 37:21

<sup>29</sup> Psalm 41:1-3

<sup>30</sup> Psalm 68:5-6

The LORD listens to those in need and does not look down on prisoners.<sup>31</sup>

God, give the king your good judgment and the king's son your righteousness. Help him judge your people fairly and decide what is just for the poor. Let there be peace on the mountains and righteousness on the hills for the people. Help him be fair to the poor and save the needy and punish those who oppress them... He will protect the poor when they cry out and the needy when no one else will help. He will be kind to the poor and the needy, and he will save their lives. He will save them from cruel people who try to hurt them, because their lives are precious to him.<sup>32</sup>

God presides in the assembly of the gods; he judges among the “gods.” He says, “How long will you defend evil people? How long will you show greater kindness to the wicked? Defend the poor and the orphans; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Rescue the poor and helpless; protect them from the power of the wicked.”<sup>33</sup>

The LORD does what is righteous and just for all who are wronged by others.<sup>34</sup>

He satisfies the thirsty and fills up the hungry.<sup>35</sup>

But he lifted the poor out of their suffering and made their families grow like flocks of sheep. The upright see this and are happy, but the wicked say nothing. Whoever is wise will remember these things and will think about the love of the LORD.<sup>36</sup>

He stands at the right hand of the helpless and gives them victory over those who accuse them.<sup>37</sup>

It is good to be merciful and generous. Those who are fair in their business will never be defeated. Righteous people will always be remembered. They give freely to the poor. Their righteousness will continue forever. They will be given great honor.<sup>38</sup>

The LORD lifts the poor from the dust and exalts the needy from the ashes. He enthrones them with princes, the princes of his people. He gives children to the woman who has none and makes her a happy mother.<sup>39</sup>

Though the LORD is supreme, he takes care of the lowly, but he stays away from the proud.<sup>40</sup>

Praise the LORD! He does what is fair for those who have been oppressed. He gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. The LORD gives sight to the blind. The LORD lifts up people who are in trouble. The LORD loves the righteous. The LORD protects the foreigners. He

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<sup>31</sup> Psalm 69:33

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 72:1-4;12-14

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 82:1-4

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 103:6

<sup>35</sup> Psalm 107:9

<sup>36</sup> Psalm 107:41-43

<sup>37</sup> Psalm 109:31

<sup>38</sup> Psalm 112:5-6,9

<sup>39</sup> Psalm 113:7-9

<sup>40</sup> Psalm 138:6

supports the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the way of the wicked. The LORD will be King forever.<sup>41</sup>

Whenever you are able, do good to people who need help. If you have what your neighbor asks for, don't say, "Come back later. I will give it to you tomorrow."<sup>42</sup>

Some people give much but get back even more. Others don't give what they should and end up poor. Whoever gives to others will get richer; those who help others will themselves be helped.<sup>43</sup>

The wicked want what other evil people have stolen, but good people want to give what they have to others.<sup>44</sup>

It is a sin to hate your neighbor, but being kind to the needy brings a blessing.<sup>45</sup>

Whoever mistreats the poor insults their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.<sup>46</sup>

The LORD will tear down the proud person's house, but he will protect the widow's property.<sup>47</sup>

Whoever mistreats the poor insults their Maker; whoever enjoys someone's trouble will be punished.<sup>48</sup>

Being generous to the poor is like lending to the LORD; he will fully repay you.<sup>49</sup>

Whoever ignores the poor when they cry for help will also cry for help and not be answered.<sup>50</sup>

...righteous people give without holding back.<sup>51</sup>

Generous people will be blessed, because they share their food with the poor.<sup>52</sup>

Whoever gets rich by mistreating the poor, and gives presents to the wealthy, will become poor.<sup>53</sup>

Do not abuse poor people because they are poor, and do not take away the rights of the needy in court. The LORD will accuse their accusers and will squeeze the life out of those who squeeze

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<sup>41</sup> Psalm 146:1,7-10

<sup>42</sup> Proverbs 3:27-28

<sup>43</sup> Proverbs 11:24-25

<sup>44</sup> Proverbs 12:12

<sup>45</sup> Proverbs 14:21

<sup>46</sup> Proverbs 14:31

<sup>47</sup> Proverbs 15:25

<sup>48</sup> Proverbs 17:5

<sup>49</sup> Proverbs 19:17

<sup>50</sup> Proverbs 21:13

<sup>51</sup> Proverbs 21:26

<sup>52</sup> Proverbs 22:9

<sup>53</sup> Proverbs 22:16

them.<sup>54</sup>

Don't move an old stone that marks a border, and don't take fields that belong to orphans. God, their defender, is strong; he will take their side against you.<sup>55</sup>

