

Chapter 1 : John Wesley's Start in Preaching to the Poor - Seedbed

Why is preaching the Gospel to the poor important? There's a little known fact about John Wesley I want to share with you. Wesley claimed a church was not a New Testament until it carried out the admonition of Jesus, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

His mission was to reach out to the poor, to deliver the captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to lift up the downtrodden. This mission is as relevant today as it was then. We should commit ourselves to fulfilling His mission. Citizens All of us are citizens of this world. Unfortunately, in this world millions of people suffer. They experience the devastation of war, the sorrows of oppression, the decimation of disease, the slow death of starvation, and the indignity of poverty. Beyond the physical conditions, millions of people live in spiritual darkness. They are crushed by a load of sin and habits that torment them. The light of truth has not yet dawned in their lives. The Battle While we are in this world, a battle rages for our spiritual allegiance. On the one hand, Satan and his allies vie for our attention and loyalty. On the other hand the body of Christ, led by our Lord, reaches out with love to all of us. The members of the body want others to be included. Through accepting Christ, we can become members of the Kingdom of God. He tells us why He came to earth. This sermon was delivered in the synagogue of Nazareth. Jesus stood to read in the synagogue, and read from Isaiah It was from the Septuagint version, which was commonly read in the synagogues. I will read these verses from the New American Standard Version: Broadly Speaking Jesus was concerned about the Kingdom of God and our membership in it. According to Mark 1: Jesus said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. However, by the power of the Spirit, the influence and presence of the Kingdom of God is made known in our lives now. The Mission Our text gives us more details about the mission. The mission of Jesus was to reach out to the poor, to deliver the captives, to restore sight to the blind, and to lift up the downtrodden. Preach the Gospel to the Poor 1. The Poor Jesus is deeply concerned about poor people. Here, Jesus means those who are impoverished economically. Does this mean that He is not concerned about the wealthy or the common people who are not poor? No, it does not. He just did not have to express that concern here. His audience would have understood that a leader would be concerned about those who are better off. By focusing on the most needy, He includes all who have needs. Thus, He begins by expressing concern for those who were despised by others. It would not be politically correct to speak against the poor today. Yet the actions of some people signal their contempt for them. If they only worked as hard as we do, they say, they would not be poor. We often are not eager to bring the poor to our services. Even in a dress casual environment, their casual clothes are not of the designer type. Unspoken, yet this is a powerful silent testimony to a wrong attitude. Jesus Jesus, anointed of the Spirit, would preach the gospel to them. Literally, he would "evangelize" [euaggelizo] them or "announce the good news" to them. The gospel [euangelion] is good news and it is for the poor as well as all others. Jesus preached a message of salvation. It included repentance and faith. It included true righteousness and concern for the poor. It included deliverance from sin and sickness. It included the good news of the coming kingdom and of the final triumph of good. Fortunately, it was a comprehensive salvation and affected all aspects of life. There is no part of our lives left untouched by the gospel. Economy Was there an economic message to the poor? The answer is "yes," but we must be careful how we express it. We must not exalt either wealth or poverty. There is no absolute correlation between either wealth or poverty and spiritual well being. We know people who are financially poor and spiritually rich as well as poor people who are spiritually poor. Also, we know wealthy people who are spiritually rich and other wealthy people who are spiritually poor Nevertheless, we believe that God does love to bless His people economically. People who believe in Christ and follow His teachings often experience an increase in their economic well being. When we live for Christ, we simply do better in life. We have seen how poor people who find Christ begin to live better and to stabilize their economic lives. Ultimately, we know that we will be joint heirs with Christ. We will inherit the earth. Your Life What is your condition today? Are you living in poverty? Then Jesus speaks directly and simply to you. He wants you to believe and enjoy the benefits of salvation. Jesus loves you as well. Being His disciple is demanding. Your allegiance to Him must

be stronger than to your possessions. But the spiritual benefits are abundant. Proclaim Release to the Captives

