

The gospel calls us to GO and to DO. If we neglect this, we become unhealthy in our faith! We are very excited to begin our Nation Changers series. This Sunday, Steve shared a message around ‘Remember the poor’.

There are two interesting stories and verses around ‘Remember the Poor’:

1. In Acts 10, we read about Cornelius, a Roman centurion who was visited by an angel of God during his prayers. The angel tells Cornelius to send some people to Simon the tanner’s house in Joppa where they would find a man named Peter. They should tell Peter to come with them. At the same time, Peter has a vision, letting him know that these men would come and he must go with them! Peter goes to Cornelius’s house, and God does amazing things at the meeting. We read that the Holy Spirit filled all of those from Cornelius’ house. *They spoke in tongues and were all baptized in water. One verse, in particular, stands out: Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and **remembered your gifts to the poor.**”* Acts 10:31.
2. In Galatians, Paul shares some of his backstory - how he used to persecute the church of God and tried to destroy it. He then became a Christ-follower and went on to speak about his early interaction with some of the 12 apostles in Jerusalem. The verse in Galatians 3:10 is key: *All they asked was that we should continue to **remember the poor**, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.*

The Bible is strong on the fact that we should remember the poor!

Steve then went on to share some statistics relating to unemployment and poverty in South Africa:

“The unemployment rate in South Africa rose to 27.6 % in the first quarter of 2019 from 27.1 % in the previous period.”

South Africa has three poverty lines, which represent different degrees of poverty.

Poverty Line	2017	% of Pop	Pop under line
Upper Bound PL	R1138	55.5%	30.4 million
Lower Bound PL	R758	40%	21.9 million
Food Poverty Line	R531	25%	13.8 million

<https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-south-africas-official-poverty-numbers/>

So why does the Bible ask us to “remember” in regards to poverty? Probably because in many ways, it’s easier in many ways to avoid poverty. Poverty can be painful to ‘remember’ for the following reasons:

- It’s overwhelming (a problem that is too big to solve)

- It’s painful (we don’t generally like to see others suffering)
- We feel guilty (doesn’t take an expert to see how many people live in extreme poverty)
- Blame (whose fault?)

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, in the middle of a story about grace, is this idea: that spiritual poverty is far worse than physical poverty: *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. This should stir us to engage with poverty on both a physical and spiritual level. Not so that we can earn our way into heaven, but because it’s about bringing something of heaven to earth.*

We get to be part of the solution! Through Nation Changers, we are doing many are doing things. Steve shared stories of three people whose lives have been changed through their connection with Nation Changers. (See links below for Sisanda and Nelly’s stories. Paul’s story is recorded in the podcast). We are also providing 17,000 meals for people per month through our Nation Changers meals.

Finally, Steve reminded us of the “starfish effect”... A young boy was walking along a beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When he came to each starfish, he would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. People watched him with amusement. He had been doing this for some time when a man approached him and said, “Why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can’t save all these starfish. You can’t begin to make a difference!” As he bent down, he picked up another starfish and hurled it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he looked up at the man and replied, “Well, I made a difference to that one!”

We can’t solve the poverty for the entire continent of Africa, but we can start to make a difference with what we have.

NOTE:

Each family was encouraged to take a Nation Changers meal pack to cook up this week, and to ‘remember the poor’ as they enjoyed the meal.

Sunday also saw the launch of our Nation Changers projects for Nation Changers month (12 July – 12 August). You can find a list of available projects [here](#).

TESTIMONIES:

Sisanda: <https://youtu.be/0rVewZuGwjY>

Nelly: <https://youtu.be/pBX44Dy6tiE>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Icebreaker (Choose 1)

- Have you cooked your Nation Changers meal pack yet? Share your thoughts on the meal.
- Have you been involved with Nation Changers previously? Share with the group about your involvement (what you did and how it's impacted you)

Questions For Groups (Choose 2 or 3 questions)

1. What stood out to you most from Sunday's message?
2. If you want to know God's plan for solving the world's problems, just take a look around your group - yes, we're it! We are His plan. He works through us. What do you think about this? Does it excite you, scare you, overwhelm you? Why?
3. There are many needs in our country - all around us, in fact. Which of these needs are the ones that you feel most drawn to? (or put another way - how do you feel you can make a difference)?
4. What helped you turn the corner from getting to giving in your journey as a Christ-follower? How would you say you are presently doing in this area?
5. Read Deuteronomy 15:7-8 & 10-11. In verse 10, there is both a command and a promise. What are they? How does this verse inspire you to action? **Note to leaders:** If your group are not sure where to start giving to the poor, one great way of giving to the poor is through an NGO like Nation Changers.
6. Consider these barriers to reaching out to the poor: time constraints, over-commitment, lack of interest, lack of confidence, lack of information. Which of these presents the biggest obstacle for you? What can you do to overcome these barriers?

PRAYER POINT

Steve shared a staggering statistic around unemployment in South Africa. Spend some time praying around the situation of unemployment in South Africa. If there are people in your group who are unemployed and seeking work, pray specifically for them.

ACTION POINT

In July and August, we have got our Nation Changers month. Which project are we going to sign up for as a group? ([Here's a list of available projects](#)). If you have any questions about Nation Changers or any of the projects, please email sam@nationchangers.org.za