

*Devotional of the Month*

# Human Trafficking



## God's Heart for Justice

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The world seems like a mess these days. At times it feels like we can turn in any direction and see brokenness and despair. Lives across the globe have been impacted physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and politically in these troublesome times. We often experience hurt in general society, but step inside the crowded margins for just a moment and what you will witness is beyond dreadful.

Statistics show incidents and severity increase every day as vulnerable people are subject to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Human beings are being illegally traded and controlled. Data from A21.org reveals it affects 5.4 out of every 1,000 people in the world. The victims are mostly women, but men and children are also among those suffering. Human trafficking is a \$150 billion dollar industry fed by force, fraud, and coercion. The reality of these stats makes this world appear as if it has been shaken beyond repair.

How easy it is to lose heart until we are reminded of verses like Psalm 11:3-4 which state, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do? The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them." Later verse 7 says, "For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face."



*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."*

*~ Ezekiel 36:26*

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The righteous and the upright are being called upon today to bring hope, healing, and restoration. As the foundations are being destroyed and God's eyes are examining everyone on earth, the question is raised, "...**what can the righteous do?**"

Stop and think about that question for a moment. It is an important one to ponder because indeed, this is a difficult time in our broken world with many hurting people. Remember Genesis 1:26-28 which is the foundation for justice. It says every human being is made in the image of God. As God's children, we bear a calling to enter into the hurt and pain of others and work towards redemption, freedom, and justice. How we choose to navigate upsetting seasons will resound into eternity. We cannot turn a blind eye to the pain of this world. We can do something! Titus chapter 3 encourages believers to be ready for every good work. We are called to do things that are excellent and profitable for people so that we may help in cases of urgent need. The time is now! May we be ready and available to seek out the despairing and shine a beacon of light in dark times.

A few years ago, my husband and I had the opportunity to pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Israel. One cold and rainy morning, we visited a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee. The Bible talks about this spot in Matthew chapter 5 as the place where Jesus gives his longest recorded teaching, "The Sermon on the Mount." As we walked through the gardens of this sacred spot, I read the eight beatitudes as described in verses 3-11. It was here where I was reminded that Jesus dwells in the midst of the margins.

**What can the righteous do?** We can look for Jesus. **Where are we going to find him?** We can venture into the less comfortable margins. It is there where we can find him working in those he



calls "**blessed**": the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those starving for spiritual nourishment, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted.

It is in the margins where we can join Him in the work as a rescuer and advocate for those who are weak. Let us commit to pray for victims, survivors, prevention workers, law enforcement, news reporters, legislators, and even the criminals themselves. May we be found among the hurting, for this is the certainty you are next to Jesus. Carry his gospel into the darkness and hold onto the hope that "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more" (Revelation 21:4).

This is what redemption looks like...**blessed in Christ Jesus.**

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me."*

MATTHEW 5:3-11