1. The Captives Jesus is concerned about captives. According to Robertson, the captives are those who have been captured at spear point. We can think of them as prisoners of war. During His days on earth, Jesus was concerned primarily with those who were enslaved by Satan. They were prisoners of Satan in a spiritual war. They are under his influence. They may be captives of habits, attitudes, and lifestyles that they cannot control. You may be one of them. The captives, however, are not limited to people who are in spiritual darkness. Some believers are captives of oppressive forces. This, too, is a form of enslavement by Satan, for the oppressors are the servants of Satan. Some researchers estimate that there are more persecuted Christians today than ever before in the history of the church. Jesus The Spirit sent Christ to proclaim release to the captives. The Spirit would enable Christ to proclaim the message of deliverance and freedom. The Spirit is a bridge between the present and the future. Through the Spirit, the power of the Kingdom of God breaks in upon the earth. During His ministry on earth, Christ encountered Satan many times. This aspect of His deliverance was instituted right away. Soon after speaking in Nazareth, went down to Capernaum. There He encountered a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon. Luke writes Luke 4: What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God! He did not get involved in political affairs and set prisoners of war free. If I were unjustly in prison, I would be praying that Christ would set me free. However, the ultimate fulfillment of this promise will be when Christ returns to earth. All oppressive regimes will be put under His power and authority. Moreover, prisons will not be needed because crime will exist no more.

Chapter 2 : Christ anointed to preach the good news to the poor | Alfred Place Baptist Church

Jesus came to preach the gospel to the poor for a number of reasons. Firstly, the poor miss out on a lot of things in this life, because without money, you generally can't muster the world's help when you are in distress.

Blossoming trade with the New World—“including slaves”—was bringing prosperity and debauchery to the growing city. Ale houses flourished; by more than were licensed, and this number grew to by George Whitefield —, evangelist and former Oxford junior colleague of the Wesleys, had just returned from preaching in America. Soon barred from London pulpits, he set off for Bristol. There on February 17, , he preached for the first time in the open air to about two hundred colliers coal miners at Kingswood. Within three weeks the crowds had mushroomed to ten thousand, and Whitefield called on Wesley for help. Whitefield had been drawn to Bristol for three reasons. His home was nearby Gloucester on the Welsh border north of Bristol. He had been in touch with Howell Harris, leader of the Welsh revival which had begun some years earlier. Then, too, turmoil and rioting had recently broken out among the coal miners of the region, particularly at Kingswood. The rioting around Bristol was part of a larger pattern of unrest during the period —40 sparked by high corn prices, low wages, and the oppressive poverty of the new class of urban workers. In these unsettled conditions Whitefield had immediate success in preaching among the neglected Kingswood colliers. In the Evening he removed to the Common, where. One alarmed London gentleman warned: But if one Man, like the Rev. Whitefield should have it in his Power, by his Preaching, to detain 5 or 6 thousands of the Vulgar from their daily Labour, what a Loss, in a little Time, may this bring to the Publick! Up to this point, however, Wesley had preached only in regular church services while in England. Charles, his brother, thought not. But John submitted the decision to the Fetter Lane Society which cast lots and decided he should go. In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life till very lately so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church. The scripture on which I spoke was this. When Whitefield returned to America in August, Wesley was left totally in charge of the growing work. He divided his time between Bristol and London, concentrating on open-air preaching, organizing bands, and speaking at night to a growing number of societies. The Wesleyan Revival had begun. The Wesleys preached, the crowds responded, and Methodism as a mass movement was born. Wesley soon discovered that some of his helpers had gifts for exhortation and preaching, and he put them to work. In , he began a series of annual conferences with his preachers at which questions of doctrine, discipline, and strategy were discussed. The minutes of the first conference show that Wesley quickly developed a general strategy for the movement. Ives, Newcastle, or any other Society. So a little leaven would spread with more effect and less noise, and help would always be at hand. Get your copy now.

