

Poverty and Prosperity II

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[0 : 00] In your Bibles to chapter 26 of Matthew, and there we'll be reading verses 6 through 13.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume.

And she poured it on his head as he reclined at the table. But the disciples were indignant when they saw this and said, Why this waste?

For this perfume might have been sold for a high price in the money given to the poor. But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why do you bother the woman?

For she has done a good deed to me. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.

[1 : 30] For when she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel was preached, in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.

In at least three of the four gospels, our Lord used this expression.

The poor you have with you always, but me you have not always. And I must confess in times past, I just kind of glossed over that, didn't pay a whole lot of attention to it other than accepting it as a truism.

But given the responsibility that is placed upon us for being custodians of our brother, as Cain asked the question, Am I my brother's keeper?

[2 : 42] The answer is, Yes, you are your brother's keeper. We are all keepers one of another. We are all related and we are all responsible one to another.

At least in certain ways, we are all accountable one to another. But when it comes to the subject of poverty and the possibility of eliminating it, or the responsibility for eliminating it, that can be a confusing subject.

Because I suppose if you were to ask most people, What's poverty and prosperity all about? The answer would simply be, Money.

The poor don't have it, and the wealthy do. And that's what it's all about. And some see this in such a simplistic way, as nothing more than what you ought to do then, is take money from the wealthy who have it, and give it to the poor who don't have it.

And there is something on the surface of that that sounds pretty equitable. Sounds pretty reasonable. But there is one flaw in the ointment that is often overlooked.

[3 : 53] And that I explained to you in our introductory session as to why we will always have the poor with us, at least in this world. Now there will not always be poor people.

Because once Christ comes and establishes that kingdom, poverty will be one of the many negatives that will go away.

There won't be any poverty, death, disease, etc. Once Christ establishes that kingdom. But this isn't it. So we still live in a fallen world, and we will always have poor people with us, as long as we have this human dynamic that God has given us called volition.

It means you have a will. You have the ability to make decisions. You have the power to make choices. And poverty is a result of people having made the wrong choice.

Riches is a result of people having made the right choice, at least in the area of finances. Now, one may make what seems to be good choices and have a lot of wealth to show for it, but in reality their choices were not good at all because they constantly engage in criminal activities.

[5 : 19] So there are all kinds of sides to this, is what I'm saying. It can be a very complex issue.

But by and large, the consequences that all of us face about everything, whether they are good consequences or bad consequences, are inevitably the result of the choices that we make.

Each of us is responsible for the decisions that we make. This means in order to make good decisions, you should be as informed as possible.

Because the more you know, the more likely it is that you will make good choices. And really, this is the basis of what education is all about.

Education is designed to prepare people so that they will be able to make good choices when confronted with different situations. We call that being responsible.

Is there a parent anywhere who has not said to their child at whatever stage they were, I want you to learn to be responsible.

[6 : 28] You've got to become more responsible. It's something that we've all said to our kids, and it's something that we long for. And to be responsible simply means that when you are confronted with a choice, your response will be a good response.

And if it is, we call that being responsible. And if our choices are bad, we call that being irresponsible. And we all know that we've got a lot of both types in this world.

So it is interesting to note that in connection with Christ saying, the poor you have with you always, he never says anything like, and it's the responsibility of the haves to stomp out the needs of the have-nots.

It doesn't say that. In other words, the scriptures do not enjoin the idea of spreading the wealth around. That is a holy, liberal, political slant on the issue.

And the scriptures do not support it. We will see later on how this is going to play out in more dramatic ways. But for now, I simply want to introduce some propositions before we go to the scriptures, because this is a really, really important issue.

[7 : 49] And I don't think in the history of our nation has it ever been such a front-burner topic as it was, except perhaps when our nation was in the throes of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

And then the poverty and wealth issue was on the front burner, as it is becoming so now. And by the way, there's an article on the desk back there by Thomas Sowell on the subject of the poverty, poverty-stricken today.

