



# REMEMBER *the* POOR

FEIKOAB PARIMAH

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*Remember the poor*

**Dedication**

*To my nephews Jedidiah & Manuel*

## Contents

Copyright page.....	2
Dedication .....	3
Contents.....	4
Introduction .....	5
What is poverty?.....	7
God's dealings with the poor .....	26
The understanding of the early church .....	35
The blessedness in helping the poor .....	45
Hope for the poor.....	55
Are you prepared for Christ's second coming?.....	60
Titles by the author .....	64

## **Introduction**

A lot has been written on the subject of riches, and how to get rich using kingdom principles as enshrined in the scriptures. However, I have observed with grave concern, how the poor are treated in the society, confirming what scripture has said concerning the plight of the poor. This piece is therefore written to draw attention to how God sees the poor, and the right attitude we must exhibit towards them. It is in no way to justify poverty, neither is it sent forth to undermine the rich and to turn a blind eye to the benevolence of some rich folks in the church of the living Christ and in society.

One's riches does not approve him or her before God, neither does one's poverty earn His disapproval. In fact, God identifies more with the poor rather than the rich. It is in the justice of God that we treat the poor with dignity. I therefore write in that spirit of upholding the justice of God for the poor, by pursuing the following order:

## *Remember the poor*

- What it means to be poor (both spiritual and physical)
- God's dealings with the poor
- The understanding of the early church
- The blessedness in helping the poor
- Hope for the poor

I will endeavor to give a brief description of types of poverty (though not exhaustive): spiritual poverty (which could be negative), spiritual poverty (which is positive), and physical poverty (a state most people, if not all dread). Subsequent chapters will look at how God advocates for the poor in the Old Testament, His justice for the poor, and Christ's ministry to the poor which we must perpetuate.

Examples of how the early church dealt with the poor in line with continuing with Christ's works and identification with the poor is further laid bare. Thereafter, I conclude with the blessings gained from remembering the poor, and the hope for the poor. May the Lord give us ears to hear what the spirit is saying to the church. Amen!

# CHAPTER I

*What is poverty?*

*What is poverty?*

The word 'poor' is common, and as such needs no introduction. Immediately it is mentioned, a picture of who falls within that bracket comes to mind. Despite how relative its meaning is, we can all attest to the fact that it amounts to a lack of something. It is relative in the sense that, a person who is poor within a particular context might not necessarily be considered poor in another context. Whichever way you choose to look at it, it is an undesirable state that no one wants to find him/herself. Others may also consider it to be a state of mind or disposition.

For the purposes of avoiding every form of ambiguity, the use of 'poor' in this piece denotes the state of lacking the necessities of life. To be poor in other words is not having your needs (i.e., food, clothing, and shelter) met. It is important at this stage to proceed to outline the types of poverty: spiritual poverty-negative, spiritual poverty-positive, and physical poverty (which will subsequently be the focus of my discourse).



## **Spiritual poverty-negative**

This is a state of lacking the right spiritual knowledge or understanding about the things of God. The Laodicean church lived in spiritual deception thinking that they were rich towards God:

*“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” Rev 3:17.*

Although they were rich in this world's goods, God saw them to be poor in His sight. They claimed to know God, but they did not.

Such spiritual lack could be because of the love for pleasure rather than the love for God. We have been advised in Proverbs 21:17, that “He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man...”. The scripture may apply to both spiritual and physical poverty. If we give ourselves to the pursuit of the pleasures of this world, it will consequently lead us into

## *Remember the poor*

spiritual poverty. Paul predicted a spiritual decline in the end-times:

*“This know also, that in the last days  
perilous times shall come. For men  
shall be lovers of their own selves,  
covetous, boasters, proud,  
blasphemers, disobedient to parents,  
unthankful, unholy, without natural  
affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,  
incontinent, fierce, despisers of those  
that are good, Traitors, heady, high  
minded, lovers of pleasures more than  
lovers of God” 2 Tim 3:1-4.*

No wonder so many people are spiritually poor in our days.