Rescue those who are being led to their death; rescue those who are about to be killed. If you say, "We don't know anything about this," God, who knows what's in your mind, will notice. He is watching you, and he will know. He will reward each person for what he has done.<sup>56</sup>

People who brag about gifts they never give are like clouds and wind that give no rain.<sup>57</sup>

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink.<sup>58</sup>

Some people get rich by overcharging others, but their wealth will be given to those who are kind to the poor.<sup>59</sup>

Whoever gives to the poor will have everything he needs, but the one who ignores the poor will receive many curses.<sup>60</sup>

Righteous people care about justice for the poor, but the wicked are not concerned.<sup>61</sup>

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; defend the rights of all those who have nothing. Speak up and judge fairly, and defend the rights of the poor and needy.<sup>62</sup>

Who can find a good wife? Because she is worth more than rubies... She welcomes the poor and helps the needy.<sup>63</sup>

When you raise your arms to me in prayer, I will refuse to look at you. Even if you say many prayers, I will not listen to you, because your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean. Stop doing the evil things I see you do. Stop doing wrong. Learn to do right. Seek justice. Encourage the oppressed. Defend the orphans. Stand up for the rights of widows.<sup>64</sup>

The city of Jerusalem once followed the LORD, but she is no longer loyal to him. They don't seek justice for the orphans or listen to the widows' needs.<sup>65</sup>

The LORD takes his place in court and stands to judge the people. The LORD presents his case against the elders and other leaders of his people: "You have burned the vineyard. Your houses

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<sup>54</sup> Proverbs 22:22-23

<sup>55</sup> Proverbs 23:10-11

<sup>56</sup> Proverbs 24:11-12

<sup>57</sup> Proverbs 25:14 (Cross-reference: Jude 12)

<sup>58</sup> Proverbs 25:21

<sup>59</sup> Proverbs 28:8

<sup>60</sup> Proverbs 28:27

<sup>61</sup> Proverbs 29:7

<sup>62</sup> Proverbs 31:8-9

<sup>63</sup> Proverbs 31:10,20

<sup>64</sup> Isaiah 1:15-17

<sup>65</sup> Isaiah 1:21,23

are full of what you took from the poor. What gives you the right to crush my people and grind the faces of the poor into the dirt?” The Lord GOD of Heaven’s Armies says this.<sup>66</sup>

The vineyard belonging to the LORD of Heaven’s Armies is the house of Israel; and the people of Judah are the garden that he loves. He looked for justice, but there was only injustice. He hoped for righteousness, but there were only cries of distress. Woe to you who add more houses to your houses and more fields to your fields until there is no room left for other people.<sup>67</sup>

Woe to those who make unjust laws, and those who write laws that make life hard for people. They are not fair to the poor, and they rob my people of their rights. They allow people to steal from widows and to take from orphans what really belongs to them.<sup>68</sup>

A new branch will grow from the stump of Jesse; a branch will come from his roots. The Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him. The Spirit will give him wisdom and understanding, guidance and power. The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD... He will judge the poor honestly; he will be fair in his decisions for the poor people of the land”<sup>69</sup>

LORD, you are my God. You protect the poor; you protect the needy when they are in danger. You are like a shelter from storms, like shade that protects them from the heat.<sup>70</sup>

A fool does not feed the hungry or let thirsty people drink water.<sup>71</sup>

The poor and needy people look for water, but they can’t find any. Their tongues are dry with thirst. But I, the LORD, will answer their prayers; I, the God of Israel, will not leave them to die.<sup>72</sup>

The LORD says, “Shout out loud. Don’t hold back. Shout out loud like a trumpet. Tell my people what they have done against their God; tell the family of Jacob about their sins. They seek me every day and delight to learn my ways. They act just like a nation that does righteousness, that obeys the commands of its God. They ask me to judge them fairly. They want to draw near to God. They say, ‘Why have we fasted, but you didn’t see? Why have we afflicted ourselves, but you didn’t notice?’”

