



Weekly Inspirations

By Pastor Pat Thompson

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You would confound the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge (Psalm 14:6).

I was taught in seminary that God has “a preferential option for the poor...” that when it’s all said and done, the High and Holy One holds a special place in his great heart for those who live on the margins. The Old Testament illustrates this point quite clearly and in many places.

We all see the world through the lens of our own background and orientation. That’s only natural. Many, if not most of us, are able to navigate through the world based on a certain ability to care for ourselves, a great gift in and of itself. But that experience is far from universal; there are millions—especially those living in underdeveloped countries—for whom the availability of clean drinking water is a constant challenge, not to mention having adequate daily food.

There are similar challenges right here at home as well, and sometimes the inadequacy is not of one’s own making. As often as not, the problem lies in a systemic reality and in a cycle of oppression that keeps a family in the grasp of poverty and utterly disenfranchised. It is that sort of oppressive power that God warns the Israelites about in words spoken by the prophets of old—and occasionally from the lips of modern-day prophets.

It is said that history is written by the victors. I would submit that a similar truth is operating when it comes to the haves versus the have-nots. Most of us are “haves” on some level, and we may find it difficult to identify with those who always seems to be without. Why, we even create a worldview which posits that the poor are somehow morally inferior; if they would just work a little harder, they would not be poor.

But that is *not* the message of the Bible, and those who say otherwise are simply wrong! God *prefers* to hear the moaning of the poor, and God expects us (the non-poor) to address their needs. I’m sorry if that offends anyone; I did not write it!

“You would confound the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge,” says the psalmist. We need to cease blaming the poor in making public policy pronouncements, for they reside close to the heart of God. Our energy would be better spent working for justice.

Faithfully and fraternally,

Pat