Scripture further cautions that “... he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want” Proverbs 22:16. Christ asked that we give to those who cannot give us back:

## *Remember the poor*

*“But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” Luke 14:13-14.*

In a way, we can say that the rich young ruler who came to Christ was poor in the spirit (in the negative sense) because he needed to be made rich by giving his possessions to the poor. Unfortunately, this requirement was too difficult for him to fulfill, making him continue in his spiritual poverty. Christ requested that he give his possessions to the poor so that he could be rich, and become perfect:

*“Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” Matt 19:21-22.*

## *Remember the poor*

Refusing to heed instructions can also lead one into spiritual poverty: "Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured" Prov13:18. A life devoid of obedience to the word of God will certainly tend to spiritual poverty.

Furthermore, loving sleep can lead to spiritual poverty:

*"Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread" Prov 20:13.*

For this reason, Christ often woke up early in the hours of the morning to commune with the father. By idleness, poverty comes chasing a man like a bandit:

*"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" Prov 24:33-34.*

## *Remember the poor*

***Please note: although the scriptures in proverbs are primarily physical, it could equally be true spiritually.***

The one who does not deal well with the poor is himself spiritually poor since he does not know God. The prophet Amos rebuked the nation Israel in their days concerning how they treated the poor:

*“Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes” Amos 2:6*

### **Spiritual poverty-positive**

There is also spiritual poverty that is positive or good. This type of poverty is a must for all the children of God. It paves way for one to gain access into the knowledge and revelation of the Lord. Spiritual poverty-positive is a disposition or state of mind, in which one sees his or her need for God or dependence on

## *Remember the poor*

Him. God only reveals Himself to people who see their need for Him in their lives - a humble posture every one of us must aspire unto. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He proclaimed blessings upon His disciples who He considered to be poor in Spirit:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"*  
Matthew 5:3.

Jesus specifically came to preach the gospel to the physically and spiritually poor. In a way, the two are linked. I will endeavor to make this clear in subsequent chapters. The scripture that concerned His ministry clearly spelt out that He was to preach the gospel to the poor:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath 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, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"*  
Luke 4:18-19.

## *Remember the poor*

In His own words, those who are well do not need a physician. In other words, those who did not see their need for him excluded themselves from obtaining salvation:

*“But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick”*  
Matt 9:12.

Therefore, when John the Baptist sent his disciples to inquire from Him whether He was the messiah or they were to expect another, He answered him by pointing to the fact that the poor had the gospel preached to them. (confirming Luke 4:18):

*“Then Jesus answering said unto them, go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached”* Luke 7:22.

A person could attain spiritual poverty-positive by having regard for the poor: “The righteous considereth the cause of the poor:

## *Remember the poor*

but the wicked regardeth not to know it” Prov 29:7. The person who sees his or her spiritual poverty and dependence on God, of necessity considers the poor. As already explained, spiritual poverty-positive is a state of mind or a disposition to see one’s need for God: humility. One way of humbling one’s self is by fasting. In fasting, we are required to feed the poor:

*“Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”* Isaiah 58:7.

In essence, those who humble themselves in a true fast do remember the poor. A classic example of a person who demonstrated his state of need and repentance toward God was Zacchaeus. In fulfilling the justice of God, Zacchaeus decided to show forth his fruit of repentance by pledging to give half of his property to the poor:



## *Remember the poor*

*“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, this day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” Luke 19:8-10.*

### **Physical poverty**

Apart from the basic foundation that was laid earlier with respect to the definition of being poor, I will like to also add that the scriptural definition for someone who is poor is a person who is naked and destitute of daily food: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food” James 2:15. Also, people who cannot pay us back when we do them good could be considered poor:

*“But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for*

## *Remember the poor*

*they cannot recompense thee..." Luke 14:13-14.*

Poor people are often hated by other people: "The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends" Proverbs 14:20 and are often shunned by so called friends.

Physical poverty can come about in so many ways: an act of God, laziness/idleness/love of pleasure& sleep, self-imposed for the sake of the gospel, stinginess, and through natural and man-made disasters (*list not exhaustive*).

### *An act of God*

Scripture also points out that God can make a person poor. He does that for His personal reasons, which no one can question. In Hannah's praise to God, she revealed that God can make a person poor: "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up" 1 Sam 2:7. We may not like some of these truths, but that is the word of God. The Israelites grew up with that understanding as shown in Proverbs 30:8:

## *Remember the poor*

*“Remove far from me vanity and lies;  
give me neither poverty nor riches;  
feed me with food convenient for me”.*

Some of these truths fall within God’s sovereignty.

