

The All Sufficient Cross 7: From Poverty to Abundance

1. **Humanity's Problem & God's solution (Is 53:6):** 'and we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned, everyone, to his own way. And the LORD has laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all' (Is. 53:6). **Iniquity (Heb. 'avon') = 'rebellion/sin' + 'punishment/evil consequences of rebellion'** (Gen 4:13) – i.e. Jesus' death was '**Substitutionary Sacrifice**' "*For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*" (Is. 53:8)
 2. **Nature of the exchange:** (1) 'Peace' instead of turmoil; (2) 'Forgiveness' instead of condemnation; (3) 'Divine Health' instead of sickness; (4) 'Christ's Righteousness' instead of guilt; (5) 'Life' instead of death. (6) 'Glory/Confidence' instead of Shame (7) 'Acceptance' instead of rejection; (8) '**Abundance**' instead of Poverty
 3. **Poverty is a Curse!**
 - a. **Some examples of starving North Koreans** in recent history. **Poverty is a curse!** (1) 5 & 7 years old perished in starvation; (2) 12 years old boy, orphaned due to poverty (Lee HS) fled to South Korea & became a Christian (Curse to blessing!)
 - b. **As the result of the fall**, God cursed the ground (Gen 3:17-19). 'thorns and thistles' & 'sweat of your face' = 'increased labour, and reduced productivity'.
 - c. "*...all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God...because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of your heart for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, (1) in hunger, (2) in thirst, (3) in nakedness, (4) and in need of everything...*" (Deut 28:45, 47-48)
 4. **Jesus Exhausted Poverty Curse**
 - a. **Jesus' on the cross:** (1) 'hungry' – didn't eat from night before execution; (2) 'thirst' – One of Jesus' last words; (3) 'naked' – soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothes; (4) 'in need of everything' – Jesus owned absolutely nothing! What about Jesus' life & ministry? Was He poor? Certainly did not travel in luxury, but can't exactly say poor either! i.e. Jesus fed '5000 men' on top of the mountain (Again 4000 later). Jesus used the 'Father's credit card' whenever He needed. **However, Jesus became absolutely poor at the cross!** i.e. Jesus was buried in a 'borrowed tomb' in a 'borrowed wrap'. Originally headed for Hinnom valley to be dumped. **Why?**
 - b. "**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**" (2 Cor 8:9). Jesus reversed the poverty curse through His death! E.g. Some people work very hard but never get to enjoy the good: "*Cursed is the man...for he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness...*" (Jer 17:5-6). E.g. Mia's family health before & after Christ. Paul's family, no riches overnight, but steady build.
 - c. "**And God is able to make all grace 'abound' toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things may have an 'abundance' for every good work.**" (2 Cor 9:8) ['all' x 5; 'abundance' x 2].
 - d. **3 levels of supply:** (1) 'lack'; (2) 'sufficiency'; (3) 'abundance'. Abundance is by God's grace through faith! 'Striving without God's blessing only leads to poverty.'
 - e. **Spread of the Gospel & Economic Growth:** from Europe, GB, USA, and now spreading through Asian countries as they open up to the gospel. (Africa next?)
 - f. **Reason for the close correlation:** (1) Wherever gospel is preached 'poverty curse' is broken off of people (spiritual law); (2) People become generally more responsible, diligent, honest, & less corruption (moral principle). E.g. precision Swiss watch was a direct influence of 'reformed Christianity' on 'principle of stewardship of time.' Different work ethics between northern/southern Europe.
 - g. **Warning:** There is no political, fiscal solution to moral decline in society leading to eventual implosion from within. National repentance is the only answer!
5. **Purpose of the blessings of God**
 - a. **(1) Preaching of the Gospel in word & deed!** (Matt 24:14) **(2) Paul's last words** to Ephesian elders: "*Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive!'*" (Acts 20:35).
 - b. Which is higher blessing? 'Receiving' or 'Giving'? What does God want for His children? (1) Destitute (lack); (2) Receive (sufficient); (3) Give (abundance).
 - c. **Why it is more blessed to give:** (1) This is what God is like (becoming more like God). 'At the heart of discipleship'; (2) The only way to carry over your riches into eternity! *If all your riches consist of houses, cars, lands, things of this world, remember this. When you die, your will take nothing with you. You will step out into eternity a naked soul.* E.g. Dead Sea gives nothing out & nothing lives there.
 - d. **Giving (Generosity) is very important part of Christian life!** Not necessary to give large amounts, but cultivating generosity as truly born again child of God. "None shall appear empty handed." (Ex 34:20) God doesn't need our tip. "*God loves a cheerful giver*" = 'Hilarious giver!' (2 Cor 9:7)
 - e. "*Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth.*" (Eccl 11:1-2) God's insurance plan for old age/sudden disaster. "Whether I have a lot or little I will live out my life as a generous person & practice generosity as a lifestyle." i.e. **Express God's love through generosity!** God loves to answer the prayers of His children, "Give us this day our daily bread..." through His own!
 6. **Stewarding True Riches**
 - a. "*There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; And one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches.*" (Prov 13:7)
 - b. Poverty is a curse. God's provision is abundance. But do not focus merely on the material realm, because when you die, that will be the end of it. To those whose priorities are right, God offers greater and more enduring riches: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ,*" (Eph 1:3)
 - c. **Apostle Paul's example** of embracing voluntary cap on personal riches as a servant of Christ. How much is enough? (2 Cor 6:4-10)