

God's Heart For The Poor, pt.5
What Can We Do?

Review

Data Fact Sheet

Free Lunch statistics in BISD

Brazosport ISD	
School	%
Beutel Elem (LJ)	25.05%
Brannen Elem (LJ)	34.35%
Brazosport HS (F)	66.70%
Brazoswood HS	28.04%
Clute Inter	65.59%
Ney Elem (LJ)	48.28%
Freeport Inter	76.42%
Polk Elem (R)	58.94%
Griffith Elem (C)	76.03%
Long Elem (F)	86.99%
Lake Jackson Inter	25.61%
Fleming Elem (F)	97.99%
Roberts Elem (LJ)	48.08%
Lanier MS (F)	86.21%
Rasco MS (LJ)	27.69%
Austin Elem (JC)	58.63%
Ogg Elem (C)	84.03%
Velasco Elem (F)	90.35%
Alternative	55.84%
Totals	53.41%

Breaking it down per elementary schools in each city:

- LJ - over 36%
- Clute/Richwood - 73+%
- F'port - 90+%

Top Three greatest needs in Brazoria County – United Way 2003 Community Assessment Booklet

What is God calling you to do?

–John 17.4 – I brought you glory Father by doing the things you wanted me to do.

–John 4.34 – My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish His work.

–John 5.19 – The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing,

–Acts 10.38 – Jesus went around doing good

–Matt.25.31–46 – Parable of the Sheep & Goats

A. Change your attitude toward the poor

- a. The greatest opportunity for transforming the nations of the earth is to reach the poor...essentially this is reaching children.
- b. Respect & dignity...they are Jesus. How would you treat Jesus? This is especially important for members w/in our church. It is such a difficult thing to ask for financial help.

Almost homeless, but not there yet -

It's 3 AM and your mind and body tell you you're hungry and a lot of places in your body

Hurt - so much so you can't get to sleep. You get up and check the kitchen shelves and

the medicine cabinet to see if the Lord has miraculously put some food in the kitchen and

some of your medicine scripts have been filled. Neither has happened. It's the middle of

the month and you know you don't have to check your pockets or wallet again - you

already know there's no money in your pockets. Maybe the wallet - but no it's empty

too. At the beginning of the month you paid as much as you could, but the ones that

didn't get paid or only got some were calling you last week looking for payments.

Yesterday the phone was cut off so at least your creditors can't reach you by phone.

After you paid what you could on your bills, you found too much month left and no more money to put towards any of the remaining bills. You've spent all you had, and you really tried to spread the money to cover everything, but the needs for medicine, and gas and food are just too much for what little you had left. Now you're completely broke and you pray someone will be touched by God to share some money or food with you so that you don't have to ask for help. Even if you ask for help, you really want the Lord to move on someone to open their eyes and minds to the needs that you have got. And you know you're not alone in terms of being in need. That thought doesn't lead you to any peace and you wish you could take care of your own needs, but that doesn't seem to be happening.

You're broke, depressed, your body is in pain, and your last bit of self respect is gone.

What will you do? Where do you turn outside of asking the Lord for help? You hope He is listening and you wonder why He seems to have overlooked you and your hurt

i.

- c. Quit making assumptions – the reason they're poor is b/c of laziness or some addiction...many times it's b/c a relationship went bad or a health crises or small children.
2/3 of poor are either children or the elderly.
- d. Don't be overwhelmed – do what you can. Jesus ministered and then he moved on. He could've stayed at one place, but he had to accomplish His Father's desires. You can't fix every problem, but you can always demonstrate God's love

B. Be An Advocate for Invisible People

- a. Pray for them
- b. As you listen to the news, & read the paper listen to how things impact the poor.
- c. Do Prov.31.8f.

C. Get out of debt and change the practices that got you there. Free up resources to spend on others. Luke 16.9

D. Reach out to those in your circle of influence, i.e., Family first, sick, elderly, nursing home residents, prisoner, children in need, immigrant...some of you have had to step back from ministry commitments over the years b/c you need to devote time to a sick or elderly family member and the Lord is pleased with you. You did the work of the Lord.

What Can We Do As A Church?

- A. Reach out to the household of faith – family first, household of faith second, the world third (Gal.6.10) It is so hard for anyone to ask for help. We need to be sensitive and compassionate.
- B. Participate in the things the church is involved in. If you're a part of this body, then you need to engage (at some level) in those things that we have prioritized as a body. (Acts 2.45; 4.32–35). No Lone Ranger mentality. Express your interest by using the Response Card.
 - a. Children & Youth Ministry – “the least of these” include our children.
 - b. Helping Hands
 - c. River of Hope Food of the Month
 - d. River of Hope Ministry
 - e. Membership Assistance Ministry
 - f. Youth Missions Week
 - g. Children's Missions Week
 - h. The Food Basket
 - i. Pregnancy Help Center
 - j. Literacy School in India
 - k. Family Life Adoption Ministry
 - l. Epiphany
- C. Place a higher value on children (18 & under)
 - a. Internally – prayer & volunteers; resourcing; be in prayer for the Children's Minister Search Committee. We're raising soldiers to advance the Kingdom of God.
 - b. Externally – This is not only the harvest field, but also the training & sending ground.

D. Get out of debt! Praying and asking God why doesn't he bring transformation to America...impression that God has given American Christians & American churches the opportunity to be a part of His transformational work around the earth by providing financial resources to support and extend these efforts. Even Jesus had people who financially supported his ministry (Luke 8.3). By simply tithing, we will have our building paid off in less than 4 years.

E. Specific activities

- a. Theonecampaign.org
- b. Data.org
- c. Viva.org
- d. Beahero.org
- e. Habitat for Humanity
- f. Assist poor Israelis - ifcj.org
- g. Compassion Int'l - compassion.com
- h. Brazosport Cares - 239-1225

Video - Rich/Poor

Jesus said I didn't come to be served, but to serve. God's calling us to serve "the least of these."

Are you more focused and desirous of living the American dream or fulfilling God's destiny?