



WEEK 2 : "CONSUME FAIRLY"

Sunday, August 9, 2009

BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus and Thompsons Roads,
LOWER TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3017

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Introducing the 50:50 Studies

We will be following the 50:50 themes in the five Sundays in August. This 5 week teaching and study program helps churches and individuals seek God's view on the poor and sets out practical ways that Christians can respond and make a difference. Each Sunday's teaching session is supplemented by linked Small Group Studies during the week.

These Studies have been prepared by the Australian staff of Baptist World Aid to celebrate 50 years of working on behalf of Australian Baptists with the world's poor, helping them to life themselves out of extreme poverty.

Check out Baptist World Aid Australia's website at www.shareanopportunity.org and click on the 50:50 graphic on the home page of our website to go straight to the 50:50 website to explore the information, links and resources there as well.

NOTE : These sermon notes have been prepared by developing the theme and using some of the notes as suggested by Baptist World Aid Australia.

1. THE BIG QUESTION

Extreme poverty is disturbing.

Few of us can contemplate hungry children,
weeping mothers and despairing fathers without asking "What _can_ I _Do?"

Although the extent of global poverty is overwhelming,
the answer to this question is "Far_ More_ Than_ You_ Think"

A fully formed response to the question begins by
listening carefully to God's HEART for the poor and vulnerable.

Scripture reveals a God who SEES the poor and HEARS their cries.

If we would truly have God's heart, we must LISTEN to what God is saying

We must also LISTEN to the poor as they tell their stories, and

be filled with COMPASSION for them,

be moved to ANGER at the injustices they suffer,

and take ACTION to bring about change.

*Our focus
this week*

2. GOD'S VISION FOR THE WORLD

Behold I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind ... i will take delight in my people and the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard no more. Never again will there be an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years ... They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit ... they will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD ... Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain

... from **Is65:17-26**

In this vision, people will share in:

A. The ABUNDANCE of the earth

B. A SUPPORTIVE community

C. A trusting and loving RELATIONSHIP with God

Extreme poverty deprives people of the first two, and erects barriers to experiencing the third

3. GOD'S CALL TO US

A. God calls the "non-poor" to ADDRESS the needs of the poor

Do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded ... give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart ... from Deut15:7-10

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1Tim6:17-18

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1Jn3:17-18

B. God calls us to "love our neighbour" as the next PRIORITY after loving him

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Mat22:37-40

C. God calls us not to EXPLOIT others.

On the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers ... Is not this the kind of fasting I decree: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke and to set the oppressed free. Is it not to share your food with the hungry, to provide the poor wanderer with shelter and when you see the naked, to clothe him. ... from Is58:3-7

Now listen, you rich, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.

... Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. James 5:1-5

D. God calls us to see JESUS in the faces of the poor.

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.

... "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

... "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matt25:35-40

AN EXERCISE TODAY: Listening to the poor

Take some time to wander around the Foyer, the passageway to the carpark and the Hall.

Look at the photos; these are real people. Read their stories; this is their reality.

Compassion? Anger? Ask the Big Question: "What Can I Do?"

Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to speak to you. Open your heart, mind and will to what he may say to you today ... and in the days ahead of our 50:50 program.

IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK

Keep your eyes open on the Supermarket shelves for goods with a "Fairtrade" label. Ask your Supermarket manager if the store has a list of what is available.

If you have internet access, put "fairtrade" in your search engine and find out what it means.