*Laziness/idleness/love of pleasure& sleep*

Some people are poor because it is their own doing. They are in such a state because they loved laziness. The wise man Solomon cautioned against laziness which can make one wallow in poverty:

*“He becometh poor that dealeth with a  
slack hand: but the hand of the  
diligent maketh rich” Proverbs 10:4.*

There is dignity in hard work. All things being equal, the person who works very hard (and of course with the favour and blessings of God) is likely to have enough to fend for himself. A close cousin of the idle man is the man who loves sleep (Proverb 20:13). By giving one’s self to sleep, one automatically makes him or herself a candidate of poverty.

## *Remember the poor*

Aside from laziness, there are others who found themselves in that state through the love of pleasure:

*“He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich”* Proverbs 21:17.

There are so many ways by which men love pleasure. The person who spends his money partying etc. will soon come to want. Imagine a student who decides not to study but gives himself to wantonness. On the average, he or she is likely to fail, and consequently find it difficult to land a job.

*“...he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough”*  
Proverbs 28:19

If people will sit down and take stock of their lives, they will realise how much money they spend on unnecessary things just for the sake of pleasure. An addiction to drugs or food can reduce one to rags. It is very expensive to maintain a life of addiction. The one who finds him/herself in such a position, has no option

## *Remember the poor*

than to find quick or easy means of making money to finance his or her expensive life. Therefore, most youth are into all kinds of vices just to make money. They may acquire the money, but the money will not last:

*“He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him”*

Proverbs 28:22

### *Self-imposed for the gospel's sake*

There are also the matured brethren who have decided to live a self-imposed life of poverty for the sake of the gospel. Such fathers of the faith see the great need in winning the lost at all costs and for that matter see the urgent need to channel most, if not all their financial resources into the spread of the gospel. They make a personal resolution not to live prodigally seeing the time is at hand. Moreover, they see the need to invest their money in heaven where thieves cannot steal. So, in truth, such people are not really poor, but have converted their physical riches into

## *Remember the poor*

spiritual riches. They will take it up in the hereafter.

Christ Jesus is the first example that comes to mind when we talk about voluntary poverty:

*“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”*  
2 Cor 8:9.

Christ became poor so that we could benefit from his poverty. It was another way of humbling himself by identifying with people who often suffered injustices in the world. Apostle Paul is another notable example of a man who decided to give out his earthly possessions so that others could gain:

*“As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things”* 2 Corinthians 6:10.

This is a state of fatherhood in the Christian faith. People who live such lives might be seen to be poor in the physical. However, the

## *Remember the poor*

spiritually discerning ones will have a better understanding of Proverbs 13:7:

*“There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches”.*

Paul derived such an inspiration from the life of Christ, and advised that we follow his example:

*“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” 2 Cor 8:9-12*

## *Remember the poor*

From this scripture, Paul was pointing to how Christ had to make Himself poor for the believers. This inspired his life of sacrificial giving as already mentioned. By this scripture, he was calling the believers at Corinth to emulate the example of Christ, and for that matter himself, by giving to the poor saints.

### *Stinginess*

Stinginess can also lead to poverty. One of the ways of escaping poverty is by giving liberally. Most people are often tempted to stockpile for fear of losing or coming to want. They fail to grasp that such disposition is rather a recipe for poverty:

*“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon*



## *Remember the poor*

*the head of him that selleth it"*  
Proverbs 11:24-26.

Stingy individuals are to understand that the one who has mercy on the poor lends to God (Proverbs 19:17). And there is no way God will not repay such a person, since elsewhere He Himself speaks against owing.

### *Through natural and man-made disasters*

It is a known fact that natural disasters like floods, tsunamis, typhoons etc. have led to poverty in some regions of the world. However, there are other people in other parts of the world who are poor because of man-made disasters such as devastations of war. War around the world has brought untold hardship to several people. Such people are poor through no fault of theirs.

## **CHAPTER II**

*God's dealings with the poor*

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The poor are always disadvantaged in the society, and thus, the justice of God demands that He sides with them. It has been recorded that the poor man is hated by his neighbours. Certainly, this is not the state anyone would like to find him/herself, hence the undesirable nature of the state of poverty. Poor people are marginalized in the society, and even their friends separate themselves from them:

*"Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbor"*

Proverbs 19:4.

