

The Christian Family and Social Movement

CFSM

Singapore

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God Revealing His Preferences. A CFSM Leadership Formation session

This Bible session was held for CFSM members in May.

The Ex-Co felt that this is too good to be kept only to those members who were able to attend on that day, and that all should have the opportunity to know and understand this and grow as adult Christians, as CFSMers.

We noticed the apparently anomalous situation in the Old Testament that God was not always on the side of the Israelites – His chosen people. He was with them when they were with Him. When the Israelites allied themselves with humans, hoping to be strong and powerful, eg the Maccabees with the Romans, they lost their battles. Each time they relied too much on human alliances, and abandon their alliance with God they lost battles and got into trouble. (1Maccabees -8 and 9)

In the Bible God was never 100% neutral.
God took sides. He is always on the side of right.
He invariably takes the side of the poor,
the weak.

The Jews knew this.

The Magnificat – the thanksgiving prayer of Mary was not something this teenager crafted from thin air. Being brought up in the Jewish tradition of that time, she articulated what the more religious Jews at that time believed and recognized, and passed on by oral tradition - that God sided with the poor and the oppressed.

Jesus too opted to be with the poor, though by profession he was self-employed, He was educated, He could read, and in those days he was decidedly middle class. But he opted to

work among the masses, with the sick, the marginalized, and with the ostracized (lepers). He recruited fishermen and formed them to become his disciples, to become teachers. “Jesus turned in word and deed to the weak, sick and neglected. He offered a chance of being human to those who were set aside by society’s standards at that time; the weak, sick, inferior, despised.”

Matthew wrote that Jesus taught that “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” (or in another translation “those who know that they are poor”- the humble who are aware of their spiritual poverty. Luke however, recorded it simply as “blessed are you who are poor.”

Jesus did not just preached and gave lip service. He proclaimed his preferential option by his actions, by the company he kept, - the women - who then had little or no rights, the chronically sick, the socially marginalized eg Samaritans).

From the Old Testament to the New Testament we see God’s consistent way of preferring the defenseless, the oppressed the poor.

For us CFSMers, all these above is just “faith knowledge”. Good to have as a foundation but if we do not attempt to build on this then we have failed our mission in life as a Christian.

We the members of the CFSM have to convert our faith knowledge into “faith practice”.

Christian Reflections

Psalm 72: 12-14

He rescue the poor who call to him.

He has pity on the weak and the poor.

He rescues them from oppression and violence,

Their lives are precious to Him.

1st Corinthians 1.27-29

Yet to shame the wise, God has chosen what the world counts folly, and to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness. He has chosen low and contemptible, mere nothings to over throw the existing order

REFLECTION for CFSM Group Meetings

In our meetings, we must talk about the poor.
We must find out who are the poor in our midst.
Who do we know, who are poor.

We must then ask ourselves the following questions.
Who are the poor now in Singapore?
Who were/are being made poor?

Are we in touch with them?

Are we able to see their life's challenges from their point of view?

Do we see their problems from their life situations?

Are we prone to judgment, to offer "middle class" solutions and apply our morality for their problems and needs?

What are their real needs?

How do we help them identify, realize their own real needs?