

## Embracing God's Heart

Jeremiah 22:16 NIV "He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD." \*Knowing God is not just intellectual assent, it must be expressed in our values – do you love Me? Feed My sheep – embrace My heart for people.

- I. Think globally, act locally.
  - a. For God so loved the world, go into all the nations and preach to everyone – we don't get a pass because we don't live near people. To be God's friend means we care about everyone – Iran, Ukraine, Israel, Africa, Belize, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, etc. We must remember God's heart for the whole world.
  - b. This phrase was originally about the environment – "Essentially, it means that while one should consider the global consequences of their actions, the most effective, tangible change happens through local, grassroots action."
    - i. God's love for the world is modeled by what we're willing to do for the one.
    - ii. Galatians 2:20b and Luke 15:4 – Jesus loves each one and He is calling us to love each one.
  - c. Acts 1:8 NIV "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
    - i. Our responsibility is always first to our Jerusalem – we are filled to touch those closest to us even as we keep the ends of the earth in our hearts as God's friends.
    - ii. Be witnesses – Eager to share the love revealed by the gospel – isn't this what it means to know Me? St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words."
  - d. The least of these. \*Do hidden things with great devotion. Those who can't pay you back – you've done it for Me.
    - i. Mother Theresa: "I spend time alone with Jesus early in the morning every day, and then I'm with Him all day as I minister to the poor."
    - ii. Local missions you can visit today include: Feeding the poor, clothing the poor, helping unwed mothers who are pregnant and afraid, sheltering the homeless with children, helping educate and equip the disadvantaged to find work and make it on their own. Helping those who have been wounded by the church or become cynical of the church to find Christ; helping Muslims come to faith.
- II. Contrasting two kings.

- a. God often gives us what not to do alongside what He wants us to do. Let's look at the passage above in its context. Jeremiah 22:13-19 NIV "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor. He says, 'I will build myself a great palace with spacious upper rooms.' So he makes large windows in it, panels it with cedar and decorates it in red. "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the LORD. "But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion." Therefore, this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: "They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!' They will not mourn for him: 'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!' He will have the burial of a donkey— dragged away and thrown outside the gates of Jerusalem."
  - b. Josiah and Jehoiakim.
    - i. One listened to God; one rejected the Word of God. \*Josiah tears his clothes and God is moved (2Chron. 34:26-2); the other burns the words and orders the execution of the prophet. (Jeremiah 36)
    - ii. One embraces God's covenant and leads the people in God's ways (2Chron. 34:31-33; Jeremiah 22:16); the other uses God's people and only builds his own palace. (Jeremiah 22:13-15) Does this make you a king?
    - iii. One pleases God is remembered with laments (2Chron. 35:25); the other isn't even buried like a donkey. (Jeremiah 22:17-19) Live in this life in the way you want to be remembered. No one on their death bed wishes they had worked longer hours!
- III. God's promises for those who remember the poor.
- a. God points out that He blessed Josiah and He gives incentives to embrace His heart for the poor. First, God says He is in your debt. Proverbs 19:17 NIV "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done." This is the one exception He makes to the general principle that "no one has given to God that they should be repaid."
  - b. God says He will sustain you in your lowest moments. Psalm 41:1-3 NIV "Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble. The LORD protects and preserves them— they are counted among the blessed in the land— he does not give them over to the desire of their foes. The LORD sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness." \*God watches how we treat those

who can't help us go higher – it's not what you know, but who you know. What about those people who couldn't possibly help you advance – this is pure before God.

- c. The greatest promises of revival are connected to our care for the poor. \*Repentance, tearing down idols, restoring worship, yet... Isn't this what it means to know the Lord? Isaiah 58:8-12 NIV "Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness<sup>③</sup> 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 in 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. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings." Everything connected to revival will only happen in the context of us opening our hearts to needy people:
- i. Light shine – the glory of God in front and behind
  - ii. Quick healings – miracles
  - iii. Quick answers to prayer – not "maybe, maybe not" – only God!
  - iv. Refreshing in the most difficult times.
  - v. Conciliation in relationships that will affect society