Chapter 3 : Luke - The Mission of Christ

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

In that article I mentioned that destroying the works of the devil was a big part of this "business". Here Jesus publicly announces at the start of his ministry what He is all about, and for what purpose the Spirit of the Lord, or the Holy Spirit, was upon Him. What was the Mission of Jesus Christ? Firstly, to preach the gospel or good news to the poor. What is the good news? There are different slants on the message. I do not believe that Jesus generally revealed the full scope of the gospel message to his hearers when He preached on earth, because he generally did not talk to the crowds about his upcoming death and resurrection and the meaning thereof. This was left for the apostles to preach. But this very fact that Jesus announced he came to preach the gospel to the poor suggests that there is gospel content that ought to be preached explicitly even apart from the basic message of forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Christ. This message is still highly relevant today because literal demons are hiding in most people, including Christians, and a lot of the church does not realize it. These demons bring with them enslavement to sinful thought and behavior patterns, terrible sickness, fear and other torments. You might then be more open to a gospel message from Jesus of healing for the brokenhearted, opening of the eyes and freedom to the captives. A skilled psychiatrist might be able to help people manage their distressing internal torments, it is far better than nothing in most cases, but if psychiatrists and drugs were absolutely necessary for people to experience PEACE, then I am sure that Jesus Christ would have been good enough in his gospels to teach psychiatry and drug chemistry so that we would not all have to wait years before medical science came up with "real answers". As I was saying, the poor are more receptive. God cares about the poor. They are not always poor because they are lazy or wicked. Sometimes they are the victims of human exploitation and unjust economic systems. They are always in need of practical help. And the Good News is all about the love of God, and it is shown in practical ways as well as in words that carry spiritual power to transform. Jesus said it is hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven. The great temptation with having riches is to be self-reliant and arrogant. Accessing those riches, both spiritual and economic, does require faith and obedience, and usually some time. But there can be no doubting that all other things being equal, the gospel lifts people out of poverty. There are exceptions to this general rule. There are times when following Jesus openly will quickly result in being thrown in prison or economically persecuted by Society. But the gospel is not a message to the rich that they can get even richer. That is a perversion of the gospel. Even so, the general effect of the gospel is to raise people out of poverty. The greatest poverty of all is to be morally bankrupt and guilty before God with a debt of sin you can never pay. This bankruptcy is common to the entire human race, and thank God, Jesus paid the debt for us, and we can go free, if we are willing to accept it. Just express this desire in your own words. If you mean business with God, He will respond and you will soon know it.

Chapter 4 : What Does the Bible Say About Preaching The Gospel?

If "preach the gospel to the poor" had referred to a proclamation of that particular good news, then in no way could Jesus have legitimately claimed, at that point, that this had been fulfilled. Today it occurred to me that the text actually lends itself to a different reading.

By whom is meant, the third person in the Trinity; so called, to distinguish him from all other spirits; and who was given to Christ as man, without measure, whereby he was qualified for his great work: The historical meaning is: The Messianic fulfilment of this announcement, i. The expression of the LXX. See on Matthew 5: The passage before us is strangely abused by the Valentinians, Clemens, Hom. The year is an allusion to the year of jubilee Leviticus He anointed me, He hath sent me and I am here! The testing of this combination does not belong to this place. It may have been read from an Aramaean version. Most notable in the quotation is the point at which it stops. The clause referring to the latter is omitted. Along with that, in the mind of the evangelist, goes the translation of all the categories named "poor, broken-hearted, captives, blind, bruised" from the political to the spiritual sphere. Legitimately, for that was involved in the declaration that the prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges In illustration of the verse generally, as indicating the work primarily of Isaiah, but in its fullest sense, of Christ, see Matthew Either the text of the Hebrew was then slightly variant, or the record introduces into the text a reminiscence of the discourse. Several particulars here are worthy of being noticed. The Hebrew accents give us a most effective stopping. Even then already Jesus implied distinctly that He was the Christ. It is from His anointing, that the abiding of the Spirit of the Lord on the Christ is deduced. As the [continuous] state of personal union [the union of His humanity and Divinity], so that of His anointing flows from the act. From the anointing flows the especial, nay, the preaching peculiarly characteristic of this Prophet, viz. So the words are found in the LXX. For this reason the seventy translators have referred it in this passage to the blind. However, Isaiah spake of such an opening of the eyes, as is vouchsafed, not to the blind, but to those set free from the darkness of a prison see Isaiah The minister, of his own accord, handed to our Lord, in the synagogue, the book of Isaiah: From which it is evident, that an ordinary and an extraordinary lesson were joined together by the Lord in His reading, and by the Evangelist in writing the account of it. Jesus was full of the Spirit, Luke 4: Regard is had to them also in ch. Pulpit Commentary Verse Luke here quotes, with a few important variations, from the LXX. The clause, "to set at liberty them that are bruised," does not occur the present text of Isaiah. The bright, comforting words of the great prophet the Lord chose as giving a general summary of what he designed to carry out in his ministry. It could be no undesigned coincidence that the opening words of the passage contain a singularly clear mention of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity - the Spirit, the Father, and the Anointed Messiah. Because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, etc. The common interpretation referred this passage to the state of the people on the return from the Captivity. Nothing, however, that the people had yet experienced in any way satisfied the brilliant picture painted in the great prophecy. A remnant certainly had returned several centuries back from their distant exile, but the large majority of the chosen people were scattered abroad; their own land was crushed under what seemed a hopeless servitude; poverty, ignorance, universal discontent, reigned alike in Jerusalem, garrisoned with Roman legionaries, and in the most distant of the poor upland villages of Galilee. Only could deliverance come and a golden age of prosperity return with the promised Messiah. This was the interpretation which the choicest spirits in Israel applied to the great Isaiah prophecy read that sabbath day in the little synagogue of Nazareth. This was the meaning which Jesus at once gave to it, only he startled his hearers by telling them that in him they saw the promised long-looked-for Deliverer. We only possess, it is evident, the very barest abstract of the words of the Teacher Jesus on this occasion. They must have been singularly eloquent, winning, and powerful to have extorted the wonder and admiration alluded to in the twenty-second verse.

