

JAMES 2:5-7

DO WE HAVE IT ALL BACKWARDS?

“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?”¹

I mentioned in a previous sermon a family that came to a church I pastored. The family related that they sought to unite with a prestigious church, only to be advised that they would be happier elsewhere. They were a family with few financial resources, and the congregation they attempted to join was uncomfortable with people who didn’t “fit.” Consequently, they were advised that the church I then pastored was “an entry-level church.”

That family did come into the church I pastored, and for some years worshipped with us until they moved from our community. While worshipping with us, some of the more “progressive” families of the church pressured me to “do something” about the family. One man, thought wanting a youth ministry for the church, would not send his daughters because the children of the poorer family were active among our teens. “They just don’t fit in,” he whined. “We need to ask them to go elsewhere.” I am quite certain that my response to him did not win his friendship. The family that did not “fit in” was not wealthy, but they were warm-hearted. The children were not part of the beautiful crowd, but they were well behaved and intent on learning of Christ the Lord. Nevertheless, the socially elite among us felt they didn’t belong.

Thus, a family that had few of this world’s goods, and who reflected some of the poorer conditions in which they lived, found both covert and overt discrimination from Christians in our community. Wherever they attempted to attend, they were tacitly held at arm’s length. Had they wandered into the synagogue of the church of which James wrote, they would likely have heard, “You stand over there,” or “Sit down at my feet.” Consequently, the cause of the Saviour would have been disgraced then, as it was in this day.

This incident I related, together with numerous other similar incidents recalled from my days of service among the churches of Canada, convinces me that contemporary churches are infected with a debilitating strain of spiritual virus that saps vitality and leads to spiritual death. No church is immune from this deadly disease that enervates labour for Christ and halts all advance within the Kingdom of God. We will do well to review the words of James, drawing out appropriate applications for our own life as a community of faith.

WHOM GOD CHOSE — “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world?” Note an easily overlooked truth—**God chose**. It is not that we chose God; but rather He chose us. Woven throughout the warp and woof of Scripture is the refrain, “God chose.” Paul testifies that God chose the Fathers, that is, the Patriarchs of Israel [ACTS 13:17]. At Jesus’ baptism, Scripture states that God chose Jesus as His Son [LUKE 9:35]. God chose those who believe [1 CORINTHIANS 1:27]. Moreover, Christ chose whom He willed to be disciples [JOHN 6:70]. Jesus refers to the redeemed of earth in the last days as “the elect whom He chose” [MARK 13:20].

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In the Ephesian Letter, Paul describes God's choosing that leads to salvation. He writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" [EPHESIANS 1:3-14].

According to the Word of God, we were chosen "before the foundation of the world." We were chosen "to be holy and blameless" in God's sight. It is not that we decided to become Christians, but it is rather that God called us and we responded to His call. Looking back, we are always astonished to note that God chose us. All we are is by the grace of God.

Clearly, God is capable of, and in fact does, choose whom He wills both to salvation and to service. Paul speaks of God's choosing as evidenced among the people of God. As he opens the First Corinthians Letter, Paul writes, "Consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord'" [1 CORINTHIANS 1:26-31]

If you are a Christian, you are called to salvation and called to serve in the church wherein the Spirit of God has placed you. Reflect on that and on what your status was and is in the world. Among us, there is not one millionaire. There is not one person who was born into exaggerated wealth. There is not one person who is a noted entertainer or Nobel Prize winner. There is not a single Member of Parliament or legislator at any level of government. In the eyes of the world, we are not powerful people. We have no wealth with which to accomplish our goals, nor do we have such influence that when we speak the world pauses to take notice.

Yet, we are able to testify that God chose us to salvation and that God chose us to assemble as a congregation and that God chose us to present a witness here. Our response to God's choosing is to accept His appointment and fulfil His will, labouring in the power He supplies. God is at work among us, and the congregation will prosper as we fulfil His will. Souls will be saved and lives will be changed and the people of God will be encouraged. However, no one will be able to boast that it was because we were a gifted and talented people. It will be obvious that God is gracious and that His power has been revealed among His people. Because God has done the choosing and because God has supplied the power, who receives the glory? Each of us will testify that all that is accomplished is because God is gracious.

In the terse words of our text, James anticipates what Paul stated to the Corinthian saints. James asks, anticipating that there is no alternative that can be imagined, “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world?” When we begin to attempt to exclude the poor in the world, or when we begin to think that we must make our service attractive only to the cultured and wealthy of the world, we are attempting to do what God has not done. The obvious conclusion is that we are attempting to do what God cannot approve and we are thus dishonouring His Name.

