

# God and the Poor





















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# The crunch of universal credit

Under the current proposals two-fifths of single parents will lose out in cash terms under universal credit.



**For single parents, work won't always pay under universal credit**

Read our report into the impact of universal credit on single parents here:  
[www.gingerbread.org.uk/creditcrunched](http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/creditcrunched)

**Gingerbread**  
Single parents, equal families

**UC** Universal  
Credit

# God and the Poor



# Common view in Old Testament times

Rich people are blessed by God as a reward for their behaviour

Poor people have been bad or sinful and are being punished

# Common view in Old Testament times

Deut 11 <sup>13</sup> So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— <sup>14</sup> then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. <sup>15</sup> I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

## Common view in Old Testament times

Deut 28 <sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD  
your God and do not carefully follow all his  
commands and decrees I am giving you today, all  
these curses will come on you and overtake you:

# Common view in Old Testament times

## Prosperity gospel

Malachi 3 <sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it

Common view in Old Testament times

Job

*Why do the wicked live on,  
growing old and increasing in power?*

# Common view in Old Testament times

Jeremiah 12:1

You are always righteous, Lord, when I bring a case  
before you. Yet I would speak with you about your  
justice: Why does the way of the **wicked prosper?**  
Why do all the faithless live at ease?

# Common view in Old Testament times

## Proverb

Righteous v Wicked

Wise v Fool

Rich v Poor?

# Common view in Old Testament times

Proverbs 18:23 The **poor** plead for mercy, but the **rich** answer harshly.

Proverbs 28:6 Better the **poor** whose walk is blameless than the **rich** whose ways are perverse.

Proverbs 28:11 The **rich** are wise in their own eyes; one who is **poor** and discerning sees how deluded they are.

**Common view in Old Testament times**

**If being rich is the “blessed” state  
why was Jesus poor?**

# New Testament times

**Is being poor the new “blessed” state?**

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

# New Testament times

**Is being poor the new “blessed” state?**

Matthew 19:23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

# New Testament times

## Is being poor the new “blessed” state?

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Luke 4:18 "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

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 1. We are required to act on behalf of the poor

Psalms 82:3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Proverbs 31:9 Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 2. Sign of salvation – giving to the poor

Luke 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Mark 10:21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 2. Sign of salvation – giving to the poor

Acts 4 No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all <sup>34</sup> that there were no needy persons among them.

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 3. You need love not just actions

1 Corinthians 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 4. When we care for the poor we encounter Jesus

Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Proverbs 22:9 A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Proverbs 28:27 He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Acts 10:4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 4. When we care for the poor we encounter Jesus

Matthew 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?:38

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?:39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' :40

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 5. Imperative to remember the poor

Galatians 2:10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

(Acts 6, 1 Tim 5)

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 5. Imperative to remember the poor

1 John 3v17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

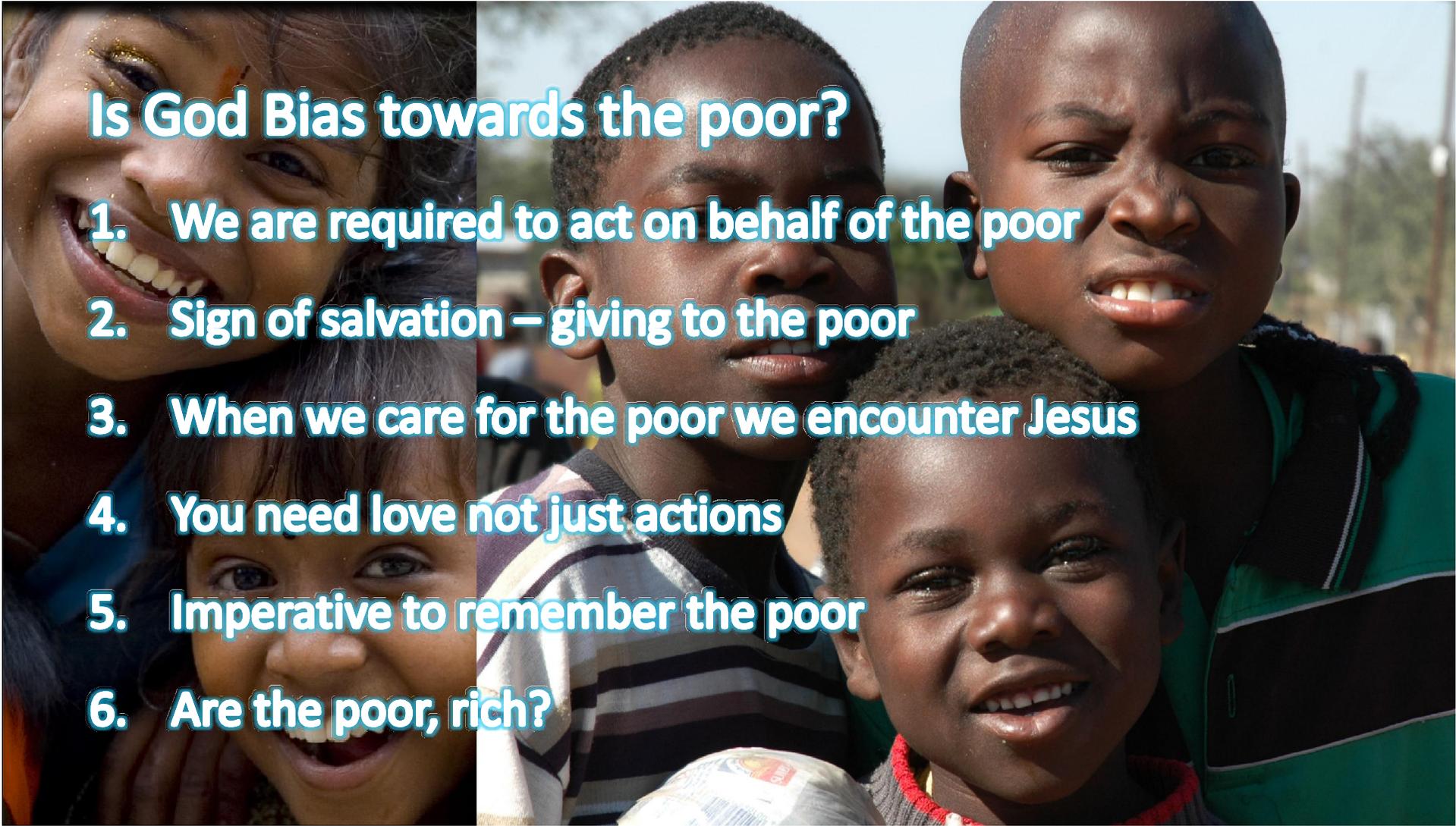
# Is God Bias towards the poor?

## 6. Are the poor, rich?

2 Corinthians 8:2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own

**Are the  
poor,  
rich?**





## Is God Bias towards the poor?

1. We are required to act on behalf of the poor
2. Sign of salvation – giving to the poor
3. When we care for the poor we encounter Jesus
4. You need love not just actions
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6. Are the poor, rich?