



The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's sermon notes
of his message, preached October 14th, 2018

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+ We have been talking about being a **Defender of the Weak**...

Today I want to start by telling you some great news! Would you like to hear some really great news?

I want to tell you about **God's great Medicare Insurance System**.

God is offering us a Health Insurance Policy that guarantees a long and blessed and healthy life. **It has INCREDIBLE benefits!** I discovered this amazing insurance plan one day while I was reading my Bible in **Psalm 41**

Blessed are those who consider the poor; the Lord will deliver them in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve them and keep them alive, and they will be blessed on the earth; He will not deliver them to the will of their enemies. The Lord will strengthen them on their sickbed; He will restore them to health. Psalm 41:1-3

Wow! That's quite the Medical Insurance Plan!

Now the Hebrew word for "consider" ("**Blessed are those who consider the poor**") is a very interesting choice of word. It's the word *Sahel* – it means **to give careful attention to a subject (to ponder it, to understand it) and then act accordingly in a wise way**.

What this is saying is that God does not want us to give the poor, those in need, a passing thought or a token hand out. He is calling us to ponder their situation and find ways to resolve their situation.

God wants us to dig deeper (Investigate) and **understand** the **CAUSE** and then act in a way that helps to resolve the issue.

Illustration: My little boat trailer blew a tire last spring...

CAUSE = bad wheel bearing | **EFFECT** = burning out tires

You can keep replacing tires (symptom) or you can fix the CAUSE

"**Blessed are those who consider the poor**"

Those who ponder/understand their situation and find ways to resolve the circumstances that are causing the problem.

+ That's why I am so excited with our Haiti FreddyLink projects! We work with World Vision. Their approach is to go into a needy community and first evaluate their needs. They look beyond the symptoms and then find the **CAUSE**... **Why are so many people dying?** Why are babies dying of preventable diseases that have been curable for over 100 years. Diseases like cholera!

One solution is to treat these babies with medicine. That is a good short-term solution but it's like changing the tire on the trailer.

So then they focus on the **CAUSE** and develop long-term solutions **empowering the Haitian people with their own future**.

One of the obvious solutions is to provide them with a sustainable source of clean water.

So not only do they help them build water sources, but they form local committees to teach them how to maintain them and empower them to take ownership of their future. **WATER IS LIFE!**

Now a whole community has a future free of all kinds of deceases!



Then they focus on education which builds huge future potential. Now they can become teachers, nurses, engineers, farmers, develop their own businesses, dream their own futures!

“Blessed are those who CONSIDER the poor”

Those who make the effort to seek to understand the **CAUSE** and come along side and find solutions!

+ We have an amazing family in our church that is working out of Uganda with MAF (Mission Aviation). They are Matt and Chaundra Eagar and their three children. Two Sundays from now (October 28th) they will be telling us some amazing stories of how they are helping to change the world in parts of Africa.

Uganda is the largest host of Refugees in Africa and the 3rd largest worldwide (after Turkey and Jordan) although we don't usually hear about it in the news in the Western world as it doesn't really directly affect us here. Since December last year, well over 250,000 Congolese refugees alone have come to Uganda fleeing rebel warfare in their country. The Congolese civil war is considered the largest loss of life since World War 2 and between Eastern Congo and South Sudan, Uganda is currently hosting just over 2 million refugees. 61 percent of these are children.

Most of these refugees have seen and experienced the most horrific things we could ever imagine and it's hard to rebuild and just move on from that. In Congo, rape is used as a weapon of war to tear families and communities apart (they estimate about 2/3 of Congolese women and girls have been raped at least once, as young as infants), families have been murdered in front of them, young boys have been taken as soldiers, the list goes on and on. These people are severely traumatised and often their trauma paralyses them, sometimes, after surviving everything they have, they arrive in Uganda and in desperation they turn to suicide. How can you rebuild from that?

That's where **Tutapona** comes in. Tutapona is a Swahili word, which means “We will be healed” and runs a curriculum (facilitated by former refugees!) based on Biblical principals of forgiveness and hope.

Chaundra works with this project as their communications person which means she has the amazing privilege of meeting them, listening to their stories and telling the world about the amazing hope and healing that is coming out of the midst of one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

After receiving trauma care, these men and women are able to move on and rebuild their lives and their families.

Matt is a pilot for MAF and they fly many humanitarian organisations (World Vision, Compassion, etc) every single day who are training and educating entire communities. Through public health, education, trades, and sustainable farming, communities are gaining the skills they need to succeed on their own.