Since the poor has no one to defend him or her, God is inevitably his or her only defender. God made it known to His people, how they were to treat the poor: "Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.... Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause" Exodus 23:3-6. In essence, it was evil to oppress the poor in Israel:

*"Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not*

## *Remember the poor*

*restored the pledge, and hath lifted up  
his eyes to the idols, hath committed  
abomination” Ezekiel 18:12.*

It was as though God always sided with the poor. This understanding was further manifested in the New Testament.

In the gospels, we notice that Christ was often identified with the poor. That is not to say that He did not, and does not love the rich. This to underscore the fact that the one who needed help the most was the poor who had no one to defend them. We may contest this to be unfair, but that is scripture. God has decided to pitch His tent (so to speak) in the camp of the poor. Nonetheless, salvation is open to all. One needs to be careful how he or she treats the poor. The way you treat the poor simply tells us, that is the way you treat God. In His first coming, Christ chose to come as a man of humble circumstance. It behooved Him to make himself humble so He could indeed empathize with the poor and to preach the gospel to them. In Isaiah 61:1-2 it is written concerning Him:

## *Remember the poor*

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn”.*

God sent His son to preach the gospel primarily to the poor. Although we are to preach to everyone, it will be Unchristian to decide to focus on the rich in ones' ministry. This is normally because of the love of money. The spirit should be to do good to people. As much as possible, it should be to those who are poor.

The matured servant will desire to preach to those who after hearing his sermon, will still need to be fed and clothed. Christ's motivation was to do good to those who followed him, by giving unto them rather than receiving:

## *Remember the poor*

*“Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way” Matt 15:32.*

He did not ask, what He could gain from them by way of offerings as some people are accustomed to these days. Personally, I think it will be out of place to preach the gospel to someone and after asking the person to give his or her life to Christ you thereafter ask the person to give an offering. This was not practiced in the New Testament church. Taking offerings could be done among those who have already believed. Let us not destroy the faith of some by our unscriptural deeds. The Lord is watching.

To begin His ministry, Christ quoted from the book of the prophet Isaiah 61:1 as fulfilled in Luke 4:18. Somewhere along the line (in His ministry), John sent his servants to enquire of Him whether He was the Messiah, or they

## *Remember the poor*

were to wait for another messiah. Christ responded to them by pointing to His deeds including his ministry to the poor:

*"Then Jesus answering said unto them, go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" Luke 7:22.*

Like His father in heaven, He also decided to side with the poor. This was partly because they suffered injustices and were also more likely to be poor in spirit, thereby placing them at the point of receiving the gospel. Although some rich folks followed Christ, majority of them that followed Him were the poor. We can rightly say that Christ always had a burden for the poor in His ministry.

A time came when Christ visited Bethany where Lazarus lived (the one Christ raised from the dead). While they were at table, Mary the sister of Lazarus poured an expensive perfume on Christ's head. This act although

## *Remember the poor*

applauded by Christ, did not go down well with Judas, who thought that the ointment/perfume could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor:

*“This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein” John 12:6.*

The posture of Judas presupposes that Christ was always mindful of the poor, and He always ministered to them not only in word, but in deeds. Christ did not countenance waste, but in this scenario, Judas failed to discern the significance of what Mary did. Moreover, his intentions were revealed in that, he did not want to help the poor but because he was in a sense their treasurer. His heart was always running after money which eventually led to the destruction of his life and ministry. There are Judases these days who pretend to receive money and donations for the poor but end up using it on themselves. If one ever asks for money to be given to the poor, it must be solely used for that purpose or else account



## *Remember the poor*

will be rendered on the day of judgment. If you need a car or house for yourself etc., just be frank and make your request but never hide under the guise of helping the poor whereas it is for your own interest.

During the last supper, the disciples once again revealed Christ's passion for the poor:

*"For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor"*  
John 13:29.

For the disciples to conceive that thought (though they were not clear on what He said), simply indicates that Christ often helped the poor. What it means is that if they were in doubt of anything at all, it should not be Christ's dealings with the poor.