And you need to pick up a copy of it on your way back, on your way back there. He deals with the relativity of poverty, and it is a very relative issue. Because you realize, and if you do not realize, let me tell you, that there are Americans living on a welfare program administered by the state and federal government here in the United States.

And these people are considered to be under the poverty guideline. But if you go to a host of other nations throughout the world, you would find their standard of living to be considered luxurious. It is remarkable how poverty is in the eyes of the beholder. It is a relative term. People may be poor compared to whom?

[9 : 15] I am dirt poor compared to Bill Gates or Donald Trump. But if you compare me to many people in Clark County who are living at the poverty line, they would consider me, of all things, wealthy.

So it is a relative issue, and it needs to be kept in consideration. Also, we gave you two areas to avoid, two extremes to avoid whenever you're thinking of the poor or the wealthy.

And the first extreme that needs to be avoided is this. Everybody who is poor is poor because they're lazy and don't want to work, and they just expect everything to be handed to them.

That is not true. That is not true at all. Are there some poor people like that? Yes. Yes, there are some people who are poor who always have their hand out.

They always think everybody should be giving them something. There are people like that. But I do think that among those who are poverty stricken, they are probably a minority.

[10 : 25] A great many people who are in poverty don't want to be there, and they will do whatever is in their power to get out of it because they don't like living that way. Someone has said, I've been wealthy and I've been poor, and believe me, wealthy is a lot better.

And the other extreme to be avoided is this. Everybody who is rich has gotten it by hook or crook, or it was handed to them on a silver platter, and they don't deserve it.

And they have earned their wealth on the backs of the poor by taking advantage of people, blah, blah, blah, blah. Are there people like that? Yes, there are people like that who are unscrupulous and who do take advantage of the poor, and that's how they have gained their wealth.

But I suspect that they too are in a minority. There are a lot of people who have a lot of money who really worked hard to get it. They earned it, and they deserve it, and they are entitled to it.

And they ought not to be resented by people who don't have as much. So this is a very, very broad subject, and people can line up on both sides of it. And what I would like to do this morning is share these propositions with you, and then we'll go to a passage of Scripture or two that will give us a lot more light on it.

[11 : 42] And let me just get these things on the table, if I may, to insert them into the record. So bear with me as I just share these propositions with you.

It is a huge, all-encompassing context. It is a context. Poverty and prosperity is in a context as great as the world itself, because the world is made up of people, and people are in this poverty, and prosperity complex.

So, as with every societal issue in every age, there are two mindsets or ways of approaching it. This is also true of poverty and wealth. By societal issues, we mean the many and varied subjects that involve the day-to-day living and the norms and values attached to each.

For instance, what do I mean by societal issues? Moral chastity and purity. Sexual activity, as in premarital or extramarital, including people living together without marrying.

[13 : 04] By societal issues, I mean homosexual behavior, same-sex marriage, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, and poverty and wealth.

And these are just a few of the more obvious issues. These are all societal issues, and they are societal issues for societies all over the world, whether you go to China, Japan, Africa, the United States, Guatemala, or where.

These are societal issues that people live with and deal with all the time. And, there are biblical positions on all of these issues.

While the world has its own secular positions. And wasn't it, wasn't it Rudyard Kipling who said, East is East and West is West and ne'er the twain shall meet.

It's very insightful, very profound. And what he meant was simply this. There is an Eastern way of thinking. And we're talking about Asia and Eastern Europe.

[14 : 23] They have a different mindset. Oriental people think differently from Occidental people. People are the same wherever you go, but there are different world views and different ways of facing the world.

There is the Eastern way, and this is where you find a lot of the Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, the afterlife idea of transmigration of the souls as in Hinduism and all the rest of it.

And of course, it includes the life after death concept that is completely different from ours in the reincarnation. So this is an Eastern way of thinking, and it includes Eastern mysticism as opposed to Western thought of Europe, the United States, etc.

