

## Divided We Fail Sermon Seeds

*They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat. . .and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.*

Isaiah 65:21-22

The Bible teaches that people who work should have enough for necessities like food and shelter. Today, a decent standard of living is a struggle for many families to achieve. The high costs of health care mean that most of us can't afford to get sick unless we have health insurance. And, many families live from paycheck to paycheck their entire careers so that they have nothing other than Social Security when they retire. What will it take to bring people together to address these pressing issues?

*Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing, and does not give him his wages;*

Jeremiah 22:13

A generation ago, a hard worker could expect a decent job with benefits that put food on the table, let you take your children to the doctor when they were sick, and provided a little pension for your old age. Today, many young people earn their living as temporary employees, independent contractors, and freelance workers without health insurance or a 401K, let alone a traditional pension. For many families, making ends meet requires one or both parents working longer than ever on the job. There's never enough time for the kids and even less for church and community. At some point, we must begin to ask whether the moral foundations of our society are threatened when so many people worry so much about earning the basics of life.

*Precious treasure remains in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.*

Proverbs 21:20

*Wealth hastily gotten will dwindle, but he who gathers little by little will increase it.*

Proverbs 13:11

At the end of the month, many of us lift our voices in thanks that God's bounty was enough to pay the bills and leave a little left over until next payday. We praise God for the blessings we have received and know that God will always provide for our needs. But did you know that God has more planned for you? God doesn't want you worrying Tuesday to Friday about how you spent all your money between Saturday and Monday. The Bible has a strategy for you to do

better. Penny by penny, dollar by dollar, you can save up and build the nest egg you need to have a little more peace of mind.

*If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But some one will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.*

James 2:15-18

*But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream*

Amos 5:24

*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God*

Leviticus 19:9-10

God commanded us to always remember those in difficult circumstances. The Bible's instruction lifts this call to action up from an act of charity to a rule of social justice. We must respond to need with more than a generous heart but a commitment to social justice too. At a time when 60 percent of Americans worry about being able to afford health insurance and 47 million lack any coverage at all, is charity enough? With pensions disappearing, will there be enough charity to provide dignity for seniors living from one Social Security check to the next?

*And he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."*

Mark 4:30-32

Jesus said the kingdom of God starts as the tiniest of seeds in our hearts and grows into the mightiest of trees rooted deep in the ground, strong enough to support the needs of many others. Likewise, social justice begins with a single lonely voice in the darkness. Our voices can echo and grow that lonely voice until it becomes a mighty chorus that moves all of society to change. I heard about an initiative from the AARP called Divided We Fail that's trying to fix health and lifetime financial security. I don't know if they will succeed, but I've heard it said that one fed up person is a crank, but 1 million fed up people is a social movement.