But the LORD says, “You do what pleases yourselves on these fast days, and you are unfair to your workers. Even when you fast, you argue and fight and hit each other with your fists. You cannot do these things as you do now and believe your prayers are heard in heaven. Is this the fast that I want? Do I want a day when people afflict themselves? I don’t want people just to bow their heads like a plant, stretching out on sackcloth and ashes. Is this what you call a fast? Do you really think this pleases the LORD?”

“I will tell you the kind of fast I want: Free the people you have put in prison unfairly and undo their chains. Free those to whom you are unfair and stop their hard labor. Share your food with the hungry and bring poor, homeless people into your own homes. When you see someone who has no clothes, give him yours, and don’t refuse to help your own relatives.

“Then your light will shine like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your

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<sup>66</sup> Isaiah 3:13-15

<sup>67</sup> Isaiah 5:7-8

<sup>68</sup> Isaiah 10:1-2

<sup>69</sup> Isaiah 11:1-2,4

<sup>70</sup> Isaiah 25:1,4

<sup>71</sup> Isaiah 32:6

<sup>72</sup> Isaiah 41:17

righteousness will walk before you, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. Then you will call out, and the LORD will answer. You will cry out, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you stop making trouble for others, if you stop speaking wickedness and pointing your finger at others, if you feed those who are hungry and take care of the needs of those who are troubled, then you light will shine in the darkness, and you will be bright like sunshine at noon. The LORD will always lead you. He will satisfy your needs in dry lands and give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that is well-watered, like a spring that never runs dry.”<sup>73</sup>

“They have become powerful and rich. They have grown fat and sleek. There is no end to the evil things they do. They do not judge justly. They won’t plead the case of the orphan or help the poor be judged fairly. Shouldn’t I punish them for doing these things?” says the LORD. “Shouldn’t I get revenge on a nation as it deserves?”<sup>74</sup>

You must change your lives and do what is right. Be fair to each other. You must not oppress strangers, orphans, and widows.<sup>75</sup>

Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD! He rescues the life of the poor from the hand of the wicked.<sup>76</sup>

This is what the LORD says: “Do justice and righteousness. Protect the one who has been robbed from the hand of his attacker. Don’t mistreat or hurt the foreigners, orphans, or widows.”<sup>77</sup>

“Does having a lot of cedar make you a great king? Your father was satisfied to have food and drink. He did what was right and fair, so everything went well for him. He helped those who were poor and needy, so everything went well for him. That is what it means to know God,” says the LORD.<sup>78</sup>

This was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were proud and had plenty of food and lived in great comfort, but she did not help the poor and needy.<sup>79</sup>

“Suppose a man is good and does what is just and right. He does not mistreat anyone but returns what was given as a promise for a loan. He does not rob other people. He gives bread to the hungry and clothes to those who have none. He does not lend money for interest or profit. He keeps his hand from doing wrong. He judges fairly between one person and another. He lives by my rules and obeys my laws faithfully. Whoever does these things is righteous and will surely live,” says the Lord GOD.<sup>80</sup>

The people in you hate their fathers and mothers. They mistreat the foreigners in you and wrong the orphans and widows in you.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Isaiah 58:1-11

<sup>74</sup> Jeremiah 5:27-29

<sup>75</sup> Jeremiah 7:5-6

<sup>76</sup> Jeremiah 20:13

<sup>77</sup> Jeremiah 22:3

<sup>78</sup> Jeremiah 22:15-16

<sup>79</sup> Ezekiel 16:49

<sup>80</sup> Ezekiel 18:5,7-9

<sup>81</sup> Ezekiel 22:7

Since the stump of the tree and its roots were left in the ground, your kingdom will be given back to you when you learn that heaven is sovereign. So, O king, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and be righteous. Stop doing wicked things and be kind to the poor. Then you might continue to be successful.<sup>82</sup>

This is what the LORD says: “For the many crimes of Israel, I will punish them. For silver, they sell people who have done nothing wrong; they sell the poor to buy a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as if they were dirt, and they refuse to be fair to those who are suffering... As they worship at their altars, they lie down on clothes taken from the poor.”<sup>83</sup>

You oppress the poor, and crush people who are in need.<sup>84</sup>

You levy a tax on poor people, forcing them to give you grain... You oppress people who do right, you take money to do wrong, and you keep the poor from getting justice in court.<sup>85</sup>

