

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Romans 8:29
Lesson #17
Conformed to His Image
02/05/2023

JesUS ImMANuel

(God with us)

God came down looking like us and **called us to rise up looking like Him.**

Romans 8:29

“He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son,**”

“THE BODY OF CHRIST”

John 14:12

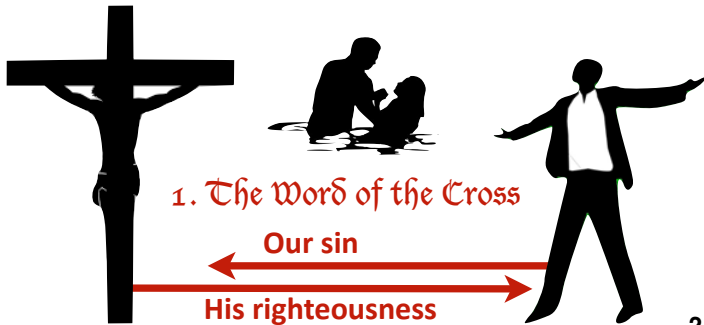
“greater works than these **will he do;**” 1

Two great exchanges

2 Corinthians 5:21

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf,

so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

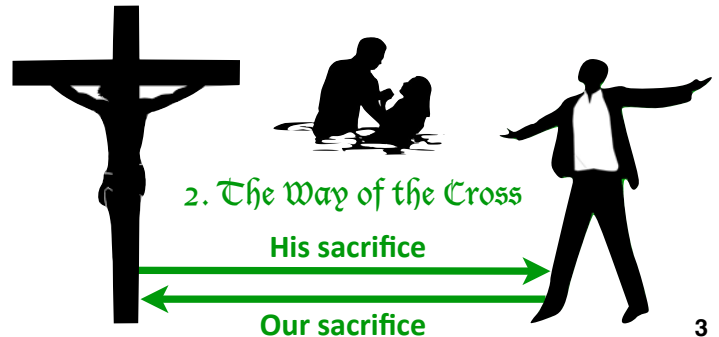


2

Philippians 2

“5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

8 Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”



3

Both the “have-nots” and the “have-lots” can say **“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want”.**

The poor need to realize that true peace, power, & dignity **do not come from HAVING material wealth.**



The rich need to realize that true peace, power, and dignity **do not depend on HOLDING material wealth.**

4

Both the “have-nots” and the “have-lots” have a calling.

God called the “have-nots” to mock the “have-lots” of this world, without becoming one of them.



God called “the have-lots” to become one with the “have-nots”, to dignify them.

1 Cor.12:18-26

5

Social Justice is about respect for the “image of God” in every human.

How much is the distribution of material wealth an issue in a society that equates self worth with net worth and makes money a ticket to inclusion in society?



6

High risk, high reward Cannabis industry



The world's wisdom

The bottom line in investing is not what is good for humanity

but rather what investment will make the most money.



7

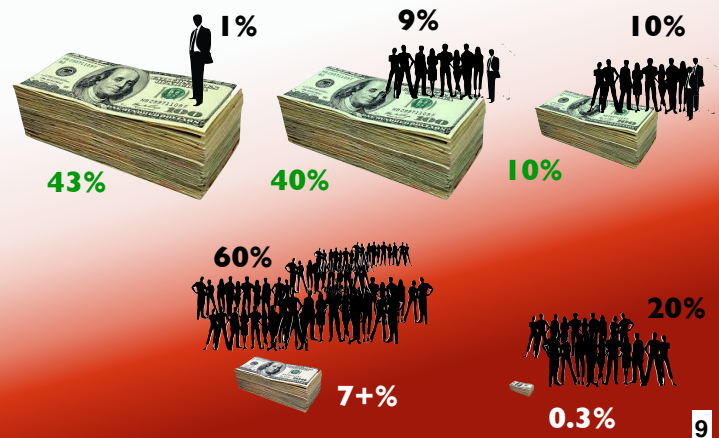
1. Build an inclusive community by reaching out, listening to, and drawing in the “have-nots”.

Both the **have-nots** and the **have-lots** need to **respond to their circumstance**, bearing witness to their spiritual faith, hope, & love as proud bearers of their master's cross as humble sacrificial stewards of their master's gifts **and thus be the “Body of Christ”.**



8

2. Address the wealth gap in America with personal posture and political pressure.



9

3. Aim at building “spiritual (not material) wealth”.

Mark 10

“²⁹ Jesus said, “there is **no one who has left** house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, ³⁰ but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now **in the present age**, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

³¹ But **many who are first, will be last; and the last, first.”**”

Are the predicted blessings **spiritual or material?**



10

James 1

“⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to **glory in his high position;**



The “Have-Nots”

¹⁰ and the rich man is to **glory in his humiliation,”**



The “Have-Lots”

11

4. Respect the complexity of social justice.

This world	SOCIAL JUSTICE	God's kingdom
LEGISLATED		Voluntary
Local		International
Short Term		Long Term
Sign		Solution
SYSTEMIC		<i>Individual</i>
Corporate	Private	

Our responses should not be superficial, insensitive, and shortsighted.

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5. Respect the complexity of poverty.



Social isolation - not connected to a supportive community.	Political marginalization - excluded from positions of public dignity, power, and respect.
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Material deprivation
- not able to access key basic goods and services.

Natural disruption - difficult circumstances beyond their control.	Family disintegration - not supported by a healthy family foundation.
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Spiritual disorientation
- not empowered from within to know personal dignity, power, and hope.

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Two common responses.

#1 A Rule - Tithing

Malachi 3:8

“Would anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In **tithes and offerings.**”

**What is expected of Christians?
Is giving 10% enough?**

Romans 12:1

“I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”

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10% management (Levites)

(Num.18:21,24)

10% charity (the poor)

every 3rd year
(Deut.14:28,29)

10% temple (sacrifices)

(Deut.14:22-27)



25-33%

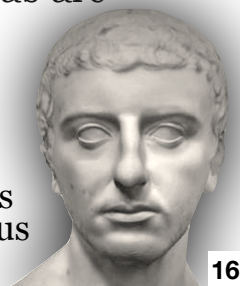
The Old Covenant tithe was like a flat tax on goods produced.

15

“In addition to the two tithes which I have already directed you to pay each year, the one for the Levites and the other for the banquets, you should devote a third every third year to the distribution of such things as are lacking to widowed women and orphan *children.*” —

Antiquities iv. 240; Loeb ed.

Flavius Josephus



16

Under the New Covenant

from Pentecost forward, the standard is **EQUALITY.**

IT IS NOT A MANDATE BUT A MODEL consistent with the spirit of the **BODY OF CHRIST.**

2 Corinthians 8

“13 For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, **but by way of equality.** . . . 15 as it is written, “**He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little had no lack.**”

(Acts 4:32-37)



17

Acts 4:32

“And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but **all things were common property to them.**”

Two common responses. #2 A System - *Socialism*

- This is **descriptive**, not prescriptive.
- This is the **church**, not the state.
- Support laws that promote the **“general welfare”**, not just individual freedom.



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SUGGESTIONS

- Ask **ourselves**: What advice would we give if I were advising someone else about **being a Christian steward of the blessings God has given them.**
- Some have **set a certain standard of living**, and share the rest with others.
- Do the **“greater works”** of a **“salt”** and **“light”** disciple (Jn.14:12, 17:26) - (the Way of the Cross).



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Suggested responses

- Settle the **“ownership”** issue.
- Don't **focus** on what we have or don't have, but rather on what we have and who we are **“in Christ”**.
- Build a portfolio of **true wealth**.
- **Start** with a heart exam, personal contacts, faith community, local issues.

- **Listen** to the Scripture, the Spirit, the culture, and the poor.
- Keep a **journal** until our plan becomes a habit.



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6. Work with and through responsible institutions.

DURHAM

RESCUE

MISSION



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A Berean's look at ...

Next lesson
Rom.
1:18-32



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