Chapter 5 : Winds Of Justice - JESUS CAME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR

The first action statement "preach the good news to the poor" includes three terms—"preach, gospel, poor—that need explanation. According to the dictionary, preaching means to advocate or inculcate Divine moral truth and right conduct.

In some cases, this veiling of certain truths has been deliberate—for instance, in the doctrines of justification and of the Sabbath—while others have been allowed to fade from memory or to be eclipsed by emphasis on other doctrines. The gospel that Jesus taught during His ministry is one such area that has been purposefully diverted from scriptural reality. Many Protestants sit in their pews each week and hear a gospel about Jesus Himself. This, too, is not wrong—certainly, Jesus is central to the gospel—but it is not exactly what the Bible says it is. His message, then, was bigger than grace and salvation—as wonderful as they are—or even bigger than Himself, for that matter. His message was about the reign, the rule, the dominion, of God the Father, as well as of the Son, the One who is to be the King of that Kingdom see John The phrases "Kingdom of God" and " Kingdom of Heaven " are found over a hundred times in the New Testament, the majority of them in the four gospels. Is He not its Creator? Is He not sovereign of the entire universe? The answer is simple: Yes, He created it. Yes, He governs all things. The holy God cannot abide sin: Taking advantage of the vacuum, as it were, Satan the Devil has enthroned himself as "the god of this age" and blinded the minds of men and women to the truths that would set them free II Corinthians 4: He has managed to deceive the whole world Revelation He quotes from Isaiah The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. He would proclaim liberty from their debt of sin, just as the year of Jubilee freed the Israelites from their financial debts Leviticus These elect, who believe the gospel, are put through the process of salvation: They, as the Bride of Christ forever Revelation

Chapter 6 : Preaching for the Poor

"The poor have the gospel preached to them."â€”Matt. OHN, the forerunner of Christ, had some followers who continued with him after Christ had come in the flesh, and openly manifested himself among the people.

Denominational churches spend much time, energy, and money helping the poor. Those who are in need or claim to be in need often visit churches seeking a handout. We are certainly to be concerned for the poor Galatians 2: He did not design or ordain it to be one. Instead, He designed and ordained the church for another purpose that is far more important than mere benevolence. When John sent some of his disciples to find evidence that Jesus was the promised Messiah Matthew Jesus did not mention feeding the poor, clothing them, or giving them money. There is no record in the gospels of Jesus ever giving money to those who asked for it. Was this because Jesus lacked compassion? Yes, there were times when Jesus fed the crowds that followed Him Matthew But His emphasis was always on teaching. Because of this, many who were seeking free food "withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" John 6: When Peter met the lame beggar at the temple gate, he did not give him a handout, even though we might agree that this man was certainly one who would have been worthy of assistance. Notice what Luke records: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazareneâ€”walk! With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God" Acts 3: Peter did not give the lame beggar at the temple a handout. Instead, Peter gave him what he had â€” the power to heal him. We cannot perform miracles like this today. But why did miracles exist then? They were done in order to confirm the word spoken in the preaching of the gospel Mark So, after healing the lame man, Peter preached and many more than just this one man believed. Luke tells us that "the number of the men [who believed] came to be about five thousand" Acts 4: Although it is not explicitly stated in the text, it is likely that the lame man was among the new believers since he was "with them" in the temple and "praising God" Acts 3: Though this man had a legitimate financial need and could have used a handout from Peter and John, he received something that was far more valuable â€” the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ. Jesus said, "You always have the poor with you" Matthew Though we may want to help, we will not always be able to help the poor with their material needs. But who else will we always have with us? They will exist in far greater numbers, too. We need to direct the efforts of the church, not to helping the poor, but to teaching the lost and building up those who are already saved. But we can teach them of the blessings of righteousness and the reward for faithful service to Christ. None of what I have written in this article is meant to minimize the importance of benevolence as it is practiced according to the New Testament pattern , or to say that we should be unconcerned with the plight of the poor. Rather, it is meant to remind us of what is truly and eternally important â€” the state of the souls of men. To help with this, what we need is not anything that can be bought with money. We need "the gospel â€” the power of God for salvation" Romans 1: The greatest help we can give to the poor and anyone else is to preach the gospel to them. The Lord does not expect us to give people everything they want. But He has equipped us to give them everything they need. While we can and should "do good to all people" Galatians 6: Send mail to minister lavistachurchofchrist. Permission is given in advance to use the material and pictures on this site for non-commerical purposes. We only ask that you give credit to the original creators. A link back to this site is not required, though it is always appreciated.