Listen to me, you who trample the needy, you who are trying to do away with the poor people of this country, saying, “When will the New Moon festival be over so we can sell grain? When will the Sabbath be over so we can bring out wheat to sell? We can give them less and charge them more, and we can change the scales to cheat the people. We will buy poor people for silver, and needy people for a pair of sandals.”<sup>86</sup>

Woe to those who plan wickedness, who lie on their beds and make evil plans. When the morning light comes, they do what they planned, because they have the power to do so. They want fields, so they take them; they want houses, so they take them away. They oppress people to get their houses; they rob them even of their inheritance.<sup>87</sup>

You say, “What can I bring with me when I come before the LORD, when I bow before God on high? Should I come before him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves? Will the LORD be pleased with a thousand male sheep? Will he be pleased with ten thousand rivers of oil? Should I give my firstborn for the evil I have done? Should I give my very own child for my sin?”

The LORD has told you, O man, what is good; he has told you what he wants from you: to do what is right to other people, love being kind to others, and live humbly, obeying your God.<sup>88</sup>

And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah again, saying, “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: ‘Do what is right and true. Be kind and compassionate to each other. Don’t oppress widows and orphans, foreigners or the poor; don’t even think of doing evil to somebody else.’”<sup>89</sup>

The LORD of Heaven’s Armies says, “Then I will come to you and judge you. I will be quick

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<sup>82</sup> Daniel 4:26-27

<sup>83</sup> Amos 2:6-8

<sup>84</sup> Amos 4:1

<sup>85</sup> Amos 5:11-12

<sup>86</sup> Amos 8:4-6

<sup>87</sup> Micah 2:1-2

<sup>88</sup> Micah 6:6-8

<sup>89</sup> Zechariah 7:8-10

to testify against those who take part in sorcery, adultery, and perjury, those who cheat workers of their pay and who cheat widows and orphans, those who turn away foreigners, and those who do not fear me.”<sup>90</sup>

Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth where moths and rust will destroy them and thieves can break in and steal them. But store for yourselves treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is. The eye is the lamp for the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst darkness. No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will be devoted to one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches. So I tell you, don't worry about the food or drink you need to live, or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes.<sup>91</sup>

So in everything, do to others what you want them to do to you. This sums up the meaning of the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets.<sup>92</sup>

John the Baptist was in prison, but he heard about what Christ was doing. So John sent some of his disciples to Jesus. They asked him, “Are you the One who is to come, or should we wait for someone else?” Jesus answered them, “Go tell John what you hear and see: The blind can see, the crippled can walk, and lepers are healed. The deaf can hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. Those who are not offended because of me are blessed.”<sup>93</sup>

“If you want to be perfect, then go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.” But when the young man heard this, he left sorrowfully, because he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”<sup>94</sup>

The Son of Man will come again in his great glory, with all his angels. He will be King and sit on his glorious throne. All the nations of the world will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The Son of Man will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to the people on his right, “Come, my Father has given you his blessing. Inherit the kingdom God has prepared for you from the creation of the world. Because I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your house. I was naked, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.”

Then the righteous people will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you into our

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<sup>90</sup> Malachi 3:5

<sup>91</sup> Matthew 6:19-25

<sup>92</sup> Matthew 7:12

<sup>93</sup> Matthew 11:2-6

<sup>94</sup> Matthew 19:21-24

house? When did we see you naked and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?”

Then the King will answer, “I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my brothers and sisters, you also did for me.”

Then the King will say to those on his left, “Go away from me. You are cursed. Go into the fire that burns forever that was prepared for the devil and his angels. Because I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger, and you did not invite me into your house. I was naked, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.”

Then those people will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?”

Then the King will answer, “I tell you the truth, to the extent you refused to do for even the least of my people here, you refused to do for me.” These people will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.<sup>95</sup>

Jesus took the five loaves and two fish and, looking up to heaven, he blessed the food. He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples for them to give to the people. Then he divided the two fish among them all. All the people ate and were satisfied. They filled twelve baskets with the leftover pieces of bread and fish. There were five thousand men who ate.<sup>96</sup>

To the crowds of people who came to be baptized by John, he said, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee away from God’s coming wrath? Do the things that prove your repentance. Don’t begin to say to yourselves, ‘Abraham is our father.’ For I tell you that God could raise up children for Abraham from these rocks. The ax is now ready to cut down the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” The people asked John, “Then what should we do?” John answered, “If you have two shirts, share with the person who does not have one. If you have food, share that also.”<sup>97</sup>

Jesus traveled to Nazareth, where he had grown up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue, as he always did, and stood up to read. The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. He opened the book and found the place where this is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he anointed me to proclaim the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to tell the captives they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. God sent me to free the oppressed and to proclaim the year when the Lord will show his favor.”

