



I. The Income Inequality Problem

- A. Income inequality refers to how _____ income (wealth) is distributed throughout a population.
- B. According to the United Nations, each day 25,000 people - including more than 10,000 children - die from _____ and related causes.
- C. When the rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer, it leads people to fall into despair and become _____.

II. The Debate

- A. Some Christians believe that the _____ needs to enact policies to help income inequality.
- B. Some Christians believe that the _____ market, without government intervention, will solve this problem.

III. Scripture and UMC Stance

- A. Income inequality is exacerbated by what Jesus refers to as the deceitfulness of _____.
- B. Some people make _____ for not helping the poor and say “There is nothing we can do about poverty, and the poor will always be there, so why bother?”
- C. The Bible speaks frequently about the responsibility of the _____ towards the poor.
- C. The UMC social _____ say “we decry the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the concentration of wealth in the hands of ever-smaller percentages of the global population.”

IV. Moving Forward

- A. As individuals, it is clear from scripture that we need to share our _____ with the poor.
- B. Our nation is _____ generous and consumed with consuming.
- C. If we want to continue to be a great nation and impact the world, we cannot let our _____ go out

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *January 13-18, 2025*

INTRODUCTION

Income inequality is the uneven distribution of income among individuals, groups, or populations. It's a major factor in social stratification and social class. In the United States, the income gap between the rich and everyone else has been growing markedly, by every major statistical measure, for more than 30 years. So what does Scripture say about this issue?

Monday: Matthew 25:34-40

In Jesus' story, both those welcomed and the ones turned away were surprised. We're one human family—and people treated unjustly, or facing poverty and illness, are “us,” not “them.” Jesus said in the end we are all his brothers and sisters; and we are all in some type of need. In what ways can you sense God reshaping your attitudes toward “the least of these” in your community and world?

Tuesday: Luke 12:15-21

Jesus warned us to “be on your guard against all kinds of greed.” What different kinds of greed have you experienced? How can you assess whether you are getting your sense of meaning and value from material things? How do you define “success”? How easy or hard do you find it to accept Jesus' teaching that “life does not consist in an abundance of possessions”?

Wednesday: Matthew 25:14-23

Our culture tends to teach us to think, “I earned all this money and these possessions, so I can do anything I want with them.” Jesus' story suggested that God has asked us to care for some of what God truly owns (not us) (*see also Deuteronomy 8:12-18*). How easy or hard do you find it to make the inner shift from “I OWN all this” to “I'm a steward to whom God has entrusted these things to use for God's purposes”? How can faithful stewardship produce joy?

Thursday: Mark 12:41-44

Jesus said that most people gave out of their wealth - their extra - but the poor widow gave out of her poverty and put in everything; all she had to live on. Are you a percentage giver or dollar amount giver? Based upon this passage what do you think God is more concerned with?

Friday: Malachi 3:7-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7

What choices are you currently making with respect to your giving? What changes, if any, do you believe God is calling you to make in your giving patterns? Make plans to carry out any changes you believe God wants you to make.

MOVING FORWARD

Solutions to income inequality vary and they are frequently debated. Although there are no simple solutions, scripture is clear that income inequality is exacerbated by what Jesus refers to as the deceitfulness of riches. And scripture is also clear that those with excess resources need to share with the poor. And as the richest nation on earth, the United States needs to be a light to the world with this problem. What is one small step you can do this week to help someone in need?

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) unevenly, B) hunger, C) hopeless. IIA) government, IIB) free. IIIA) riches, B) excuses, C) rich, D) principals. IVA) resources, B) both, C) light.