Chapter 7 : "The Poor Have the Gospel Preached to Them" - Plain Bible Teaching

Jesus' words and actions, as documented in the story of the "Anointing at Bethany" and throughout the Gospel of Matthew and the New Testament, can be seen as instructions for the poor to unite and organize today to transform society and end poverty for all.

Wealth and faith[edit] Wealth as an offense to faith[edit] According to historian Alan S. Kahan, there is a strand of Christianity that views the wealthy man as "especially sinful". In this strand of Christianity, Kahan asserts, the day of judgment is viewed as a time when "the social order will be turned upside down and Paul continues on with the observation that "the love of money is the root of all evil. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is[a] to enter the kingdom of God! But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6 Jesus counsels his followers to remove from their lives those things which cause them to sin, saying "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to go with two hands into hell, where the fire never goes out. In order to remove the desire for wealth and material possessions as an obstacle to faith, some Christians have taken vows of poverty. Christianity has a long tradition of voluntary poverty which is manifested in the form of asceticism, charity and almsgiving. Pope Benedict XVI distinguishes "poverty chosen" the poverty of spirit proposed by Jesus , and "poverty to be fought" unjust and imposed poverty. He considers that the moderation implied in the former favors solidarity, and is a necessary condition so as to fight effectively to eradicate the abuse of the latter. For example, the Franciscan orders have traditionally foregone all individual and corporate forms of ownership. Wealth as an outcome of faith[edit] One line of Protestant thinking views the pursuit of wealth as not only acceptable but as a religious calling or duty. This perspective is generally ascribed to Calvinist and Puritan theologies, which view hard work and frugal lifestyles as spiritual acts in themselves. John Wesley was a strong proponent of gaining wealth, according to his famous "Sermon 50," in which he said, "gain all you can, save all you can and give all you can. John Wesley and his Methodists were noted for their consistently large contributions to charity in the form of Churches, Hospitals and Schools. Included among those who view wealth as an outcome of faith are modern-day preachers and authors who propound prosperity theology , teaching that God promises wealth and abundance to those who will believe in him and follow his laws. Prosperity theology also known as the "health and wealth gospel" is a Christian religious belief whose proponents claim the Bible teaches that financial blessing is the will of God for Christians. Most teachers of prosperity theology maintain that a combination of faith , positive speech, and donations to specific Christian ministries will always cause an increase in material wealth for those who practice these actions. Prosperity theology is almost always taught in conjunction with continuationism. Prosperity theology first came to prominence in the United States during the Healing Revivals in the s. Some commentators have linked the genesis of prosperity theology with the influence of the New Thought movement. It later figured prominently in the Word of Faith movement and s televangelism. In the s and s, it became accepted by many influential leaders in the charismatic movement and has been promoted by Christian missionaries throughout the world. It has been harshly criticized by leaders of mainstream evangelicalism as a non-scriptural doctrine or as an outright heresy. Precursors to Christianity[edit] Professor Cosimo Perrotta describes the early Christian period as one which saw "the meeting and clash of three great cultures: Whereas the Hebrew culture prized material wealth, the Classical and Christian cultures either held them in contempt or preached indifference to them. However, Perrotta points out that the motivation of the Classical and Christian cultures for their attitudes were very different and thus the logical implications of the attitudes resulted in different outcomes. Jewish views of poverty, wealth and charity Perrotta characterizes the attitude of the Jews as expressed in the Old Testament scriptures as being "completely different from the classical view. Instead, such work was protected by biblical commandments to pay workers on time and not to cheat them. The poor were protected from being exploited when in debt. Perrotta asserts that the goal of these commandments was "not only to protect the poor but also to prevent the excessive accumulation of wealth in a few hands. However, Perrotta