Jesus closed the book, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. All the eyes in the synagogue were watching Jesus closely. He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears!”<sup>98</sup>

Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you... But woe to you who are rich, because you have had your easy life. Woe to you who are well-fed now, because you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, because you will mourn and weep.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Matthew 25:31-46

<sup>96</sup> Mark 6:41-44

<sup>97</sup> Luke 3:7-11

<sup>98</sup> Luke 4:16-21

<sup>99</sup> Luke 6:20,24-25

Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who are cruel to you. If anyone hits you on one cheek, offer him the other cheek, too. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt. Give to everyone who asks you, and when someone takes something that is yours, don't demand it back. Do to others what you would want them to do to you.<sup>100</sup>

Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without hoping to get anything back. Then you will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God, because he is kind even to people who are ungrateful and full of sin. Show mercy, just as your Father shows mercy.<sup>101</sup>

Give, and it will be given to you. You will be given much. Pressed down, shaken together, and running over, it will spill into your lap. The standard you use with others is the standard God will use with you.<sup>102</sup>

As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes, beat him, and left him lying there, almost dead. By chance a priest was going down that road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite came there, and after he went over and looked at the man, he passed by on the other side of the road. Then a Samaritan traveling down the road came to where the hurt man was. When he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. The Samaritan went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds, and bandaged them. Then he put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn where he cared for him. The next day, the Samaritan brought out two coins, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again."

Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?"

The expert on the law answered, "The one who showed him mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Then go and do what he did."<sup>103</sup>

So give from your hearts to the poor, and then everything will be fully clean. Woe to you Pharisees! You pay tithes on even your mint, your rue, and every other herb in your garden. But you fail to be fair to others and to love God. These are the things you should do without neglecting to do those other things.<sup>104</sup>

"Be careful and guard against all kinds of greed. Life is not measured by how much one owns." Then Jesus told this parable: "There was a rich man who had some land, which grew a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What will I do? I have no place to keep all my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and other goods. Then I can say to myself, 'I have enough good things stored to last for many years. Rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life!'" But God said to him, 'Foolish man! Tonight your life will be taken from you. So who will get those things you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be for those who store up things for themselves and are not rich in what matters to God."

Jesus said to his disciples, "So I tell you, don't worry about the food you need to live, or about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothes... Don't

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<sup>100</sup> Luke 6:27-31

<sup>101</sup> Luke 6:35-36

<sup>102</sup> Luke 6:38

<sup>103</sup> Luke 10:30-37

<sup>104</sup> Luke 11:41-42

always think about what you will eat or what you will drink, and don't keep worrying. All the Gentiles in the world are trying to get these things, and your Father knows you need them. But seek God's kingdom, and all your other needs will be met as well. Don't fear, little flock, because your Father wants to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make for yourselves moneybags that will not wear out, the treasure in heaven that never runs out, where thieves can't steal and moths can't destroy. Your heart will be where your treasure is."<sup>105</sup>

Who is the faithful and wise servant that the master trusts to give the other servants their food at the right time? That servant will be blessed when the master comes and finds him doing his work. I tell you the truth, the master will put him in charge of everything he owns.<sup>106</sup>

When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite only your friends, your family, your other relatives, and your rich neighbors. At another time they will invite you to eat with them, and you will be repaid. Instead, when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then you will be blessed, because they have nothing and cannot pay you back. But you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.<sup>107</sup>

There was a rich man who always dressed in the finest clothes and lived in luxury every day. And a very poor man named Lazarus, whose body was covered with sores, was laid at the rich man's gate. He longed to eat only the small pieces of food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs would come and lick his sores. Later, Lazarus died, and the angels carried him to the arms of Abraham. The rich man died, too, and was buried. In Hades, he was in torment. Lifting up his eyes, the rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus at his side. He called, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire!" But Abraham said, "Child, remember when you were alive you had the good things in life, but bad things happened to Lazarus. Now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, there is a great chasm set in place between you and us, so no one can cross over to you, and no one can leave there and come to us."