My dad often said, “God must love the poor; He made so many of us.” The poor, especially those who are truly impoverished, have little besides hope. They are compelled by need to look to God, and looking to God to supply their daily need, they are generous with the little they have. As people gain wealth, so the temptation to accumulate more grows. Of course, I am speaking in generalities. There are exceptions. Undoubtedly, you will find poor people who are greedy, just as you will find wealthy people who are generous. However, the usual observation prevails that the poor are dependent upon God.

Jesus pronounced a benediction that speaks to the issue of those who are poor. He said, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” [LUKE 6:20]. If this record of Jesus’ words were all that were available to understand the mind of God, we could quite legitimately conclude that impoverishment is a sign of blessing. However, we are given a commentary on this same point in another account of this same sermon that Jesus delivered. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [MATTHEW 5:3]. Notice the qualifying phrase, “in spirit.” It is akin to what James has written in our text.

The Greek word translated “poor” has a range of meaning in biblical Greek. Certainly, the word does signify people who are bereft of wealth. However, the word can refer to people who are “poor” in a spiritual sense. These poor are humble and meek, recognizing their utter dependence on the Lord and trusting Him for deliverance. In a material sense, the antonym of “poor” is “wealthy”; in the spiritual sense, its antonym is “wicked.” The two forms of the beatitude just cited show that Jesus held this duality of meaning. VERSES TWO AND THREE demonstrates that the word James used in VERSE FIVE has a measure of material significance. James added a qualification to the word that raises the possibility of other nuances. When James focuses on “those who are poor in the world,” he is forcing us to look beyond the fiscal situation and see the spiritual condition. *It is according to the evaluation of the world—non-Christian people hostile to God—that the people James writes are accounted “poor.”*

You may imagine that James is inciting revenge against those who injured the saints. This is not at all his intent. Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us [LUKE 6:27]. Moreover, He taught us to pray for those who persecute us [MATTHEW 5:44]. Christians are not to avenge themselves [ROMANS 12:19], but rather we are commanded to “overcome evil with good” [ROMANS 12:21]. However, we are to exercise sanctified common sense, understanding that loving our enemies does not mean that we esteem them. Ordinary human civility is quite different from fawning.

Also, we must always remember that some people have acted so badly toward the church that they no longer command the least respect of the people of God. For this reason John warns, “Do not receive Him ... or give him any greeting” [2 JOHN 10]. It is not wrong, but divinely obedient to hold wicked people accountable for their actions. Those who have attacked the work of Christ, who have hindered the advance of the Kingdom of God, are to be loved enough to call them to account, demanding that they receive the message of life and that they obey the command of the Lord. To do less is a tacit confession that we are more concerned to receive the praise of men than we are to receive the commendation of the Lord.

Let me underscore the truth that God includes both rich and poor among His churches. James was writing to Christians, most of whom were undoubtedly impoverished. The fact that James could speak so broadly about God's choice of the poor of the world to be rich in faith is evidence that poverty was the common economic condition of believers. There was a great cost for being a Christian in that day, just as there can be a great price extracted for identifying with Christ in this day. Also, from earliest days the Faith has drawn extensively from the poor of society; undoubtedly, the Gospel had spread quickly among the poor. The poor readily confess their dependence upon the grace of God, just as the Dalits in India are responding in great numbers to the message of Christ in this day.

In order to lend balance to our understanding, note that JAMES 1:10, 11 makes clear that wealthy people held membership even in churches experiencing persecution. So, when James speaks of the "poor in the world" as being "rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom," it should be understood that James is not arguing for either blessing or bane resulting from wealth; neither is he exclusively identifying the redeemed as fiscally impoverished.

Nevertheless, James does caution against assuming that privation and hardship is of no concern to the churches. God's love for the poor is a persistent theme throughout the Word of God, and we also must reflect that same love for the vulnerable about us. When Mary received the announcement that she would bear God's Messiah into the world, she rejoiced and sang:

"He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty."

[LUKE 1:51-53]

God delights especially to shower his grace on those whom the world has discarded and on those who are most keenly aware of their own inadequacy. James calls on followers of the Lord Jesus to embody special concern for the poor and for the vulnerable. We are to judge from the spiritual vantage and not from the material; all people should be evaluated by God's standard.

