

The Way to Honor God

Scripture Reading — Proverbs 14:30-35

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker.
Proverbs 14:31

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In Luke 4:18 Jesus declares that he was anointed "to preach good news to the poor." His concern for the poor is not surprising. Throughout the Bible we are told that God cares for the poor in a special way. Not only does he listen to them; God is on their side. Our reading for today states this in a way that may be hard for many of us to grasp. If we oppress the poor, we insult not only them but also God, for he made them. Every single mother trying to hold her family together, every child whose belly is bloated by hunger bears the image of Almighty God.

Since God cares for the poor, we may not leave them to struggle. We must not only have compassion for them as Jesus did, but we must also strive for justice for them.

Part of that justice is truth-telling. Isaiah says we may not "destroy the poor with lies" (Isaiah 32:7). Have you ever caught yourself thinking or even saying, "If she would only work as hard as I do, she wouldn't be in such a predicament?" Children, have you ever found your-self leaving someone out because they were dressed shabbily? Neither your words nor your actions are proclaiming good news in such instances.

In Proverbs 29:7 we read, "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern." This is a hard saying, but it is the gospel truth.

Prayer

Lord our God, you call us to defend the rights of the poor and needy. May we hear and obey your word. Give us wisdom to speak and live by the truth, we pray. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

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