The rich man said, "Father, then I beg you to send Lazarus to my father's house. I have five brothers, and Lazarus could warn them so that they will not come to this place of torment." But Abraham said, "They have the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets; let them learn from them." The rich man said, "No, father Abraham! But if someone goes to them from the dead, they would believe and change their hearts and lives." But Abraham said to him, "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded by someone who comes back from the dead."<sup>108</sup>

Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. A man was there named Zacchaeus, who was a very important tax collector, and he was wealthy. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because he was too short to see above the crowd. He ran ahead to a place where Jesus was about to pass, and he climbed a sycamore tree so he could see him. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! Because I must stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus came down quickly and welcomed him joyfully. All the people saw this and began to complain, "Jesus is staying with a sinner!" But Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "I will give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times more."

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<sup>105</sup> Luke 12:15-34

<sup>106</sup> Luke 12:42-44

<sup>107</sup> Luke 14:12-14

<sup>108</sup> Luke 16:19-31

Jesus said to him, “Salvation has come to this house today, because this man also is a son of Abraham. The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them.”<sup>109</sup>

All the believers were in close fellowship and had all things in common. They would sell their land and the things they owned and then divide the money and give it to anyone who needed it. The believers met together in the Temple every day. They ate together in their homes, sharing their food with joyful and generous hearts.<sup>110</sup>

The group of believers were one heart and mind. All those in the group acted as though their private property belonged to everyone in the group. In fact, they shared everything... There were no needy people among them. Because from time to time those who owned fields or houses sold them, brought the money from the sale, and laid it at the feet of the apostles. Then the money was distributed to anyone who needed it.<sup>111</sup>

Cornelius was a godly man. He and all the other people who lived in his house feared God. He gave much of his money to the poor and prayed to God often. One afternoon about three o’clock, Cornelius clearly saw a vision. An angel of God came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

Cornelius stared at the angel. He was terrified and said, “What do you want, Lord?”

The angel said, “God has heard your prayers. He has seen that you give to the poor, and he remembers you...”

Peter began to speak: “I truly understand now that to God every person is the same. In every nation God accepts anyone who fears him and practices righteousness.”<sup>112</sup>

When I was with you, I never wanted anyone’s money or fine clothes. You yourselves know I always worked with my own hands to take care of my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. I provided an example to you in everything I did that you should work as I did and help the weak. I taught you to remember the words Jesus said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”<sup>113</sup>

We who are strong should help the weak with their weaknesses, and not please only ourselves. Let each of us please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not live to please himself.<sup>114</sup>

Brothers and sisters, look at what you were when God called you. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many of you had great influence. Not many of you were of high social status. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and he chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose what the world thinks is lowly and what the world looks down on and thinks is nothing in order to destroy what the world thinks is important.<sup>115</sup>

When you meet as a congregation, you are not really eating the Lord’s Supper. This is because when you eat, each person eats without waiting for the others. Some people do not get enough to eat, while others get drunk. Don’t you have homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you have no regard

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<sup>109</sup> Luke 19:1-10

<sup>110</sup> Acts 2:44-46

<sup>111</sup> Acts 4:32-35

<sup>112</sup> Acts 10:2-4,34-35

<sup>113</sup> Acts 20:33-35

<sup>114</sup> Romans 15:1-3

<sup>115</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:26-28

for God's church and so humiliate those who are poor? What should I tell you? Should I praise you? I will not praise you for doing this. ...All who eat the bread and drink the cup without careful regard for the body eat and drink judgment against themselves. That is why many in your group are sick and weak, and a number of you have died... So my brothers and sisters, when you gather as a congregation to eat, wait for each other. Anyone who is too hungry should eat at home so that in meeting together you will not bring God's judgment on yourselves.<sup>116</sup>

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace God gave the churches in Macedonia. Although they have been tested by great trials and are very poor, they gave much because of their great joy. I can tell you that they gave as much as they were able and even more than they could afford. No one told them to do it. But they begged and pleaded with us to let them share in this service for God's people...

I am not commanding you to give. But I want to see if your love is true by comparing you with others that really want to help. You know the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor so that by his becoming poor you might become rich...