If we really believe the doctrine of God's grace—God dealing with each of us in mercy rather than on merit—we are forced to relate to people on the basis of God's plan and not on the basis of human merit or social status. This is especially true with the congregation of the Lord. Be warned that *a "class church" is not a church that magnifies the grace of God.*

TO WHAT GOD HAS CHOSEN — "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?" One must be struck by James' words that "those who are poor in the world" are "heirs of the Kingdom." The reason this is true is because they love God.

Love is the result of faith, and thus the best indicator of a spiritual state. Those who do not believe do not love; they cannot obey if they do not love. Do you love God? When promises have conditions attached to them, we cannot take comfort in the promise until we have fulfilled the condition. As Christ asked Simon Peter, "Do you love me?" so you must ask your own soul, "Do you love God?" Of course you would say you love God, but you must know that those who love God love what belongs to God—His glory, His commandments, and His friends.

Lovers of God love His glory. Glory belongs to God. The great desire and delight of those who love God is to honour him. In this way they endeavour to be fully engaged in His work, knowing that it is to the glory of God. Paul spoke of a time that would come when professed religious people would be “lovers of self” [2 TIMOTHY 3:2], which is the opposite of being lovers of God’s glory. When the service that people render within a church is concerned primarily, if not solely, with self-respect, it should be evident that they have little love for God. Their self-love exceeds love for God. However, those who love God love His glory and rejoice when He receives praise and glory for His work.

Having heard Jesus preach, “Many even of the authorities believed in Him” [JOHN 12:42]. John perceptively notes that they feared the Pharisees, so “they did not confess it.” They feared being put out of the synagogue. Thus, the Apostle appended this comment concerning their silence, “They loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God” [JOHN 12:43]. Surely these silent saints fell under the condemnation that Jesus spoke when He asked, “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the Only God” [JOHN 5:44]? Lovers of God love His glory and seek to live in such a way that they reflect His glory through their own lives.

Lovers of God love His commandments. John wrote, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” [1 JOHN 5:3]. Duty is the delight of those who love God. There are among the professed saints of God people who complain at Christ’s call to serve, and through their complaints they reveal that they do not love Him. They forget that “there is no discharge from war” [ECCLESIASTES 8:8]. Those who love God rejoice at the call to keep His commandments and rejoice in the opportunity to serve.

Mark in your mind the individual who always complains about serving God or exercising the gifts with which God has entrusted her. Such an individual is demonstrating that she loves ease of life more than she loves God. Mark the individual who always seeks an easier way to fulfil the will of God. Shunning the instruction provided in the Word, he endeavours to apply his “great wisdom” obtained through compromise with the world. Such a man does not love God, but rather loves his personal comfort. The Word of God is not a cafeteria buffet from which we select a few tidbits that appeal to us while leaving the remainder to others to pick over.

Lovers of God love His friends. Those who love God also love Christians as Christians, no matter how poor they may be. Love of the brothers is critically important, if John’s words are taken seriously. He testified, “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death” [1 JOHN 3:14]. Those who love God and who are heirs of the Kingdom, will receive as divine gifts all whom God sends to the Body. They accept one another as friends, and not as commodities to be used. Those who accept fellow believers as fellow heirs demonstrate that they love God.

God has chosen those who love Him to be heirs of the Kingdom. But we may ask, “What Kingdom is James writing about?” James is projecting forward to the Kingdom of God, the reign of Messiah on earth. It is possible to be poor in this world and rich in the next, or rich in this world and poor in the next. Or, you could be poor both in this world and the next, or rich in this world and the next. It all depends on what you do with Christ and the material wealth He has given you. What is vital for us to understand as followers of Christ the Lord is that ***God promises the kingdom to “those who love Him,” not to those who love this world and its riches.*** Those individuals who fail the test of loving God are revealing through their impoverished lives that they have no inheritance in the Kingdom of light [see COLOSSIANS 1:12]. Their focus is this present dying world, and not the coming Kingdom of God.

REJECTING CHARACTER FOR CONNECTIONS — “You have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?” James asks three rhetorical questions to assist the saints to understand the folly of showing deference to wealth. It is difficult to argue against him, since the evidence is so plain.

First, James asked, “***Are not the rich the ones who oppress you?***” The answer was obvious to the impoverished saints that first read the letter James wrote. The rich were oppressing (exploiting or dominating) these impoverished saints. The verb translated “oppressing” occurs only one other time in the New Testament. Addressing Cornelius’s household, Peter began with the affirmation that God shows no “partiality” [ACTS 10:34]; rather, he contended, Christ came to deliver “all who were oppressed by the devil” [ACTS 10:38]. God’s impartiality compelled Peter to accept Gentile believers as brothers.

