

THE POOR / *Luke 12:33-34*

Jesus' example and attitude toward the poor gives believers a picture of how they ought to hold lightly to their worldly possessions, willingly sharing with those in need.

Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor."

Luke 7:22, Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."

Luke 11:41, "So give to the needy what you greedily possess, and you will be clean all over."

Luke 12:33, "Sell what you have and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven have no holes in them. Your treasure will be safe—no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it."

Luke 14:13, 21, Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

"The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was angry and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the city and invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.'"

Luke 18:22, "There is still one thing you lack," Jesus said. "Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Luke 19:8, Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Luke 21:2-3, Then a poor widow came by and dropped in two pennies. "I assure you," he said, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest of them."

We must not spiritualize away Jesus' concern for the poor. Jesus' ministry, as the promised Messiah, would focus on calling people back to God—those who saw their need, such as the poor, the outcasts, the disabled, and the Gentiles.

The prophet Isaiah had prophesied that the "one to come" would do such miracles. See also Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; 8:1.

It is a "cleansing" act to give generously. Jesus wanted to stress the importance of the inward over the outward, here focusing on the importance of a right attitude when giving to the poor. The inner attitude must match the outward act.

Treasure in heaven far surpasses any accumulated treasure on earth. Why have abundance when others are starving? Why hoard when others could be helped?

When God's people can do good, without expectation of reward or repayment, they have truly served him unselfishly.

The task of selling possessions will not give anyone eternal life. But such obedience shows the desire to follow Jesus in complete commitment. Only when money is no longer lord of one's life can Jesus become Lord.

Jesus took the initiative with Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus took the initiative to follow wherever the path of obedience to Jesus might lead. Zacchaeus was able to give away his wealth in order to follow Jesus. This was the heart attitude Jesus was always looking for. When he perceived it in Zacchaeus, he lost no time in bringing this man the Good News.

Jesus judged this woman's gift not by how much she gave, but by how much she had left after giving. She gave everything. She could have kept back one coin, but she willingly gave both coins and trusted God to care for her. Jesus wanted the disciples to see this lesson in total surrender of self, commitment to God, and willingness to trust in his provision.