So these two great bodies, the Eastern and the Western, have different ways of looking at issues, but every one of them face these same societal issues.

There is a biblical worldview position as regards poverty and wealth, and there is the world's secular position regarding poverty and wealth.

[15 : 40] Essentially, the world's position is one of chaos and injustice because it makes its own rules that fluctuate with the changes of each succeeding generation.

And this is where the United States of America falls right in with all the rest of the world, whether it's an Eastern mindset or a Western mindset.

We all in each culture tend to march to the drumbeat of that particular culture, and it's always changing. It's very fluid.

And we're seeing this right now. For instance, the world's norms and standards are not fixed. They move. They evolve. They change. What was once generally considered wrongful behavior may be completely reversed from one generation to another.

[16 : 49] When I was born, back before the earth's crest heartened, when I was conceived, I later learned, and my dear mother told me because she was confronted with this situation of an unwanted pregnancy out of wedlock, never knew or met my real father, but she told me later that the idea of abortion never even entered her mind.

She never gave it any thought at all. And if somebody would have suggested it to her, she probably would have been highly offended. Do you see how the thinking of society has changed from 1935 to today?

And then, what about the subject of divorce? There are lots of people, more and more people who know firsthand about the pain of divorce.

And it is a very difficult thing. There are lots of people divorced because they should have never married.

And if they had it to do over again, they would be the first to say they would never have married the person they married if they had to do over again. So, divorce is a painful situation and I can remember as a very young boy that the woman that lived across the street, she was the talk of the whole neighborhood.

[18 : 22] You know why? Because she was divorced. And that was a real stigma back then. But today, it's almost commonplace. Now, I'm sure it still hurts and I'm sure that it's still really painful for a lot of people.

But it isn't looked upon in the same way by society as a whole as it once was. Well now, why is that? It's because cultures shift.

They change in their estimation and the way they value things. Who in the world could ever have imagined that homosexuality would actually be legitimized especially by the mass media and by governmental agencies so that now, if you want to be politically correct, you have to be willing to sign on to the idea homosexuality is just fine.

It's completely legitimate. Nothing wrong about it. Nothing sinful about it. It needs to be embraced as an alternate lifestyle.

Are you kidding me? That's precisely where we are. How did we get there? How did we get from point A where it was looked upon as an undesirable thing and condemned by God?

[20 : 04] Nobody is saying that homosexuality is the only thing God condemns. God condemns all unrighteousness. Homosexuality is just one of a long list.

Gossip he condemns also. And hypocrisy he condemns also. It isn't as though homosexuality is the ultimate sin. It is just one among many.

But it is sinful behavior. and yet there are places not yet in the United States but there are places in Canada where you can't even stand up and read the portion of scripture that describes it in the Bible in a church service without being threatened with jail.

In Canada. And in case you don't know it Canada is about five years behind Great Britain. the United States is about ten years behind and we are moving in that direction.

Same could be said about a number of other things. Abortion itself infanticide euthanasia it too is coming and there was a time when these things by our society would be rejected.

[21 : 24] Unacceptable. And now they are being more and more and more accepted. Someone has likened it I think it was Francis Schaeffer who likened American culture to the old frog in the kettle thing.

You take a frog and put him in a bucket of cold water and turn the heat on. And the water starts out cold.

But very very gradually it gets warmer and warmer and warmer and warmer and you know what that old frog does? He just sits there until he's cooked to death.

He doesn't jump out because it has been so gradual he hasn't noticed. Now if you throw him in just a hot boiling pot water you jump right out. But you do it gradually. And this is exactly what has been permeating our culture in a gradual way over the last 50 years or so.

And our view regarding poverty and wealth has gone right along with it. Now there is a movement afoot and you are as aware of it as I am.

[22 : 32] And some say, well no Mark, you shouldn't be getting political. Listen, politics is linked with morality. I have a responsibility to talk about morality.

