



WEDNESDAY

THE POOR

BY SEAN & BECKY COX
(OUR MISSIONARIES TO ETHIOPIA)

One thing I've pursued in life is an abiding friendship with God; to know Him on a deep and intimate level. I often turn to Job to study the life of a man who was not only esteemed by God, but who really knew God and had a deep friendship with Him.

Job 29:4 reads "Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God's intimate friendship blessed my house". I believe there exists a connection between this friendship and Job's actions described in verses 12-16. "Because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him. The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger." Could this be why Job knew God and had an intimate friendship with Him?

When we really truly know someone is when we get to the deepest level of friendship. In Jeremiah 22:16, God says that defending the poor and needy is knowing Him. Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision, prayed that God would break his heart for the things which break God's heart. When our hearts break for the least of these, for the plight of the poor and needy and oppressed, we know God intimately. The Bible is full of passages which describe our Lord's heart for the poor; His desire for justice and compassion for them; His great love for those who are shown little or no love at all in this harsh world.

And He is a God of active love and asks us to put our own love into action as well. 1 John 3:16-18, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought also to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." Jesus gave us several examples of active love for the least of these in Matthew 25:35-36.

Caring for the poor is love in action and this obedience draws us closer to God's heart; we live in Him and He in us (1 John 3:24). Jesus Christ alive inside of us, our hearts bound to Him with a bond as thick as blood; there is no deeper, more intimate friendship than this.

My prayer is to continually delve the depths and riches of an intimate relationship with God. Actively caring for the poor is a doorway into the heart of God. Obedience is the key.

Isaiah 1:17 "Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow."