

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE DUST AND THE DUNGHILL

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill. Psalm 113:7

Back in the mid 1960's, the Democrats under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson (who took his cue from FDR before him) began a campaign which they called the "war on poverty". Their concept (like most of those concocted by liberal socialists) was that by instituting various government programs that the problems associated with poverty could be eradicated. Some fifty years later, both Democrats and Republicans alike still labor under this delusion and continually seek funding for various programs and give-away schemes which merely exacerbate this societal problem rather than solving it.

The truth is that the underlying cause of "poverty" is misunderstood by these political soothsayers. Not only that; but, their definition of what constitutes "poverty" is wrongly stated by them as being the lack of a certain quantity of monetary possessions or benefits. They call this "amount" the "poverty level." Thus they devise means whereby to redistribute wealth of this type to those who have no appreciation for it, not having not labored to attain it. What is meant as a helping hand turns out to be an empowerment to non productivity and a sense of entitlement.

We are sure that the LORD said that there would always be in every society those who did not possess great earthly property. *"For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good."* (Mar 14:7) HE also clearly instructed HIS disciples to have concern for these individuals and to seek to do them good in whatever way they can. HE also instructed the church (through Paul) about a principle which is widely disregarded in our society concerning those who refuse to provide such things for themselves. *"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."* (2Thes 3:10)

Now, while this instruction is specifically and primarily given to those who make up the body of CHRIST, this is, nonetheless, a principle which should not be disregarded by any culture lest the ills which are promoted by laziness permeate it as we see manifested in our own society.

Poverty is the result of sin and the outgrowth of that curse which was placed upon the Earth by the LORD at the manifestation of Adam's corruption. *"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."* (Gen 3:17-19) No amount of human endeavor, expenditure, or creation of material wealth can ever change this situation and condition even one iota.

In our society men judge a man's "poverty" by how much money he has in the bank or whether he meets the government's defined threshold. Yet even natural poverty (i.e.; being poor) is not actually a matter of money, but rather one of mind and thought. A truly "poor man" cannot be helped, whereas a man who simply lacks money can often see his "problem" solved through determination and industriousness.

All natural men (without exception) are in a place of poverty when it comes to possessing those "goods" which are of value in the Kingdom of GOD. Yet it is impossible for a man to gauge or comprehend his "poverty" apart from a revelation from the HOLY GHOST. By nature, men believe that they possess enough "wealth" (i.e.; worth, righteousness, understanding) to purchase for themselves some favor with GOD.

We often hear men say "GOD helps those who help themselves" or that they believe that if they do their best, don't rob any banks, or kill anybody that doesn't deserve it, then just based on the fact that they have been relatively "good" they can do business with GOD. By nature men feel that they are in good standing with HIM, since they call on HIM when they get in a bind, and even help other folks out if it's not too much of an inconvenience. So they believe the LORD, surely, will not turn them away. They are even thankful when everything is going just like they planned and they even go to church whenever it doesn't conflict with their busy life.

Those who blissfully go about their daily routines, content with their knowledge of GOD, and satisfied with their religious affiliations and various activities which promote good works, good citizenship, and care for their fellow man really have no need of the gospel. In fact they are not the least bit interested in hearing a message which strips them of all hope in some decision which they can make by their free-will or destroys the notion that some activity which they can perform will insure their inclusion among the saints of GOD. They expect that GOD is just like they suppose HIM to be. Such folks are described in Revelation, "*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" (Rev 3:17)

Those who think they can see are in reality blind. Those who have some form of righteousness are in reality unholy. Those who speak great words of testimony, declaring what they have done to gain salvation, are in reality deceived by their own confession. There is not one thing that a man can do to effect his own deliverance from this state of "poverty" which he is in by nature and choice. He will only be rescued from it by the grace and mercy of GOD. HE, alone, is the ONE who makes a differentiation between one man and another. "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" (1Cor 4:7)

Thus we read in this Psalm, of HIM who "*raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.*" None of these terms are in the least bit flattering or empowering to men in the activity of their free will. Therefore this message is highly unpalatable to men in their natural state, especially those who are religiously oriented and think that they can stir themselves up to seek after GOD when the notion strikes them.

This is the heart and soul of the gospel message and is a summation of the work of redemption which the LORD JESUS does perform in the behalf of HIS elect Bride. The gospel is a sweet and welcome sound to those who are described as the "poor" and the "needy". If a man is "poor", he cannot be helped in any way by someone else who is "poor."

He needs a wealthy BENEFACTOR to deliver him from his poverty. He stands in need of SOMEONE who is touched with the feelings of his own infirmities and who having pity upon him, will provide for him what he cannot provide for himself. The LORD JESUS CHRIST is just such a DELIVERER who comes with "healing in HIS wings" declaring to those who find themselves in an impoverished state that HE, by HIS own power will set them free from the cycle of sin and death.

HE raises up the "*poor*" from the "*dust*". Man in his natural state was created from the dust and to that same dust he will return. Dust is nothing but dry powder, it has no life of any kind in it and is blown away by the winds of time. Apart from the "LIFE" which is breathed into the nostrils of such creatures they shall pass away and be remembered no more. But HE came to give LIFE to those who possess none of their own.

HE lifteth up the "needy" from the "dunghill" (i.e.; pile of garbage or manure). Any man who dwells in a "dunghill" is like Lazarus, "*by this time he stinketh.*" (John 11:39) Yet as Lazarus was raised from the dead, so too are the "needy". Are you poor and needy? mam