And you cannot divorce politics from it. And anybody who thinks you can, it's got your head in the sand. And the idea of taking from those who have and giving to those who have not, in one respect, sounds pretty logical.

Why should all of these people have all of this money here when these people here are doing without? Take it away from those who have. They don't need all that money. They're not entitled to all that money.

You've got all these people over here who don't have anything. Take it from them and give it to them. Where's your Robin Hood mentality anyway? And that can be made to sound pretty convincing. There are those afoot who are seeking as we speak to do that in small incremental steps.

And the next thing you know, the end game, which is, of course, egalitarianism, which is really the basis of Marxist communism, the motto of which is, from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

[23 : 59] Doesn't that sound good? Indeed, it does. Someone has said that communism, Marxism, is one of the most wonderful theoretical schemes that anybody could ever come up with.

And it works marvelously on paper. But when you try to put it into practice, I'll tell you what you get. You get a failed Soviet Union. And you get a failed Cuba. And there are those who would have the U.S. follow in that train in the name of making everybody equal.

And the only thing that is equal is the misery. thanks, but no thanks. We're not going that way. The Bible doesn't shift.

The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture stands fast and continues to be the north star for the establishment of right and wrong and all the moral values connected with right and wrong.

[25 : 06] But who is listening to what the Bible says? only those who have volitionally placed themselves under the authority of the God of the Bible.

Where does that leave the vast majority of the world's population? It leaves them in the chaos and injustice spoken of earlier. Can we who are Christians expect the chaotic and unjust world to adopt our biblical values?

values? Think about that. Let me ask that again. Can we who are Christians expect the chaotic and unjust world to adopt our biblical values?

We will be sadly disappointed if we do because they're not interested. They don't want our values. They have values of their own.

And even our values we insist are not our values. They are simply values we have adopted from that moral compass, that moral north star that sets forth these dictates in scripture.

[26 : 30] The world does not embrace biblical values nor should we expect them to do so. Not only do they not want to adopt and live by biblical values, they do not even possess the ability to do so.

And I want you to go to Romans chapter 8 with me because this is very critical. We really need to understand this. Romans chapter 8 chapter chapter chapter chapter chapter chapter chapter chapter chapter And Paul begins with this glorious truth.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Now understand he is talking about and to believers. Paul never wrote his epistles nor did anyone else in the Bible write under the inspiration of the spirit of God to the unregenerate individual.

The Bible is not a book for unbelievers. The Bible is God's revelation to those who are in Christ. It is for believers. Matter of fact the likelihood is the Bible doesn't even make sense to those who are not in Christ.

[28 : 01] So Paul is qualifying his audience here and he is talking about those who are in Christ Jesus and the way the only way that anyone can be in Christ Jesus is to have personally dealt with the reality of their sin and they have seen Jesus Christ as their substitute their sin bearer and they have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ who he is and what he did and why it matters and as a result they have received eternal life through Christ our Lord these are the people to whom Paul is speaking that category for those who are in Christ Jesus for the law of the spirit of life in Christ has set you free from the law of sin and death only believers have been set free from the law of sin and death those who you were one of them now you are a believer and then he goes on to say for what the law could not do weak as it was through the flesh

God did sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us these believers again who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit for those who are according to the flesh who are they they belong to that chaotic and unjust element called the world they are those who are walking according to the flesh they set their minds on the things of the flesh this means their viewpoint is human viewpoint and human only it is conventional wisdom human thinking and it is generally all in the same vein man has a way of thinking and in his fallenness his mind is fallen also he thinks with a warped intellect this is why man reaches so many wrong conclusions about so many things his intellect is warped he has a way of looking at things and God has a way of looking at things it's called a biblical worldview as opposed to a humanistic worldview so those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh but

those who are according to the spirit the things of the spirit for the mind the way of thinking set on the flesh is death but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace now listen up carefully because what's coming here is really important it's a terribly important concept that you've got to grasp because the mind set on the flesh that means the mind that is locked in to purely human thinking human wisdom that's all it's got is what seems logical and natural and reasonable to the individual and sometimes it's right and sometimes it's dead wrong but that's where the mind of the flesh is the mind set on the flesh is hostile that means at enmity in conflict toward