One of the basic tests of becoming a man of God is to have value for the sanctity and dignity of human life, especially value for the poor and vulnerable in society. This is a

## *Remember the poor*

requirement for anyone who desires to serve God faithfully. Christ demanded that the rich young ruler sell his property and give to the poor before following Him. He did this to test the heartbeat of this young man for the poor, and to also give him the opportunity to store his treasures in heaven (Matt 19:21-22).

According to scripture, God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith:

*"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James 2:5.*

The way we treat the poor reveals a lot about who we are before God.

*Remember the poor*

## **CHAPTER III**

*The understanding of the early  
church*

*The understanding of the early church*

It is an imperative for the children of God or the church to remember the poor: “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do” Gal 2:10. The early church learned this from Christ who always had the poor in mind. If Christ did, and the early church followed in His example, then we have no option.

*Why is it an imperative?*

In the Old Testament, God made it abundantly clear that the poor will never cease from among His people, Israel:

*“If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the*

## *Remember the poor*

*year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land” Deut 15:7-11.*

While I cannot fully explain why this is so, I will only attempt to highlight the importance of knowing the position of God on the poor and our responsibility towards them. Christ made similar remarks when the alabaster box of ointment/perfume was poured upon him:

*“There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on*

## *Remember the poor*

*his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always" Matt 26:7-11.*

He made us to understand that we always have the poor with us, who we can help. James 2:2-3 equally suggests that we will always have the poor among us in the church. It is not our business to try and make everybody rich, but to rise to the responsibility of helping those who are poor. The early church was not in the business of making everybody rich as some people want us to understand these days. Thus, the prosperity gospel is conspicuously a sham.

God sided with the poor, and when Christ came the first time, He declared that He had come to do the will of the father. This included

## *Remember the poor*

justice for the poor, and to preach the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18). Christ continues to work through His church. We are co-labourers with Him in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit that was upon Christ is the same spirit that is upon His church. It has already been declared that the one who does not have the spirit of Christ is none of His:

*“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” Rom 8:9.*

If He was an advocate for the poor, why will He stop being an advocate for them in our days? If He is indeed working with us, then we ought to continue with His work. The Psalmist said, “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor” Psalm 140:12. God has purposed to do this through His church. Besides, doing good to the poor is an act towards Christ:

## *Remember the poor*

*“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one*



## *Remember the poor*

*of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” Matt 25:32-40.*

Some will get to understand this, but it will be too late for them. We must choose to obey these scriptures now whiles we are alive. He calls the poor His brethren. We sin if we decide not to strengthen the hand of the needy: “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” Ezekiel 16:49. Therefore, showing mercy unto the poor is in essence a cessation of the sin of the neglect of the poor. This was the same counsel Daniel gave king Nebuchadnezzar, to break off his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor (Daniel 4:27). Hence Paul’s call to always remember the poor: “Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do” Gal 2:10.

In that light, contributions were often made to help the saints that were poor in other regions: “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and

## *Remember the poor*

Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem” Rom 15:26. This was significant to the extent that the Macedonian church purposed to give to the poor though they themselves were poor:

*“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much in treaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God” 2 Corinthians 8:2-5*

Giving to the poor like the early church did attests to our righteousness (Proverbs 29:7), and way of honoring God (Proverbs 14:31). The Psalmist declared that God raises the poor:

## *Remember the poor*

*“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people” Psalm 113:7-8.*

I believe the Psalmist got this understanding from the teachings they had received as the people of God (1 Sam 2:8). The question is, how does God raise the poor? In a way He does that through His children or the church. God wants to raise the poor as the scripture says, but wants to do it through us. He wants to use us to answer the poor: “For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever” Ps 9:18.

Let us also understand that having mercy on the poor by remembering them is a good deed in the sight of God: “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” 1 Cor 13:3. The scripture presupposes that these two deeds were respected among the saints of God. However, Paul wanted them to understand that love

### *Remember the poor*

should be the motivation for giving to the poor. We are not supposed to give to the poor to show how spiritual we are, but to do so because we love them.

## **CHAPTER IV**

*The blessedness in helping the poor*

## *Remember the poor*

### *The blessedness in helping the poor*

There are blessings attached to helping the poor: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour" Ps 112:9. The one who gives to the poor lends to God:

*"He that hath pity upon the poor  
lendeth unto the Lord; and that which  
he hath given will he pay him again"*  
Prov 19:17.

