

Enough but unequally distributed

God has created a fertile world rich in minerals and all the other materials we need for life - that is wonderful. There is enough for everyone, but it is not equally shared. Some people have far more than they need and others do not have enough. It isn't fair. Human greed means that people who have want more and stockpile goods, creating wealth. But having more doesn't necessarily make them happier. They worry about the things they have and about getting more possessions and more money. The things they have rapidly get out of date and they need to by the most up to date and superior goods. Then they worry about keeping what they have and increasing it.

Sometimes debt, wars, illness or natural disasters like drought, earthquake and flood cause people to become poor. Wars can mean that people lose their homes and all their belongings as happened to many of the people who have had to leave their homes in Syria - they leave with nothing and have to start again. Poor people worry about their children's health or where the next meal will come from, or where they can find water or shelter. Everyone seems to worry, but worrying doesn't help it is more likely to make people unwell or awkward with each other.

Be concerned about the kingdom of God

Jesus knew the answer for people who worry - be concerned about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is God's rule and reign on earth. We should be concerned that God rules and reigns in our lives and that he rules and reigns on the earth. So what might that mean on Harvest Sunday for us?

1. Share

First of all, God wants everyone to have enough food to eat and clothes to wear. That means that those who have too much will have to share more with those who don't have enough. Instead of worrying they must do something and they must do it in ways which please God.

Putting God's kingdom first includes doing what we can to make sure that everyone has a fair share of what God has provided - enough food, clean water, clothes, a home. For those who live in the rich part of the world, God's way is for us to share more of what we have rather than worry about having more for ourselves; to be willing to have less so that others can have more, so that all can have enough. Because we live in a rich country it is easy to think that there are no poor people here and when a problem is far away from us it is easy to think that there is nothing we can do about it. There are poor people in our country, many people living on very little and living in terrible conditions. And over the past six months many more people are struggling to provide for their families and worrying about keeping their homes. We are supporting Jimmy's night shelter and a local food bank because that helps people in our community who have very little and very little dignity. The night shelter makes a difference to people's lives. It does what it can to help. The Food Banks make the difference between going without and having just enough

2. Do what we can

Being concerned for God's kingdom is very practical. We can do things to make a difference.

For example

Jane was asked to go to a special disco. 'I've got nothing to wear' she said I will have to buy some more clothes.' But she had a cupboard full of clothes. Surely there must be something there that she could wear? She found a top that she had forgotten was in the cupboard and wore it with the trousers she had been given for her birthday. The money she was going to spend on disco clothes she sent to an aid agency. The agency used the money to help provide a water supply in a village in Kenya where the land was dry. The villagers were then able to water their crops. The crops grew and the food production improved. Then the people of the village had enough to eat.

The Jennings family decided that they would buy fairly traded goods whenever possible. They knew that some people work very hard to produce food, clothing and other goods for us but

get paid very little for doing so. Sometimes they do not have enough food and clothes for themselves. Like the people who make trainers for the western fashion market. They get a few pence for doing it and the trainers are sold for £80.00 or more per pair. (Imagine what it must be like producing food and goods for other people when you are hungry and have no shoes). The Jennings family learned that goods bearing the fair trade mark come from places that treat their workers well. The workers earn enough money to buy food for their own families. So when they go shopping the Jennings family look for goods with the fair trade mark *show examples*. They also joined a campaign to encourage their supermarket (and others) to ensure that their food suppliers pay their workers fairly so that everyone can have enough to eat.

John decided to give up chocolate, sweets, biscuit and cake during lent. He put the money he would have spent on them in a jar and at Easter was able to give enough money to Mary's meals to provide a hot meal every day for a year for two children (£12.20 per child)

Conclusion

God is faithful and provides for us all, but some people have more than their fair share of what is provided. We can help to make a difference so that everyone has a fair share and can enjoy God's generous provision. To do that we have to stop worrying about our possessions and focus on God's kingdom, doing things his way. That includes sharing what we can and not using more than our share of the resources that God provides.