

Tuesday 11th August 2020

Amos 5:11(part), 12(part). *"You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain..." "...you oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts"*

Proverbs 13:23. *"A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away"*

Leviticus 25:35. *"If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so that he can continue to live among you"*

In every society there are the rich, the wealthy, the comfortable, the struggling and the poor. Why is this? Causes are varied ranging from thirst and hunger through ill-health, overcrowding, pestilence and poor education to, worst of all, oppression at the hands of the better off.

This is why Amos, a poor shepherd turned man of God berates the Israelites for their treatment of the poor. *"You trample on the poor..."* and *"...you oppress the righteous and take bribes..."* Proverbs 13:23 highlights the injustices dealt to people who struggle to provide for themselves and their families. Any attempt at redistribution of wealth is bedevilled by covetousness, judgemental attitudes and the exercise of power and control.

Scripture is quite clear that the poor should be supported not ignored. Uplifted not down trodden. Provided for not fleeced. As Christians we give to Christian Aid, we supply provisions to the food bank and our cast offs to charity shops but are these actions just sops to our conscience?

Lord, how we need you to jog us from our complacency. Puncture our smugness. Soften our hearts and make us treat the poor righteously.