God for it the mind set on the flesh it does not subject itself to the law of God in other words the flawed mind of humanity in their way of thinking in their worldly fleshly disposition simply cannot grasp the mind of God or the reason or the rationale that God has it's just beyond them they just cannot log on to that and Paul goes on to say it does not subject itself to the law of God for it is not even able to do so do you get that doesn't have the ability it isn't as though they really want to think the thoughts of God after him but they just don't know how to go about it no they don't they want to think their own thoughts they want their own mindset they want their own plans they want their own objectives they want their own reasoning they want their own everything that's part of our fallenness we're all that way in our old

Adam we're all that way this is part of the curse of humanity God is over here and man is over here something is needed to get them together and only the cross can do that only Christ can do that nothing else not capitalism not communism not socialism nothing can do that not human thinking only meeting Christ at that cross can provide us with a basis for looking at God's mind and complying with it and outside of Christ there is no possibility of doing that it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh that is in their unregenerate unconverted state as we all were before we came to faith in

[34 : 04] Christ those who are in the flesh can not please God I don't care what you do or what you try or how good your intentions are you cannot please God you cannot because you're coming out of a position of being wrong unregenerate on the other side and whatever is done even if it is done in the name of God is not recognized by God only when we are in Christ however now do you see the contrast here verse 9 however you the audience to whom he is speaking these Roman Christians you are not in the flesh but in the spirit if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you but if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he does not belong to him this really sets forth a dichotomy here that is I think absolutely unmistakable between the world's way of thinking and acting as opposed to the biblical way of thinking and acting now question does this difference does this dichotomy between

God's way of view of man's way of view things does that extend to poverty and wealth you better believe it it extends to everything it covers the whole waterfront every moral issue that exists is one upon which God has a position and he makes it clear in scripture man in his fallen flesh has the opposite position and as I've said ne'er the twain shall meet this is the things of the spirit of God are not received by man neither can he know them because they are foolishness unto him this is why many unbelievers look at biblical directives that Christians hold dear and they say that's foolish that's in fact the word that's used in the

Greek for foolishness in the Greek is the word from which we get the word moronic you know there are a lot of people especially in the liberal media who are quite convinced that the whole Christian constituency is pretty moronic out of it unrealistic radical extremes I've even heard these people call Christians Christian Ayatollahs where do they get that view where do they get that idea Christians have a position we have a point of view and do you know what we're supposed to do about that point of view we're supposed to speak out but so often we don't unless we are safely in the company of those who think the same way we do then we'll talk about how terrible the other side is this is part of our problem is

Christians having biblical convictions but being too intimidated into silence to mention them because if you do you know what you're going to get well what gives you the right to cram your religion down my throat what makes you right and everybody else wrong and I wouldn't try to impose my standards on other people why do you Christians try to do that that's the accusation that's often made and you know what nobody wants to be accused of that so we dummy up and we shut up and we just talk about it among ourselves in the safe little circles where everybody thinks alike and we won't get any put downs and we won't get any criticism we'll just get nods of assent yeah it's terrible all right it's really bad yeah I know that's what you know and we're in safe company