Give from what you have. If you want to give, your gift will be accepted. It will be judged by what you have, not by what you do not have. We do not want you to have trials while other people are at ease, but we want everything to be equal. At this time you have plenty and what you have can help others who are in need. Then later, when they have plenty, they can help you when you are in need, and all will be equal. As it is written in the Scriptures, "The person who gathered more did not have too much, nor did the person who gathered less have too little."<sup>117</sup>

Those leaders who seemed to be important did not change the Good News that I preach... The only thing they asked us was to remember to help the poor – something I really wanted to do.<sup>118</sup>

When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should give special attention to those who are in the family of faith.<sup>119</sup>

Those who are stealing must stop stealing and start working. They should do something useful with their hands. Then they will have something to share with those who are poor.<sup>120</sup>

When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more regard to others than to yourselves. Do not look out for your own interests, but look out for others' interests. In your lives you must have the same attitude as Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. But he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He became like a slave and was born as a man. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God, even to the point of death – death on a cross.<sup>121</sup>

Provide support for widows who are truly widows... But the widow who lives in luxury is really dead while she is alive... To be on the list of widows, a woman must be at least sixty years old. She must have been faithful to her husband. She must be known for her good works – works such as

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<sup>116</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

<sup>117</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

<sup>118</sup> Galatians 2:6,10

<sup>119</sup> Galatians 6:10

<sup>120</sup> Ephesians 4:28

<sup>121</sup> Philippians 2:3-8

## Ep. 26 – Proof That God Cares More About The Poor Than We Do

raising her children, welcoming strangers, washing the feet of God’s people, helping those in distress, and giving her life to do all kinds of good deeds.<sup>122</sup>

Command those who are rich with the things of this world not to be proud. Tell them to hope in God, not in their uncertain riches. God richly gives us everything to enjoy. Tell them to do good, to be rich in doing good deeds, to be generous and ready to share. By doing that, they will be storing up a treasure for themselves as a strong foundation for the future. Then they will be able to take hold of the life that is true life.<sup>123</sup>

Our people must learn to use their lives for doing good deeds to meet urgent needs so that their lives will not be unfruitful.<sup>124</sup>

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Do not neglect to welcome strangers, because some who have done this have welcomed angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison as if you were in prison with them. Remember those who are mistreated as if you were suffering with them.<sup>125</sup>

Do not neglect to do good to others, and share with them, because such sacrifices please God.<sup>126</sup>

People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just deceiving themselves. Their “religion” is worth nothing. Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans and widows in their distress, and keeping yourself free from the world’s evil influence.<sup>127</sup>

My dear brothers and sisters, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, never show favoritism. Suppose someone comes into your church meeting wearing nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor person comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. You show special attention to the one wearing nice clothes and say, “Please, sit here in this good seat.” But you say to the poor person, “Stand over there,” or, “Sit on the floor by my feet.”

What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others, and with evil thoughts you are deciding that one person is better. Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! God chose the poor in the world to be rich with faith and to be heirs of the kingdom God promised to those who love him. But you show no respect to the poor.<sup>128</sup>

In everything you say and do, remember that you will be judged by the law of freedom. So you must show mercy to others, or God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the person who shows mercy can stand without fear at the judgment.<sup>129</sup>

Suppose a brother or sister in Christ is naked and lacks daily food. If you say to that person,

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<sup>122</sup> 1 Timothy 5:3,6,9-10

<sup>123</sup> 1 Timothy 6:17-19

<sup>124</sup> Titus 3:14

<sup>125</sup> Hebrews 13:1-3

<sup>126</sup> Hebrews 13:16

<sup>127</sup> James 1:26-27

<sup>128</sup> James 2:1-6

<sup>129</sup> James 2:12-13

“God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat,” but you do not provide for the needs of their body, your words are worth nothing.<sup>130</sup>

You rich people, listen! Cry and be very sad because of the miseries that are coming to you. Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have been eaten by moths. Your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be an evidence against you. It will eat your bodies like fire. You stored up your treasure in the last days. The pay you did not give the workers who mowed your fields cries out against you, and the cries of the workers have been heard by the Lord of Armies. Your life on earth was full of luxury and pleasing yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready to be killed.<sup>131</sup>

Open your homes to each other, without complaining.<sup>132</sup>

This is how we know what real love is: Jesus laid down his life for us. So we should lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. Suppose someone has the world’s possessions and sees a brother or sister in need, but does not help. Then God’s love is not living in that person. My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by showing true love through our actions.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> James 2:15-16

<sup>131</sup> James 5:1-5

<sup>132</sup> 1 Peter 4:9

<sup>133</sup> 1 John 3:16-18