

Bible Study Resource

Challenge Poverty Week 2024

Overview of CPW24

Challenge Poverty Week 2024 (CPW24) calls on churches, individuals, and communities to confront the systems that perpetuate poverty and work together to create lasting change. Nearly 90% of people in the UK believe more needs to be done to tackle poverty. This Bible study resource aims to explore how Scripture speaks to the issues of poverty, power, and justice, encouraging believers to consider how God calls us to respond to these challenges in our communities and the world.

Through this study, we will reflect on God's heart for the poor, the role of power, and the responsibility of the Church in advocating for the dignity and well-being of all. Together, we can learn from Scripture how to work for lasting change in the fight against poverty.

Selected Bible Passages

Isaiah 58:6-12 NRSV

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator^[b] shall go before you;
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
¹¹ The LORD will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.
¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

James 2:1-7 NRSV

My brothers and sisters, do not claim the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory while showing partiality. 2 For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, 3 and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here in a good place, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonoured the poor person. Is it not the rich who oppress

you? Is it not they who drag you into the courts? 7 Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

Luke 4:16-21

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Discussion Questions

Facilitators, use these questions to guide your group through the study of these Bible passages, helping participants to reflect on the issues of poverty and power in both the biblical text and today's world.

- 1. Who has the power in this Bible passage?**
 - Consider the individuals or groups with authority or influence in the story. How do they use their power?
- 2. What happens to them?**
 - Do those in power act justly, or do they exploit their power? What are the consequences of their actions?
- 3. Who are the poor or powerless in the passage?**
 - Identify the marginalised, oppressed, or vulnerable individuals or groups. How are they treated?
- 4. What happens to them?**
 - Do they experience justice, liberation, or further oppression? How is their situation resolved?
- 5. Whose side is God on?**
 - Consider God's stance in the passage. Does God advocate for the poor or marginalised? How is this expressed?
- 6. Why are things the way they are in this passage—and who is responsible?**
 - Reflect on the systems or individuals that contribute to the injustice or poverty described. Who bears responsibility for the situation?
- 7. Whose voices do we hear in the passage?**
 - Who speaks, and whose perspectives are represented?

8. **Which voices are excluded?**
 - Are there any silent or marginalised voices in the story that are not heard? Why might their perspective be important?
 9. **Who were the original audience or readers for the passage?**
 - Reflect on the historical and cultural context of the passage. How would the original readers have understood it?
 10. **What kind of world did they live in?**
 - Consider the social, economic, and political realities of the time. How did these factors shape the experiences of the people in the passage?
 11. **How should our church respond?**
 - What role can the church play in addressing poverty and injustice? How can your congregation be part of creating lasting change?
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Application Questions

14. **In our world today, which people might have experiences similar to those described in the passage?**
 - Make connections between the experiences of the poor or powerless in the Bible and those facing similar struggles today.
 15. **What steps can we take as a community to listen to the voices of those with lived experience of poverty?**
 - Consider practical ways to elevate the voices of those most affected by poverty in your church or local community.
 - How should I respond?
 16. **What systems or policies in our society contribute to poverty, and how can we challenge them?**
 - Identify the systemic issues that perpetuate poverty. How can we work together to change these systems?
 17. **How can we demonstrate God's justice and compassion in our everyday lives?**
 - Think about how you can live out your faith through acts of justice, mercy, and advocacy for the poor.
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Notes for the Bible Study Facilitator

- **Preparation:** Before leading the study, read through the selected passages and reflect on the questions yourself. Familiarise yourself with the context of the passages and consider any additional insights or resources you might want to bring in.
- **Facilitation Tips:** Encourage open and honest discussion. Allow space for participants to share personal stories or reflections, and

be sensitive to different perspectives and experiences, especially when discussing poverty and injustice.

- **Group Dynamics:** Ensure that all voices are heard during the discussion, including those who may feel less confident speaking up. You may want to divide into smaller groups for certain questions and then come back together for sharing.
- **Follow-Up:** Encourage participants to take practical steps after the study, whether through individual action or collective church efforts. Challenge Poverty Week provides an excellent opportunity to connect Bible study reflections with real-world advocacy.

Scripture from the Margins: [Click here](#)

Politics in the Pulpit CPW24 Episode: [Click here](#)