There is no way God will owe a man and not pay him back. Thus, once you give to the poor you are assured of reaping the benefits. Some of the benefits attached to helping the poor are as follows:

### *Storing up treasures in heaven*

Primarily, we are to give to those who cannot pay us back. By so doing we store up treasures in heaven where thieves cannot steal:

*"But lay up for yourselves treasures  
in heaven, where neither moth nor  
rust doth corrupt, and where thieves  
do not break through nor steal: For*

## *Remember the poor*

*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” Matt 6:20-21.*

When you give to people, you will love them. Imagine helping a poor young man through his education and immediately after graduation the young man passes on. How will you feel, compared with a young man you never supported? I believe we will be so much hurt because, we loved the young man, and thus invested in him. Apart from the treasures you will have in heaven for giving to the poor, you also learn to have affection for people because your treasure is in them.

Giving to the poor in love, can qualify you for spiritual insight into the things of God. Christ wanted to do this in the life of the rich young ruler, but he failed to understand:

*“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away*

## *Remember the poor*

*sorrowful: for he had great possessions"* Matt 19:21-22.

This requirement was because of Christ's love for the young man. It is always a great opportunity for us to be a blessing to the poor. By this, Christ further wanted to pass the message that the one who is not faithful with unrighteous mammon cannot and should not be entrusted with true riches:

*"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"*  
Luke 16:11.

### *Abundance*

Aside from the benefits that could accrue to us in the hereafter, God has also promised us of reaping in abundance so that we can continue to help the poor. Paul amplifies the value of giving and receiving in the following light:

*"Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your*



## *Remember the poor*

*righteousness;), Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you”*  
2 Corinthians 9:10-14.

In this scripture, he assures the giver that God will multiply the seed that he sows by way of giving so that he or she can do more the next time. I think a lot has already been written by others on this aspect of giving, and I would not want to proceed further along that tangent. The one who gives to the poor will not lack as Proverbs 28:27 and Proverbs 11:24 state. Apart from the abundance that we stand to reap, also think about the amount of thanksgiving that

## *Remember the poor*

goes up to God because we give to the poor. Therefore, if we want a lot of thanksgiving to ascend unto God, then we better learn to give much to the poor.

### *The blessings of Job*

Job is a typical example of a man who feared God and because of that he remembered the poor. He makes known some of the blessings that come upon a man who shows mercy to the poor.

*“...When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The*

## *Remember the poor*

*blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out" Job 29:1-16.*

In this scripture, Job recounts how he had been helpful to the poor and disadvantaged. He delivered the poor, the fatherless, and was an advocate for those who had no one to defend them. He lightened up the hearts of widows, and constantly made it his burden to seek the course of the poor. This attitude brought him honour in the city. This earned him respect from both the young and the old. People in places of authority could not say anything against him. They were speechless whenever he was around. People always opened their mouths to bless him simply because he showed mercy to the poor. Job also makes known how he grieved for the poor:

## *Remember the poor*

*“Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?” Job 30:25.*

I wonder how many people grieve for the people in society, and the church. These are things we ought to learn from such a sage. No wonder God was so proud of Job.

*“If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;(For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;)If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering” Job 31:16-19.*

The rich in society should learn from the above scripture. What the scripture means is, Job always met the needs of poor people who encountered him. If only you could meet Job, then your desire will be granted. The hope of widows was never dashed whenever they saw

## *Remember the poor*

Job. He learned to share his food with the fatherless and made sure that none ever died because they had no clothing to keep them warm. This is how a godly man appropriates wealth. The wealth God gives us is not for prodigal living.

Scripture declares that “He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he” Proverbs 14:21. Some philanthropist can attest to this truth. It is said that a particular known philanthropist gained his health when he decided to give out to the poor. Hitherto, this man made all the money, but failed to give to the poor. Until he learned to remember the poor, he never enjoyed good health. This is a truth that many come to terms with when they are old and nearing their grave. Their reflections bring them to the point of understanding that naked they came, and naked they shall return.