In our text, James shows the complementary side of the same principle. To show partiality toward the rich is to join sides with those who perpetuate oppression. It does not overstate the case to say that **Christians who are partial toward the rich have, in effect, sided with the devil against God; they are assigning worth according to the world’s standard.**

Then James asked, “***Are not the rich ... the ones who drag you into court?***” James strengthened his appeal by pointing out that the rich were dragging poor believers into court. Those to whom he wrote would be readily acknowledge the truthfulness of the exploitation of the poor carried out even through formal legal action. We immediately catch the forcible tone of James’ query when he uses the verb translated “drag” to describe the abuse of the legal system. This was not a polite settling of disputes, but a harsh imposition of the will of the wealthy on impoverished believers who would not be able to afford appropriate representation. It is significant to note that James did not urge revenge by the Christians when a rich person appeared in their assembly. However, he did expose the folly of favouring the rich, as if their wealth made them more valuable in the kingdom. It should have been obvious from their treatment of Christians that it was not so. We still need this reminder in our day.

James also asked, “***Are [the rich] not the ones who blaspheme the honourable Name by which you were called?***” Underscore in your mind the fact that the rich were blaspheming the Name of Christ by their actions. Their treatment of poor believers was religious persecution; that is, harsh treatment was directed at the Christians explicitly because they bore the name of Christ. This is implied in the concluding words of the text, where the rich are said to be blaspheming the name that—literally translated—“has been called upon you.” Bearing the Name of Christ implied a relationship. Therefore, abuse of Christians was abuse also of the Name they bore. The rich were treating that Noble name of Christ as worthy of contempt by heaping abuse upon those who bore it. If Christians were to practice favouritism, they were agreeing!

Paul cautions that Christians who condemn fellow Christians for exercising their freedom in Christ, blaspheme [literally meaning of “denounced” in 1 CORINTHIANS 10:30]. Railing against a fellow Christian because they do not share your scruples is blasphemy, which moves toward blaspheming God. Indeed, the conscientious Christian must be aware that freedom may be misused, and that his freedom can be spoken of as evil [see ROMANS 14:16]. Nevertheless, we need to learn and apply the truth taught in ROMANS 14:4: “Who are you to pass judgement on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” To speak ill of a fellow Christian is to violate God’s Holy Name, for that fellow believer is called by the Name of the Master.

Let me bring these questions into this day. When church people fawn over the rich and discriminate against the poor, they have sided with the devil against Christ. They are applying the standard of this dying world and rejecting godliness. When professed Christians take advantage of fellow believers, breaking their promises and acting as the world acts through appeal to legalities, they demonstrate that they are more closely identified with the world than with Christ. When professed followers of Christ rage against the people of God because they do not like the message of Christ and they disagree with the righteous acts of the godly, they blaspheme the Name of Christ. When you are discriminated against—even by religious people—“rejoice ... and leap for joy ... your reward is great in Heaven” [LUKE 6:23].

Isn't it tragic that after two thousand years, there are professed Christians that are more concerned about how the mighty of their denomination think about them than they are about how Christ sees them? Isn't it tragic that after two thousand years of the advance of the Faith, there are many professed saints of God who are ready to jettison principle for a supposed advantage in the eyes of friends? Tragically, an infectious strain of a debilitating virus has infiltrated the churches of our Lord, blinding His people to spiritual realities in their weakened state; that deadly virus is well nigh ubiquitous among His churches. Neither should we imagine that we will be immune. James writes as he does precisely because the people of God are susceptible to succumbing to the allure of embracing the attitude of this dying world.

I must be more pointed still toward the people among whom I serve and with whom I share this Faith. The Faith of our Lord Jesus demands integrity of those who name His Name. In JAMES 1:22, we read that we are to “live out the message,” and not “merely listen to it.”² James now calls the church to reject economic and/or social partiality, just as we are to reject racial or cultural prejudice in the church. We are to embrace the teaching of the Word that distinguishes “the church of God” from Jews and Greeks [see 1 CORINTHIANS 10:32]. Here, we are to live out the Word, and that means holding one another accountable to the Word, even as we esteem one another as gracious gifts given by the hand of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The role of material wealth becomes a major spiritual issue for us as Christians today. Our relative wealth as Canadians demands that we both address the issues and that we take action as Christians, if we will honour our Lord. Jesus warned that “you cannot serve God and money.” Money has played a significant role in human society, and Christians must be prepared to oppose those roles that usurp the place of Christ in their lives. If we understand the commonly accepted roles of money within society, we will be better equipped to handle wealth responsibly.