so we can talk about it that way but at work in the neighborhood well

I don't talk about politics I don't talk about religion and that too is part of the problem you will not find any two subjects more important to talk about than religion and politics because religion has eternal consequences politics has temporal consequences but they both have consequences and too many Christians have their heads stuck in the sand in the name of phony spirituality why don't talk about politics which is the same thing as saying I've got my head in the sand I've just bailed out I don't want to think about these things because they are divisive and they cause arguments and I'm all for peace and tranquility and we become part of the problem let the redeemed of the Lord say so we've got something to say we ought to be saying it we see these diametrically opposed value systems in the ongoing experiences that we have with people in need who visit our ministry at the food pantry very often when we open the food pantry and distribute food there are always a hundred or more families that come through there that are families in need and we are delighted to be instrumental in providing these things for them because we don't want to see people hungry we want to see people's needs met and that's why we're there but few who come through there for their food items very few want to talk to a counselor about the real problems they have and they are not physical food but a spiritual hunger many of course have no spiritual hunger at all some don't even know such a thing exists or that there is any remedy for it and the expression well they're too kind to come right out and say it with the words but this is the impression that you get from them look [41 : 31] I'm not really interested in the religious stuff just give me the food and let me be on my way because people are waiting for me okay so the man just boxes up the food items and hands them to them and they say thank you and they turn around and walk out and the vast vast majority of them are not interested in anything spiritual at all and if they do come in for a little counseling it's always very stilted and you can tell they really prefer not to be there so you try to give them some scripture and have a word of prayer with them which I'm sure many of them accept the word of prayer and they treat it almost as if like maybe it'll bring me luck and that's the extent of it oh there are some there are a few precious few who are really serious about spiritual matters and they are always a breath of fresh air but they are not many so we give them the tracts and the pamphlets and a brief prayer and send them on their way the problem is as old as mankind the Israelites in the Old

Testament were to be a light to the Gentiles the Gentiles often don't want the light and will not come to the light lest their evil deeds be reproved can you imagine can you imagine in the Old Testament back in the times of Joshua and the judges etc can you imagine these Jewish people reaching out to their neighbors the Hivites the Perizzites the Hittites the Girgashites all the otherites all pagan neighbors all worshipping foreign deities can you imagine the Jews saying to them you know what you people need you need to get circumcised oh that's going to go over great won't it you need to get circumcised and another thing you need to keep one day holy out of the week called the Sabbath and no more pork rinds no pork chops you've got to give all that stuff up can you imagine the Jews trying to communicate can you imagine them trying to impose their standards on their neighbors and not have a terrific backlash from them why can't you do that why why can't we as Christians go to our non-Christian community and say listen you people need to be in church on Sunday morning and you need to do this and you need to do that they're not going to want to hear that they're going to throw rocks at you they're going to call you and that would be a study in futility I do not recommend it don't be stupid and go about it like that what these people need is not a change of rules and regulations any more than the Amorites or the Hittites what they needed back then was a real relationship with the God of Israel then all the rest of that stuff is secondary and that comes along and the world today they are not interested in Christian standards or Christian morals they don't want to live that way they wouldn't like living that way they like their own lifestyle that gives them freedom and liberty for whatever but they would see Christian standards norms and values as being very confining and legalistic and who wants to live like that but what they need is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then they would see that the standards and values that we have adopted since coming to Christ are not burdensome are not difficult are not unreasonable they are in the best interest of everyone but they don't understand that you can't convince them of that as long as they are outside of Christ they don't have the wherewithal to see that it just escapes them I want to leave you with this passage because it is really powerful and it addresses this issue that we're talking about and it involves some evangelism come with me if you would please to

Ephesians chapter 4 and here Paul again is establishing this remarkable contrast between believers and unbelievers and he is reminding them that they have a new mindset a new world view and if you look at Ephesians 4 and verse 17 and while you're turning there may I remind you that these people he is addressing in this letter are coming from a purely pagan background Paul was there spent a lengthy amount of time in Ephesus preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and won several of those people to faith in Christ now he's writing this letter back to them and updating them on things that they need to know and he is reminding them of what they used to be and what they are now and look at what he says in verse 17 this I say therefore and affirm together with the Lord that you you people there at Ephesus you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind being darkened in their understanding excluded from the life of