points out that poverty is not admired nor is it considered a positive value by the writers of the Old Testament. The poor are protected because the weak should be protected from exploitation. However, Kelly also points out that the Old Testament insisted that the rich aid the poor. Prophets such as Amos castigated the rich for oppressing the poor and crushing the needy. In summary, Kelly writes that, "the Old Testament saw wealth as something good but warned the wealthy not to use their position to harm those with less. The rich had an obligation to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. He also consistently warns of the danger of riches as a hindrance to favor with God; as in the Parable of the Sower, where it is said: But Jesus rejects the possibility of dual service on our part: Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. In The Parable of the Rich Fool Jesus tells the story of a rich man who decides to rest from all his labors, saying to himself: Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. This very night your life will be required of you. Then who will get all that you have prepared for yourself? Jesus and Zacchaeus Lk The repentant tax collector Zacchaeus not only welcomes Jesus into his house but joyfully promises to give half of his possessions to the poor, and to rebate overpayments four times over if he defrauded anyone Lk Luke strongly ties the right use of riches to discipleship; and securing heavenly treasure is linked with caring for the poor, the naked and the hungry, for God is supposed to have a special interest in the poor. Thus, Jesus cites the words of the prophet Isaiah Is: He has shown the might of his arm: He has pulled down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich has sent empty away. The two famous passages 2. Acts also portrays both positive and negative uses of wealth: A concept related to the accumulation of wealth is Worldliness, which is denounced by the Epistles of James and John: Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" Ja 4. The first letter of John says, in a similar vein: The Epistle of James also stands out for its vehement condemnation of the oppressive rich, who were presumably outsiders to the Christian community, which mainly consisted of the poor. Revelation[edit] Finally, the Revelation treats earthly riches and commercial activities with great ambivalence. Later, earthly riches and businesses activities are associated with the sins of Babylon, the earthly power of evil with self-accorded glory and luxury, whose fall is imminent Early Christianity[edit] 15th-century fresco of the Apostles, Turin, Italy Early Christianity appears to have adopted many of the ethical themes found in the Hebrew Bible. However, the teachings of Jesus and his apostles as presented in the New Testament exhibit an "acute sensitivity to the needs of the disadvantaged" that Frederick sees as "adding a critical edge to Christian teaching where wealth and the pursuit of economic gain are concerned. Kahan acknowledges that, "Christian theology absorbed those Greco-Roman attitudes towards money that complemented its own. The New Testament urges Christians to sell material possessions and give the money to the poor. According to Kahan, the goal of Christian charity is equality, a notion which is absent in the Greco-Roman attitudes toward the poor. Kristol asserts that traditional Judaism has no precepts that parallel the Christian assertion that it is difficult for a rich man to get into heaven. However, they recognized early on that this was an ideal which was not practical in everyday life and viewed private property as a "necessary evil resulting from the fall of man. He argued that the accumulation of wealth was not a worthy goal for Christians. Clement of Alexandria counselled that property be used for the good of the community, he sanctioned private ownership of property and the accumulation of wealth. Apostolic poverty By the beginning of the medieval era, the Christian paternalist ethic was "thoroughly entrenched in the culture of Western Europe. For example, he cites Honorius of Autun who wrote that merchants had little chance of going to heaven whereas farmers were likely to be saved. Thomas Aquinas defined avarice not simply as a desire for wealth but as an immoderate desire for wealth. Aquinas wrote that it was acceptable to have "external riches" to the extent that they were necessary for him to maintain his "condition of life". This argued that the nobility had a right to more wealth than the peasantry. The church evolved into the single most powerful institution in medieval Europe, more powerful than any single potentate. Over time, this wealth and power led to abuses and corruption. Abbots of the larger monasteries achieved international prominence. In reaction to this wealth and power, a reform movement arose which sought a simpler, more austere monastic life in which monks worked with their hands rather than acting as landlords over serfs. Francis of Assisi viewed poverty as a key element of the imitation of Christ who was "poor at birth in the manger, poor as he lived in the world, and naked as he

died on the cross".

Chapter 8 : To the Poor the Gospel is Preached, by R. Enraght

ected to the preaching of the Gospel? Poverty raises economic issues; the Gospel deals with theological So "preaching Good News to the poor" is shown in the.