There is what many know as Maslow’s pyramid of needs. At the zenith of this pyramid is self-actualization where we ask ourselves the legacy we will be leaving behind

## *Remember the poor*

when we are no more. The wisest thing to do is to understand this essential truth at a young age or else there will be regrets in the end.

*God will hear your cry*

The poor always cry to the Lord for help. When an individual decides to be a conduit for God to use in remembering the poor, God also remembers that person in his or her time of need when he or she calls out to God: “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard” Proverbs 21:13.

They are further assured of God’s deliverance in times of trouble:

*“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.” Ps 41:1-2*

## CHAPTER V

*Hope for the poor*

## *Remember the poor*

### *Hope for the poor*

No matter the cause of one's poverty, there is still hope for the poor. The fact that this piece is being written attest to God's love for the poor. The poor is always in His mind, and He will always remember them. The Lord will remember the poor through His disciples:

*"For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor"*  
John 13:29.

He still identifies with the poor in that, He said because you did not do it to one of these my brethren, you did not do it unto me:

*"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil*



## *Remember the poor*

*and his angels: For I was an hungred,  
and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty,  
and ye gave me no drink: I was a  
stranger, and ye took me not in:  
naked, and ye clothed me not: sick,  
and in prison, and ye visited me not”*  
Matt 25:40-43.

By the justice of God, the poor ought to be remembered, and will be remembered. He has declared in His word that He will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor: “I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor” Ps 140:12. He calls the poor His brethren and that is good enough to assure the poor that He will never leave them nor forsake them.

Scripture makes us understand that God raises the poor:

*“He raiseth up the poor out of the  
dust, and lifteth the needy out of the  
dunghill; That he may set him with  
princes, even with the princes of his  
people”* Ps 113:7-8.

## *Remember the poor*

The poor today may never be the same tomorrow by reason of the possibility that God can choose to make him or her rich tomorrow.

God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith:

*“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” James 2:5.*

It is not necessarily evil to be poor. We may not desire to be poor but that does not mean that a poor person should despair because of his or her state of poverty. There are spiritual provisions made by God for the poor. The poor is never forsaken. Many in such state have drawn very close to God in prayer and by seeking Him. It is just a matter of how you see it, and the good one can draw from his humble circumstance.

I know your poverty says the Lord:

*“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which*

*Remember the poor*

*say they are Jews, and are not, but are  
the synagogue of Satan” Rev 2:9*

***Are you prepared for Christ's second coming?***

Please note that...

The first Adam disobeyed God and because of his disobedience sin entered humanity, resulting in the spiritual death and separation of man from God:

*"Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned...So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life" Romans 5:12-13, 18.*

The second Adam (Jesus Christ) obeyed God to take away sin from humanity:

*"But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8.*

Your part of the arrangement is to receive the grace or gift of God's salvation by faith (Romans 4:16-17).

You must understand that faith without works is dead, so God expects you to obey and receive this gift (but costly) salvation with your free will:

*"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" John 1:12-13.*

The most important decision you must make now is to be born again (John 3:1-8). Being born again is to repent of your sins and to submit yourself to be baptized by immersion (and not by sprinkling) as well as receive the Holy Spirit:

*"Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38.*

The grace of God is not a license for you to sin, but rather to receive strength to live in obedience to God's word (Titus 2:11-14).

Therefore, you must (as a matter of necessity), live a holy life and walk as Christ did:

*"However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his, and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" 2 Timothy 2:19.*

*"Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3.*

If you walk in the light of the above scriptures and make 2 Peter 1:2-10 your guiding principle, you will never live a defeated Christian life. Moreover, you will be found in Christ at His glorious appearing. I however caution that you beware of people who preach another Gospel, another Jesus and another Spirit as in line with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

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## **Titles by the author**

- A message to those at the crossroads
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- Broken vessels
- Bread baked in hell
- Awake, and Christ will give you light
- The cry of Apostles and Prophets
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- Bargaining for pure gold
- Christian modesty
- Golden distinctions of end-time saints
- Important signposts for believers
- Demystifying parables and sacrifice
- The realm of divinity, contradicting the World
- The paradox of maturity
- Thirty pieces of silver
- Precipitants of revival
- 'Weightier' matters
- Because of the hour
- Brethren, let us grow
- Masked blessings
- Remember the poor