Finding solutions for the **CAUSE!**

You want to hear some amazing examples of how people are making a difference and bringing hope to communities, make sure you don't miss two Sunday's from now (October 28th). The Eagars will be telling us some amazing firsthand examples that will really encourage you with hope. **Invite someone to come!**

+ **What about here in Fredericton?**

Between 2016 and 2017 about 750 people fell into a homeless situation because of job loss, family break-ups,



sickness... **15%** of those that end up as homeless can't seem to bounce back out and end up in what is called chronic homelessness.

Often we walk by someone on the street that is in need and like the Priest and the Levite did in the story Jesus told of the Good Samaritan, we see them but "we are busy", "we don't know what to do". **I get that!**

You're on your way home from work, and you get a text from your wife, 'stop at the Superstore and get some milk' and there is the guy with the cup. *You don't even have any change!* So you rush by... **I get that! I've done it myself!**

Stopping at the ATM machine and withdrawing some cash and giving it to the guy is commendable but that is not what **Psalm 41** is about!

"Blessed are those who CONSIDER the poor"

IT CAN GET A BIT OVERWHELMING! → It is for me!

So I have really great news for you!

Instead of being frustrated or feeling guilty, we can partner with those in our city that have "understanding" of the **CAUSES** and, get this, are asking the church, US, to partner with them. Just like Matt and Chaundra partner with other organisations and find community solutions; just like we are partnering with World Vision in Haiti and changing communities. We can partner with other organisations in Fredericton and find clear workable solutions, right here in Fredericton. Solutions that we all can get in on!

Next Sunday we are going to show you what we are aiming to do as a church as part of our Road Ahead vision as a church to "CONSIDER" the poor and needy of our city!

What we can do to make a difference right here in our city?

+ Tucked in those little Old Testament books of the prophets is this little interesting book called Micah. Micah was a prophet who gives this summary of how God wants us to live...

"This is what the Lord requires of you, to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

When we think of justice we quickly connect it to punishment for wrongs done... We say, "Justice has been served" when a criminal gets sentenced. The Bible justice is way more than that. While it does include punishment for wrongs, it is more about defending people's rights, protecting them and caring for them.

So often the word justice is connected to the poor, the fatherless, the widow...

Learn to do good; **Seek justice**, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17 (NKJV)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly (give legal aid); defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)



All through the Bible this word justice is connected to the quartet of the vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the immigrant and the poor...

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the immigrant or the poor.” Zechariah 7:9-10

In premodern times when societies lived on farming and raising animals, these four groups suffered the least economic power.

Today, in our industrial revolution of a world, these would also include the refugee, the migrant worker, the homeless, those single parent families and the elderly.

Justice, according to the Bible, is connected to how these groups are treated. To neglect help to these most vulnerable of our neighbourhood is not just a lack of charity, it is a lack of justice. When Micah says...

“This is what the Lord requires of you, to **do** justice...”

There are many in our church that are “**DOING** justice” by helping an immigrant family get settled, by helping someone get into their home through the SUN committee, by helping in the Soup Kitchen. **It’s about doing!**

Example: **Youth in Transition** is looking for people to spend time with their youth. Last year they had 35 youth who had an average stay of 89 days in their home. These kids have experienced domestic violence, drug addiction, mental illness, abuse, poverty, unemployment, lack of affordable housing. These kids are hurting. There are several things that they need help with:

- Fall clean up of the yard and house at the end of October.
- There are patching and painting jobs in the house.
- They’re looking for a few to come and do a Christmas baking day with the kids.
- They also run a life skills evening once a week. This is an opportunity to bring in a skill that the students may find helpful. (Like sewing on buttons, fixing a hole in your shirt, computer skills, resumes, etc.)

This is an opportunity to **DO JUSTICE** God’s way!

We too often see our Christianity in a vertical way | Me and God! But Jesus calls us to a horizontal way as well — “Love your neighbour” which calls for action, “doing justice”! Going out of your way like the Good Samaritan, who came along the road.

...when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

In a self-centred “God and me” Christian entitlement culture, doing JUSTICE for others is an inconvenience, but it is the Gospel Jesus taught.

After Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan he said:

“Go and do likewise.” Luke 10:37



“Save us, Lord, from a religion that ignores the cries of the exploited and oppressed. Lead us into a deeper faith that challenges injustice and makes the sacrifices that must be made to build a society that is ever more truly human. Amen.” (Walter Brueggemann)

Blessed are those who consider the poor; the Lord will deliver them in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve them and keep them alive, and they will be blessed on the earth; He will not deliver them to the will of their enemies. The Lord will strengthen them on their sickbed; He will restore them to health. Psalm 41:1-3

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matthew 25:34-36