George Stulac perceptively identifies three roles money plays in society. He cautions that money serves as *status*, as *value* and as *power*.³ Think with me, then, of how money plays the role of *status* in society. When James identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as “the Lord of Glory” [JAMES 2:1], he is erecting a standard to guide our reaction toward people. We are not to respond to the glory of wealth, or the glory of clothing, or the glory that accompanies notoriety of mere mortals. We are to be focused on the glory of Christ rather than being enamoured of wealth.

If we love Christ's glory, we will not defer to the wealth people hold—wealth which they have by the grace of God in any case. We are not to be overly impressed by wealth, understanding that holding wealth does not say anything about the character of the one holding it. When we seek those whom God would appoint to positions of leadership, we must seek out qualities of godliness and spiritual equipment rather than wealth. When we receive others into the church, we must not be swayed by wealth or by its absence.

² NET Bible

³ George M. Stulac, *IVP New Testament Commentary, James* (InterVarsity, Downers Grove, IL 1993)

James also compels us to acknowledge the role of money as *value*. Wealth can be destructive. Money has the power to make us exploitative, abusive and blasphemous, if the warnings James issues in our text have any meaning at all. The greater the wealth we hold, the greater the danger we face. Undoubtedly, this was the basis for Paul's warning in his first letter to Timothy. "There is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs" [1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10].

This knowledge must serve as a warning to be on our guard, for in the broader realm of this present world, Canadians are wealthy. Material wealth can present a grave danger to the soul; the wise saint will be alert to signs of danger and take appropriate action to protect himself or herself. Undoubtedly, this is the meaning of Jesus warning that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God" [MATTHEW 19:24].

There is another point that may be beneficial as we begin our own missionary outreach. If the poor respond more readily to the Gospel, and if wealth predisposes to spiritual destitution, then where should we concentrate our missionary efforts? Should we not focus our own efforts and resources on those who are most likely to respond? And those whom society considers to be poor and of less value will be most likely to respond to our ministries.

James also confronts the role of money as *power*. Over thirty years ago, I first read "Money, Sex & Power,"⁴ a book which challenged Christians to adopt the life of self-discipline. Richard Foster rightly warned that the power of money can move those who seek it to greed, which leads to vengeance, which leads to violence. However, for those who learn to use money as a tool for good, the wealth they hold can lead to generosity, which in turn leads to magnanimity, which ultimately leads to peace. The task of the conscientious Christian is to move from greed to generosity, from vengeance to magnanimity, and from violence to peace.⁵

James cautioned that money has the power to endanger one's spiritual direction. He said, "Let ... the rich [boast] in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits" [JAMES 1:10, 11]. Now, in our text, James cautions that wealth has the power to induce those who hold it to abuse others and to blaspheme the Lord.

Catholic theologian Thomas Merton has perceptively commented, "Money has demonically usurped the role in modern society which the Holy Spirit is to have in the Church." Tragically, I fear that he likely addressed those of the evangelical movement, though his immediate focus when he wrote those words was the Catholic Church. Beloved people, we are in jeopardy if we fail to address the power of wealth and if we fail to harness that power.

As a doer of the Word, you must take seriously James' admonition to avoid misusing economic power to exploit others, to abuse others and ultimately to blaspheme the Name of Christ our Lord. Within this church, we must make every effort to accept one another as gifted individuals given by the hand of our gracious Lord to strengthen, encourage and comfort one another. We must make every effort to fulfil the Royal Law, a tenet awaiting exploration in another message.

⁴ Richard J. Foster, **Money, Sex & Power** (Harper & Row, New York, NY 1985)

⁵ Foster, op. cit., 86

DO WE HAVE IT ALL BACKWARDS?

Do I address someone who is not a Christian? Perhaps you imagine that you cannot do the things of which we have spoken today. Indeed, you haven't the power to do all that has been address in this message. However, the Son of God is well able to supply the power necessary to fulfil His will. You need but receive Him as Master of your life, believing that He died because of you and that He has been raised for your sake.

The Word of God promises, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." That same Word promises that "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" [ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13]. Our invitation is for you to believe this message and to receive the life that is found only in Christ Jesus the Lord. Amen.