

God Cares



Orphans, Widows, the Poor and Oppressed (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

I think we'll come to our theme for tonight, our responsibility for orphans, widows, the poor and the oppressed. And I want to take this in a systematic way. I want to study first of all the nature of God Himself. And then the requirements for righteousness in every successive stage of God's dealings from the flood of Noah onwards—under the Patriarchs, under the Law of Moses, under the Prophets, in the New Testament and then some general promises and warnings at the end.

But first of all let's look at the nature of God Himself. In Psalm 68 and verse 5 it says of God,

> "A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation?"

So that's the character of God. He's a father to the fatherless and a defender to the widows. Then in Psalm 103 and verse 6, it says,

> "The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed."

I don't think most of us realize how passionately God cares for those who are oppressed. And most of the human race at this particular time are oppressed. The number of people who get a fair deal and are treated honorably is a small proportion of the human race. Most of the human race today are unjustly, and unfairly treated. And God cares about them. He loves them. He wants to help them, and He's also very, very angry with those who oppress them.

And then in Psalm 140 and verse 12.

> "I know that the LORD will maintain The cause of the afflicted, And justice for the poor."

Now that's God's nature to care for the afflicted and to desire justice for the poor. And let's face it, frankly there are not many places where the poor really get justice. And I'm not sure that Britain is one of them. Britain is a lot better than some places. But I doubt that we can say here in Britain tonight that the poor really are treated with justice, with fairness.

Now I want to look at picture of God's standards of righteousness in all the main ages that the Bible deals with, beginning with the age of the Patriarchs—that's the time before the Law of Moses. The time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the time even earlier before then. And the main book that unfolds that is the book of Job, which is a very fascinating and stimulating and challenging book. And in Job 29, Job himself gives us a picture of his righteousness. And I found it extremely challenging to consider the way Job treated people. Job 29 beginning at verse 11 it says,

> "When the ear heard, then it blessed me, And when the eye saw, then it approved me; [in other words I had favor with people. Why?] Because I delivered the poor who cried out, And the fatherless and him who had no helper. The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Whom is he speaking about? The fatherless, the widows, the poor and the oppressed. And then he says this and it's very remarkable for those who are interested in doctrine. He says,

> "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a [diadem or] turban."

You see, none of us has righteousness of our own. Right back in the time of Job he says "I've put on righteousness, and it clothed me." And every one of us who's counted righteous before God in any age is clothed with a righteousness which is not ours. We have no righteousness of our own. So right back in the patriarchal time Job says, "I put on righteousness. Not my own, and it clothed me." And this is how his righteousness was expressed.

> "I was eyes to the blind, And I was feet to the lame. I was a father to the poor, And I searched out the case that I did not know. I broke the fangs of the wicked, And plucked the victim from his teeth."

You look at that outline of Job's righteousness. He says, "I delivered the poor, the fatherless, and him who had no helper. The blessing of a perishing man came upon me. I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." I wonder if you could ever say that. Have you ever done anything for a widow that would cause her heart to sing for joy? They're not far away. I'll talk to you a little later about them.

And then in Job 31, Job, who's asserting his righteousness before God, disclaims being guilty of various sins and he lists a number of sins that he did not commit. And what has impressed me is some of the things that he considered sinful. I just want to take you to one passage there in Job 31 verse 16 and following. Now you have to remember that these things are things that Job said he did not do because they were sinful. And if he had been doing these things he would not have expected any mercy from God.

> "If I have kept the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, Or eaten my morsel by myself, So that the fatherless could not eat of it"

Now all those things Job considered sinful—to cause the eyes of the widow to fail, to eat your food by yourself when there were hungry people around - Job said I've never been guilty of that. Could you say that? Then he goes on,

> "(But from my youth I reared him [the fatherless] as a father And from my mother's womb I guided the widows); If I have seen anyone perish from lack of clothing, Or any poor man without covering;"

If I've seen anybody in need of clothing and did nothing about it, that was sinful. Then he says,

> "If his heart has not blessed me, And if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;"

When I saw a man who needed clothing, I took my own sheep, sheared them and gave them the wool. Bear in mind if Job had not done these things he would have considered himself a sinner. And then he goes on,

> "If I have raised my hand against the fatherless, When I saw I had help in the gate; [in the court] Then [this is a tremendous statement] let my arm fall from my shoulder, Let my arm be torn from the socket."

You understand what he is saying? He is saying, if I haven't used this arm of mine to bless the needy, to help the widows, to feed the hungry then it has no right to be in my body. It shouldn't be here. Could you talk like that? Or does Job have a standard of righteousness which is different from most of ours today. And who is right? Job or us? I tell you, I get so challenged by these words. I've read them again and again and I've said to myself, this man Job had a standard of righteousness which we don't even think of, most of us today. And yet he was affirming his righteousness before God.

Well, then let's go to the Law of Moses. In Leviticus 19 verses 9 and 10, this is about how to handle your agriculture.

> "When you reap the harvest of your field, you should not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard;"

In other words you're to leave a certain amount of your harvest, whether it's corn or whether it's grapes, unreaped. Why?

> "You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

You see, it was built into the Law of Moses. Every Jew that followed that law had to have a concern for the poor and the stranger. It was part of his agricultural proceeding and they were agricultural people. And then the Lord concludes there by saying, "I am the LORD your God." And this is how I interpret that—"This is the kind of God I am and this is how I want you to represent Me with a concern for the poor and the stranger." That's built into your whole life system. It's part of it.

Radio Program

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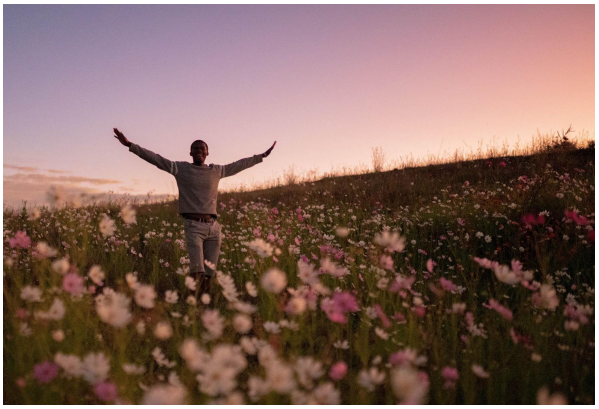


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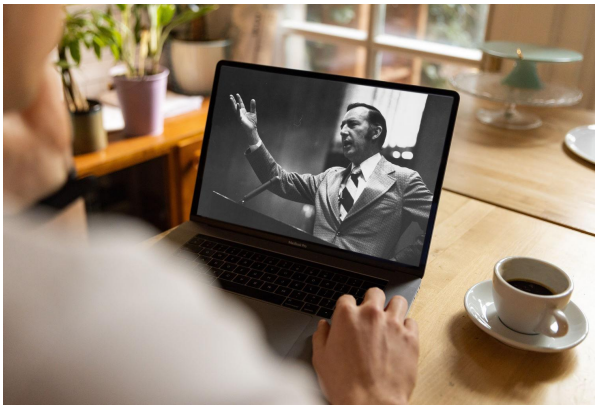
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