

# The Beauty and Wisdom of Benevolence

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## I. Jesus and the Early Church walked in the beauty and wisdom of benevolence.

- A. Jesus was rich, but for our sake became poor that we might become rich (Matthew 26:6-13; II Corinthians 8:7-9; Philippians 2:3-11).
- B. Jesus' life and teachings revealed the wisdom of kindness to the weak.
  - 1. He was anointed to preach good news to the weak and broken (Isaiah 61:1-3).
  - 2. How we treat the weak is how we treat God (Matthew 25:31-40).
  - 3. Zacchaeus' revelation of the wisdom of benevolence (Luke 19:1-9).
- C. The benevolence of Jesus was carried into the earliest expressions of the Church.
  - 1. The Early Church (Acts 4:32-35)
  - 2. Paul's commission from the Apostles (Galatians 2:9-10)
  - 3. Financial gifts from the Gentiles to the Church in Jerusalem. This gift was about more than money; it was about joy, thankfulness, the praise of God, and heartfelt relational connection (II Corinthians 9:6-15).

## II. Defining wisdom

- A. Two nuances of the word "wisdom" in Scripture.
  - 1. Skill in the affairs of everyday life—This includes the idea of good judgment and management (James 1:5-8).
  - 2. In respect to divine things—Wisdom, knowledge, insight, deep understanding of the ways of God (Ephesians 1:7-10, 17)
- B. "For those who find me [wisdom] find life and receive favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 8:32-36).
- C. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10-12).

## III. Ways in which a lifestyle of benevolence is wise

- A. The promise of protection and healing (Psalm 41:1-3)
- B. "He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:24-25).
- C. Honoring God and receiving His blessing (Proverbs 14:21, 31)
- D. "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done" (Proverbs 19:17).
- E. Answered prayer (Proverbs 21:13)
- F. "The generous will themselves be blessed...for they share their food with the poor" (Proverbs 22:9).
- G. The Lord plunders those who plunder the poor (Proverbs 22:22-23).
- H. "Those who give to the poor will lack nothing. But those who close their eyes to them will receive many curses" (Proverbs 28:27).
- I. Speaking up for those who cannot speak up for themselves (Proverbs 31:8-9)
- J. A wife of noble character (Proverbs 31:20-21)
- K. "Then your light will break forth like the dawn..." (Isaiah 58:5-12).