

riding lawnmower, insert more stuff here. I am not saying it is wrong to have these things. I have some of them and would love to have more of them. But when these things take priority over giving to the church and its mission to the world, then our understanding of God's provision has been perverted.

Consider joining our church's growing Mercy Ministry team; consider going to Biloxi for disaster relief; consider reaching out in some way to those people in need in your neighborhood. Pray for the willingness and courage to give of your resources. Perhaps start out small, but do something! Like Jesus did for you, begin to be a friend to the poor.

—Mark Tucker (2007)

I'll Fly Away

Please see print copy for words.

Covert Art: by David Buckley, 1991.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**



Old Orchard Church August 28, 2011 – 10:15 – 11:50 a.m.

Jesus went to Nazareth, . . . and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue . . . 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:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them,

Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

—Luke 4:16-21

Celebrating Jesus Christ, Friend of the Poor

We call him Friend of Sinners,
and so he is.
But we worship and praise Christ
also as Friend of the Poor.

He who was rich,
for our sake became poor,
that through his poverty we might become rich!

God is Giver and God is Friend;
He has poured out his blessings upon us
And extends to us the privilege of becoming
givers in his name.
Praise the Lord, you his godly ones;
Come into his courts with praise!
Before the Almighty all are poor;
But he shares his riches with us,
and through Christ calls us his friends
that we too might befriend the poor.
Alleluia!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: 1 Kings 17:7-16

New Testament Lesson: Matthew 25:31-46

Sermon Series: Disciplines of Disciples

“Fasting in an Age of Comfort Food”

Matthew 9:14-17

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

Being Christ to the Poor

A young believer told me the other day that he felt like he was losing his faith. When I asked him why, he replied that he struggled to trust in God because of all the pain in the world. He went on to describe the prevalence of violence and hatred, but he especially focused on the extreme poverty that he sees everyday in our very own city, St. Louis. How could the God who promises to provide for us allow children to live without basic necessities? How could the God of protection allow whole families to fall through the cracks of our social system? How could the God of compassion watch as the elderly suffer because they can't afford air-conditioning? These are hard questions and I could not pretend to answer them satisfactorily over a cup of coffee, even more so in this single page of a bulletin.

However, there are answers. Scripture alone gives us the most exhaustive understanding of Christ and his relationship to the poor. It does not mean that the answers will extinguish our nagging concerns, but they are Truth nonetheless.

First, God is all powerful, but evil still has a crippling effect on our world. Poverty exists because sin is real and powerful and destructive. Sin affects the way we cherish our “stuff.” Sin affects the way we spend our money. Sin affects the way we give or don't give. Think of this: the way you spend your resources is part of the answer to the question “Why there is there so much poverty in our world?” Every time you spend a buck in a way that is not for God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31) you are stealing from the poor.

Second, God did not leave us in our state of sin and misery. God could have left the world to itself completely, leaving all of humankind physically and spiritually poor. Thankfully, he did not. Instead he joined us in our poverty and misery. Even more, he took upon himself the full and final outcome of evil, death (Phil. 2:1-11).

Third, God gives us hope. Even while we suffer the crippling nature of our sin and the sin of others, we need not despair. One day soon those that are followers of Christ will be with him and these days will be forgotten. That is why Paul says in Romans 8:18 ***For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*** Praise Him!

Finally, God tells us to give. How should we live until that glory is revealed? By giving of our resources (time, money, skills, gifts) for the benefit of those in need, like Jesus did. Historically, the church has given more to aid the poor than most all other organizations. However, studies have shown that Christian giving has decreased dramatically over the last 50 years (see www.generousgiving.org). An article in World magazine suggested that if followers of Christ actually gave 10%, the church would gain \$156 billion dollars (currently the average per Christian is 2.9%). This is money that could be used to feed the poor, protect the weak, pay an electric bill, or fund international missions. But instead we think we need the latest cell phone, plasma TV, entertainment center, wireless network, organic veggies, sleep-comfort bed, laptop,