

Restoring Dignity: A call to Care for Those who Struggle

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS: BIG AND THE BIBLICAL CALL TO JUSTICE

Restoring Dignity: God's Call to Care for Those Who Struggle

Theme: Voices from the Margins:
BIG and the Biblical Call to Justice

Scripture Readings: Luke 4:16–21 • Genesis 1:26–27

Philiswa Gwazela

As an unemployed woman,
I struggle to make ends
meet. I depend on others
to survive.
I want to live with dignity.

**“EVERY PERSON
IS CREATED
IN THE IMAGE
OF GOD”**
Genesis 1:26–27

Nadine Abrahams

With no stable income,
I worry every day about
my family's future.
I want the chance
to stand on my own.

A BASIC INCOME GRANT AFFIRMS HUMAN DIGNITY.
It reduces poverty. | It restores hope. | It enables independence.
It says: YOU MATTER. YOU BELONG. YOU HAVE DIGNITY.

- PROVIDES BASIC SECURITY
- REDUCES DEPENDENCE & VULNERABILITY
- EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO SEEK WORK & LEARN
- ENABLES FULL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY
- AFFIRMS THAT THEIR LIVES MATTER

**“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”**
Micah 6:8

GRAPE **STAND FOR JUSTICE.** **World Commission** **Economic Policy**

OPENING PRAYER



1. Listening to the Word...

Luke 4:16–21

▶¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:



▶¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the
poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for
the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the
blind,
to set the oppressed free,



▶¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

▶²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.



▶²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Genesis 1:26-27

- ▶²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”



▶²⁷ So God created mankind in
God's own image,
in the image of God God
created them;
male and female God
created them.



2. Listening to the Context



► Today we will hear the stories of two women who will share their lived realities with us...

► As they speak, listen for:

- *What challenges do they face?*
- *How does poverty affect their sense of dignity and independence?*
- *What hopes do they have for themselves and their families?*
- *Where do we hear echoes of God's concern for the poor and vulnerable?*



3. Seeing Through the Eyes of Faith...

► After the testimonies, we may reflect on the following questions:

► **Observation**

1. What touched or surprised you in these stories?

2. What forms of suffering or exclusion did you hear?

► Interpretation

3. In Luke 4, Jesus says He came to bring good news to the poor. *What might “good news” mean for people struggling with unemployment today?*
4. *How does dependence on others affect a person’s dignity and sense of worth?*

► Theological Reflection

5. *What does it mean that every person is created in the image of God?*
6. *Can a society honour the image of God while allowing people to go hungry, remain unemployed, or live without basic means of survival?*



4. Biblical Reflection

- 
- ▶ The Bible consistently teaches that God hears the cry of those who suffer.
 - ▶ **The issue is not simply charity. It is dignity.**
 - ▶ When God liberated Israel from slavery, God restored their humanity.
 - ▶ When Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, and welcomed the excluded, He restored dignity.
 - ▶ Throughout Scripture, **justice means ensuring that people can live as full human beings created in God's image.**

- 
- ▶ The poor are not objects of pity. They are bearers of God's image.
 - ▶ The unemployed are not failures. Their worth comes from God, not from a payslip.
 - ▶ The question for the Church is not merely:
“How do we help the poor?”
 - ▶ But rather:
“How do we build a society where all people can live with dignity?”



5. Connecting with the Basic Income Grant

- 
- ▶ A Basic Income Grant is often discussed in economic and political terms.
 - ▶ But for Christians, it is also a **theological question**.
 - ▶ If every person bears God's image, then every person deserves the opportunity to live with dignity.

▶ A Basic Income Grant cannot solve every social problem.

▶ However, it can:

- Reduce extreme poverty.
- Provide a basic level of security.
- Reduce dependence and vulnerability.
- Enable people to seek work, care for families, and participate more fully in society.
- Affirm that their lives matter.

- 
- ▶ The question is not only:
“Can we afford a Basic Income Grant?”
 - ▶ But also:
“Can we afford the loss of human dignity that comes when people are left without the means to survive?”



6. Hearing God's Call

▶ **Micah 6:8**

▶ “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

▶ **Questions:**

- *What is God calling us to do?*
- *How can churches become places that affirm dignity rather than deepen dependence?*
- *How can Christians advocate for policies that protect the vulnerable?*



Conclusion

- 
- ▶ **Poverty is not merely a lack of money.**
 - ▶ **It is often the loss of dignity, opportunity, and hope.**
 - ▶ The Gospel invites us to see every person as God sees them: precious, valued, and worthy of dignity.
 - ▶ Jesus announced good news to the poor because God's Kingdom is a place where no one is forgotten.



► As followers of Christ, we are called not only to show compassion but also to seek justice; not only to relieve suffering but also to transform the conditions that cause it.

► May we hear the voices from the margins and respond with faith, courage, and action.