

God's Justice and Hunger

Jesus' call to follow him is a call to abandon the self and to join him in building the just Kingdom of God, and—as Matthew 25:31-46 clearly instructs—to act on behalf of the least of those among us. Hunger is on the rise in the United States. Around the world today, the least of these are afflicted by a great many things, including hunger. Bread for the World states that in the United States “More than 36 million people—including 13 million children—live in households that struggle to put food on the table. Around the world, more than 800 million people suffer from hunger.” Jesus states in Matthew 25, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food.” It is clear that to truly be people of God, blessed by the Father, we are to address the concrete needs of the least of these.

Not only does the Bible give us clear mandates to address hunger in the lives of the least of these, but it also gives us an example of how hunger was to be addressed on a corporate level. God instituted a series of laws to ensure that the poor and hungry had access to food. Known as the "Gleaning Laws" (Deuteronomy 24:19-20 and Leviticus 19:9-10), farmers were prohibited from harvesting their fields and vineyards more than once. Then, they were commanded to open their fields to the poor, the widow and the alien to allow them to harvest the leftovers. Through this public policy, God ensured that hunger would be eliminated.

In addition, the Old Testament prophets called God's people to fast—go without food—for the purpose of providing basic necessities for others (Isaiah 58:6-7) In the New Testament, those who have food are instructed to share it with those who do not have it. (James 2:14-16) Withholding food indicates an incomplete faith.

God is concerned for the hungry and makes provision for them both through charity (individual action taken to relieve hunger) and through justice (creating policies that guarantee the elimination of hunger). As God's people, we must take action with God on behalf of those who are poor and hungry.

See the Hunger Resources for a list of actions to “make hunger history.”