He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: Never again did Jesus make even a shelf. Now he was equipped for the three years of his public ministry by the power of the Spirit. In other words, there was a dimension of spiritual enabling about him that even Christ had not known before his baptism. The descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove was no mere symbol. Our Lord had always been filled with the Spirit from the womb of Mary but because of this new, energizing endowment our Lord had become gifted and prepared for his public ministry. Never had the world seen anything remotely like those next two years when the Lord Christ took the initiative traveling slowly from one community in Galilee to another. His ministry transformed that whole area, banishing disease from the place, and bringing the message of the Kingdom of God – the reign of grace over the lives of men and women – to Galilee. They all spoke well of him. Jesus appeared to be riding the crest of the wave of popularity. The Lord Jesus Christ is the subject of all that Luke writes here from the fourteenth verse onwards; he returned. Someone claimed that Jesus did not come to preach but to do something that we might have something to preach, but this chapter shows us how mistaken that view is. Here is the incarnate God and he involves himself for a couple of years in the life of the ordinary people of Galilee, the farmers, the housewives, the fishermen and their children by talking to them, by exhortation and counsel and rebuke and calling them to repent and believe. We are being shown what God is like, that he is not one who made the earth and then left it to run by itself. He is one who constantly intrudes; he is always involved in the world of his own making. Sometimes this involvement is one of judgment. We find that in the flood, and again at Sodom and Gomorrah, but on most occasions his involvement is redemptive. Here is the Son of God moving around Galilee of the Gentiles, meeting ignorance and opposition and need and never giving up. For seven hundred years it had been the most compromised part of the nation. Other gods and philosophies had had enormous influence there from way back at the time of the Assyrian ascendancy, but that was the place Jesus chose to begin his preaching. It was the vortex of ignorance in the nation, but there the people that dwelt in darkness saw a great light. This planet was never to be the same after our Lord erupted into the three-dimensional reality of human lives, and the Lord did so by preaching the word of God to men. Though his personality was wonderfully attractive, and his deeds quite breath-taking, most of all men were struck by his words. Never man spake like this man. This is the time at which the Old Testament prophecies and types found their fulfillment, that great period which it had been looking forward to with such expectancy and longing. That glorious time had come. So Luke tells us of one particular Sabbath day in Nazareth and describes what happened in the local synagogue, the one Jesus had been attending for almost thirty years. He and his family had sat in the family bench week after week; they were one of the most godly families in the community. There they listened to the Pharisees or rabbis reading and speaking to the people. A collection of cottages and crofts did not have many carpenters. Some, no doubt, would remember Jesus coming to their homes to hang a new door or to deliver a table they had bought from him and his Dad. He was missing for about six weeks, and then the stories began to trickle into Nazareth that he was actually preaching in different places in Galilee; more than that, he was healing the sick, and people everywhere were impressed by him. He had a good reputation, and his own fellow townsmen and women wanted to see the new Jesus and hear him. Maybe he would even do a miracle for them. And would he preach to them? There came the time in the service when favoured known men were permitted to speak and Jesus stood up and walked to the front. It was the moment they had hoped for; the atmosphere was electric. He asked for the scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah from its keeper and then he began to roll it from one staff to the other until he found the passage he wanted to read to them. It was the opening verses of the sixty-first chapter. I suppose it was in Greek not Hebrew; I am not sure of that. Certainly no one had actually spoken the Hebrew

language for years, they all talked in Aramaic to one another, but Jesus was literate and able to speak a few languages. Maybe they were familiar with the Hebrew of the Scriptures. They were all waiting for what would happen next. He sat down in the front because preaching was done from a sitting position. They were on the spot to witness the fulfillment of this prophecy. So in Nazareth Jesus announced that what they had been hearing concerning his actions and words in the villages of Galilee was the literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah as he spoke of the Spirit of God coming down in power on a special preacher in the last days. He was announcing that he was a prophet and the mouthpiece of God, in fact he was hinting at messianic identity. Isaiah was speaking about the Year of Jubilee. There was first of all the seventh day of each week which was the Sabbath day. Every seventh year was a sabbatical year when the land was to lie fallow. Then every seven sabbatical years, in other words every fifty years, was the Year of Jubilee. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. His wife and family would be outside waiting for him and together they would walk back to his own land, the farm he had forfeited because of his debt. That was the first mark of Jubilee – freedom! Also the land was left fallow that great year and the oxen did no ploughing. I remember from my teenage years living in a mining valley of South Wales when the pit ponies were brought up to the surface once a year for the weeks when the miners had their annual holidays, and how those little horses frolicked in the fields when they were released. There was one occasion when I saw them; people came and watched them tenderly knowing that soon they would be taken in the cage down under ground for fifty more weeks of darkness and dust. It was a time of deliverance and restoration. So it was also a year with a foretaste of heaven about it, a prophetic year, of three Rs, a day of Release for the slaves and the bond servants, a day of Reversion for the land going back to its original owners, and a day of Renewal of the fields as they were to lie fallow for twelve months. All this was a great symbol to the children of Israel, speaking of a blessed time yet to come. God is going to do wonderful things in the future; he can make a new heavens and a new earth and then the curse will be removed. It all belonged to God. If you live by my word and keep the Sabbath as a day of rest each week, and every seven years keep a sabbatical year letting the land be fallow, and every fifty years sound the trumpets and for the next days keep a Year of Jubilee then you will be amazed at my provision for you. You will not go hungry; you will have food enough and to spare. I will provide for you all richly. The whole land will know an awakening; the soil, the trees, the animals and yourselves will know a new dimension of blessedness. More than that, from the Year of Jubilee the people also learned about God, what sort of Lord he is, a God who cares for the poor, and for the prisoner in the dark cold jail, for the slave and for the oppressed. People matter to God, not just prophets and priests and kings, but little people, the widow, the orphan, the oppressed, the street person who has nowhere to stay but a cardboard box, and God cares for them and he would make provision for them, if only they would avail themselves of it. Even more than that, the Year of Jubilee shows that God makes promises he keeps, not only that future days of liberation are coming but that he will accomplish this liberation. Here is this immense structure put into place by God stretching over fifty years – the socio-spiritual engineering of liberty for the people he loved – for the slaves to be free, and the man ejected from his land to receive it back again, because liberty is what God loves. He sees the man and woman under the yoke, the voice of the oppressor yelling at them, and it grieves him. He hears the sound of the whip and the rod of the taskmaster striking the backs of the slave and it grieves him. God will deliver them. He will do it himself; he will put on his helmet of salvation and his breastplate of justice and he will certainly come to the prisons of Israel every fifty years and fling open the doors and let the people out. So Jesus, on that never to be forgotten Sabbath in his home assembly in the synagogue of Nazareth, read from the prophecy of Isaiah – a passage written when the people of God were about to go off to captivity in Babylon. There Isaiah was promising that the Lord of Jubilee would deliver them from their distant exile and restore them to their land again. He promised not only restoration but spiritual renewal. They would enjoy a new relationship with God. They would love him more

