

Fair Wages?

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 3:1-15

*“It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses.”
Isaiah 3:14 —*

Often we’re taught that God’s people Israel were punished for forgetting the Lord and turning away to worship other gods. But Israel also disobeyed God in the way they treated the poor. “They have brought disaster upon themselves,” says Isaiah. How? By taking advantage of laborers, and “grinding the faces of the poor.”

Throughout the world today millions will work very hard and be paid almost nothing for their labor. Over 40 percent of the world’s people subsist on less than \$2.00 (U.S.) a day. Yes, businesses must keep costs as low as possible, and labor and benefits are costly. But Christian business people know the Lord is seriously against taking advantage of workers. The lowest possible wage may not be a fair one.

Providing good, productive work at a living wage for the poor is one of the noblest deeds we can perform. Reading Isaiah convicts me that taking advantage of the dire needs of the poor by paying them too little or too late is one of the worst evils we can commit.

We all employ or pay for the work of others in various ways. So we all stand accountable before the Lord of creation, and we will have to give account to him for the ways we spend our money and other resources.

Prayer

Lord, those who work for us are also your children. They have needs; they must be treated fairly. Help us to be employers and buyers who treat all people justly. Amen.

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