

Remember The Poor

Ponder: Christ-like compassion

Scripture: “They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do” (Galatians 2:10, NKJV).

Throughout Scripture, God has had a special concern for the poor. He required His people under the Law of Moses to make particular provision for orphans, widows, foreigners, and others who might be less fortunate. Similarly, the New Testament teaches Christians to help people who are in need.

When Paul and others met with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem in Acts 15, the main issue was what to do with the Gentile converts. False teachers were demanding that circumcision and Mosaic Law-keeping be bound upon the Gentiles. Paul would have none of that! Guided by the Holy Spirit, the apostles and elders decided in favor of Paul and the true gospel he preached. Their only request was that he would remember the poor.

Most likely, this request focused upon the poor in Jerusalem. Paul had already demonstrated his willingness to help in Acts 11:27-30, and he was eager to do more. Even as he wrote the letter to the Galatians, he was organizing a collection from predominantly Gentile congregations he had planted. The funds would benefit Christians in Jerusalem (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Receiving assistance from Gentile brethren would surely help the Christians of Jewish heritage to accept them as true members of Christ’s body. And even some outside of Christ would receive assistance, for Paul wrote that the Jerusalem brethren would “glorify God for . . . your liberal sharing with them and all men” (2 Corinthians 9:13). “Them” would be the Christians, while “all men” refers to non-Christians.

Are you eager to help the poor? There is no shortage of people in need! Of course it is impossible for you to help all of them. The local church cannot help everyone either. But we can help some, whether individually or as a congregation, and we ought to do so gladly! Give priority to fellow-Christians, but “as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). It will strengthen the bond of love among Christians, and could well soften the hearts of unbelievers to be receptive to the gospel.

Song: “Each Day I’ll Do A Golden Deed”