than ever before. They would rejoice in him and trust him with all their hearts. They would give up all their idols that had led them astray and serve him alone. This blessing would be accomplished in the fulfillment of Jubilee. Jesus sermon was the actual trumpet call. The notes of the sermon summoned the congregation in Nazareth to wake up and see what had begun. That very Sabbath day that scripture, seven hundred years old, speaking about the coming of the year of Jubilee, was being fulfilled "as they were hearing of the mighty works Jesus had been doing throughout Galilee and listening to Jesus preaching to them. You know the broad Bible picture, that there had been, for a two thousand year dispensation from Abraham to Christ, one little nation on this planet the size of Wales, set aside by God. That nation, Israel, had been commanded to keep this Jubilee pattern, the three Rs, a year of Release for the slaves and the bond servants, a year of Reversion for the land to go back to its original owners, and a year of Renewal of the land as it lay fallow for twelve months. That law had been given, but it was weak as every law is through the sinfulness of the human heart. Did Israel ever keep the Jubilee Year? Now the great Motivator has come! In the incarnation of the Lord Jesus the Jubilee-enforcer has come.

Chapter 9 : Christian views on poverty and wealth - Wikipedia

The point is: the apostles were agreed on the importance of ministry to the poor because it flows from the center of the gospel—the cross—and because Jesus lived it out. The apostles were eager to bless the poor.

Most American church members are white. But what about the poor? What does Jesus tell us to do for the poor? Preaching to the poor was important to Jesus. Listen to how important it was to Jesus to preach to the poor. When John the Baptist was put in prison, he became discouraged and believed that Jesus was not the Messiah. John the Baptist expected a Messiah who was a political Deliverer, one who would drive the Romans into the sea. No wonder John the Baptist doubted, he was imprisoned by the Romans, the very ones he expected Jesus to drive into the sea. Because we are supposed to preach the Gospel to them. The great revivals of John Wesley and the beginning of the Methodist church were primarily among the poor. When the rich would not respond to Wesley, the poor heard him gladly. There will always be poor people. We have done much in America to eliminate poverty. As much as America has done for the poor, there will always be poor people. Even God understood in the best of economies, where the Jews lived by the Word of God; there would always be poor people. God blesses those who look after the poor. Since there will always be poor and there will always be great needs, God opens up His heart to the needy people. Towns describes the revivals in our churches that focused on the bus ministry. Towns, in the early 70s the Independent Baptists had the Shekinah-Glory cloud upon them, and God poured his blessing out on Independent Baptists because they carried out the Great Commission through the bus ministry. We had over buses and faithful laymen who got up on cold, windy snowy days to crank up old buses and drive all over Central Virginia to pick up children and bring them to this church. Most of these children were poor—very poor—and they came from needy homes where parents were poor. They came from shacks, trailers, or inner city homes.