[47:18] God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their heart they have become callous have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness that's our world that's our world today that was the world then still is nothing's changed people are the same generation after generation after generation they're all the same and then he says in verse 20 but you did not learn Christ in this way you have no basis for continuing to act that way because you're not that anymore you are a new creature in Christ there's a new sheriff in town new game plan get with the program that's exactly what he's telling these people in verse 22 in reference to your former manner of life you lay aside the old self which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit that's what you used to be you give that up you walk away from that that doesn't dominate you doesn't control you anymore you're marching to a new drumbeat and along with that is the power to be and do what

God wants us to be and do and when we come over to chapter five and I'm not going to take time to read all the passages in between but I would recommend it and look at what he is saying in verse six let no one deceive you with empty words and by the way that's what the opposition to Christianity has to offer empty words fallacious arguments excuses puerile things stuff that holds no water fluff that's what the world has to offer let no one deceive you with empty words for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience who are they they are unbelievers you were one of them at one time therefore do not be partakers with them for you you Christians were formerly darkness but now you are light in the Lord walk as children of light be what you are for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord now I want you to look at this verse 11 and do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness but instead even expose them how do you do that unfruitful deeds of darkness consists of all of this garbage that Paul mentions here in a negative way saying this is what you used to be you used to engage in nothing but the unfruitful deeds of darkness you don't go that way anymore what you do is you call them out you expose them how do you do that there's only one way you can do it by speaking out against them by calling a spade a spade by recognizing and identifying evil for what it is and call it what it is evil abomination wrong sinful but if you do that you're going to get people upset oh absolutely you're going to get people upset but do you not understand that most people have to get mad before they get saved most people have to become angry before they change what do you think got all of the prophets martyred

Jesus confronted the religious establishment and on one occasion this is what he said to them which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute and kill why because they wouldn't shut up they insisted on speaking out God gave them a message and they delivered it and the people on the receiving end resented it and said we're not going to take this that's intolerant and they rose up against them and it cost these prophets their life cost John the Baptist his life it caused Jesus Christ his life now if we want to stay nice and safe and secure don't have anybody talking about you you won't have anybody calling you a religious fanatic you won't have anybody calling you unloving and unkind just shut up just dummy up don't say anything and when you hear the world take its ridiculous positions just kind of hang your head and just pray for them

Paul says expose them speak out open your mouth share your values let the word of the Lord go forth and without apology and if as one brother put it you do that you're going to rub the cat's fur the wrong way the only answer is let the cat turn around that's what happens you see when the gospel is preached there is only folks there's only one reason that we need the gospel there's only one reason that there is a gospel sin sin that's it oh you're one of those hellfire and brimstone preachers well someone says it's better to be hell scared than hell scarred when we preach the gospel the good news it has only one agenda item just one just one and that is salvation from sin you take that

out of the gospel you have gutted the gospel you don't have anything left we need this gospel because of the reality of sin and our responsibility as believers is not with a holier than thou but with a deep sense of compassion remembering that we were at one time as they are and somebody cared enough about us to tell us the truth and maybe on our first hearing we didn't appreciate it we didn't like it and we didn't receive it but eventually the hound of heaven caught up with us now what does this have to do with poverty and wealth everything everything because the real solution the real solution the poverty not only physical poverty but spiritual poverty is spiritual truth that's the only real solution and you know something that's the very one that people don't want but that's the only one that'll do the job that's the only one that works and that's the one we commend to you and once again

[55 : 47] I've gone over on my time which means I don't have time for you to ask questions and comments so we'll do that next week all right next week is Father's Day and don't forget to bring your little baby bottles bring your baby bottles for Father's Day preferably filled with goodies and the crisis pregnancy resource center will make good use of that may we pray please Father we are so grateful for what you have incorporated here in your word it is very clear and very plain and we have no excuse for him hawing about it or stumbling around it and we certainly have no excuse for denying it we want to see these old age directives resurrected in a practical way let us start right here we know that there is fear and intimidation oft times in speaking the truth because we're afraid of how it will be perceived and we're afraid of what people will think of us help us to dispel that nonsense and to focus on the things that really matter even as we've discovered this morning we pray in Christ's name amen