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Sermon Notes

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## **Visions from Isaiah on Ministry of Mercy**

### **Selected Passages in Isaiah**

This will be my final message in Isaiah for a while... my next sermon will be from the Gospel of Matthew, as I return to a series I was preaching in that book back in spring of 2007.

For my final message in Isaiah, I want to take a more topical approach and preach something that's been on my heart for a while from the book of Isaiah—the issue of ministry to the poor and needy here in Durham and around the world.

We just returned from a week of ministry in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere—Haiti. The scenes of degradation and poverty that are commonplace in that country are shocking and heartbreaking

There is the unforgettable City Soleil in Port Au Prince, the capital of Haiti. City Soleil is a filthy city of tents and other temporary structures, where children run around in minimal clothing and drink muddy puddle water, where adults stand around all day with nothing productive to do, where poverty sits like a 900 pound gorilla on a city unable to rise... where people created in the image of God live at the lowest level of existence imaginable... far from the glory and honor God originally intended for beings created in His image.

As I come back to Durham to preach, my heart is moved to preach a powerful theme from the visions of Isaiah the prophet... a prophetic word falling like a coal from the altar, having touched Isaiah's lips, burned in his heart... written with the pen... read by our eyes, and applied to our sinful hearts by the same Holy Spirit that first moved the prophet to write

I believe God is calling this church to embrace the poor and needy of Durham and of the ends of the earth with a commitment that we have never seen before

***Isaiah 58:10 if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.***

I believe that if we do this, God will bless our church like never before... and more than that, we will ourselves be a blessing to this world like Christ was when He entered:

**2 Corinthians 8:9** *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*

## I. Isaiah's Heart for the Poor

### A. Isaiah's Message a Burning Coal from the Altar

1. He called on Judah and Jerusalem to deal honestly with their sin
2. they were saturated in religiosity—Isaiah 1

**Isaiah 1:13** *Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies.*

3. but God was very displeased with their hearts... with their hypocrisy
4. also God was very displeased with their lack of compassion on the poor and needy
5. through Isaiah the prophet, God called on Israel to repent

**Isaiah 1:16-17** *wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, <sup>17</sup> learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.*

- a. These staccato commands from God speak of a life lived energetically for the poor and needy
- b. "Seek justice" = be certain that the weakest members of society are being fairly and justly treated
- c. "encourage the oppressed" = find people that are crushed as if by a yoke of slavery, and encourage them by releasing them from the crushing burden that oppresses them
- d. "defend the cause of the fatherless" = be certain that the weakest most defenseless members of society—orphans—have their needs met
- e. "Plead the case of the widow" = stand in the courtrooms and in the halls of power and act as an advocate for their causes as if they were your own; perhaps some powerful man has robbed them of their inheritance, the portion of the Promised land that was allotted to them by the Lord in the time of Joshua

### B. Fighting the Corruption of Wicked Rulers

***Isaiah 1:23 Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.***

1. consistently Isaiah preached against these men
2. they were the ones corrupting society such that widows, orphans, and the otherwise weak and needy were being defrauded
3. so there were multiple blasts from his clear trumpet against them

***Isaiah 3:14-15 The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. <sup>15</sup> What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.***

- a. This included unjust judges who used their positions to rob the poor and needy and favor the rich
- b. This included kings and princes who plundered houses and lands from the poor... a great example of this was King Ahab in Elijah's day who coveted Naboth's vineyard and, prompted by his wicked wife Queen Jezebel orchestrated Naboth's death by using false witnesses against him
4. so Isaiah raises his trumpet to his lips and blasts out a warning against these unjust leaders

***Isaiah 10:1-3 Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, <sup>2</sup> to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. <sup>3</sup> What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?***

C. Yet... Even the Poor and Needy are Sinners in Need of Salvation

1. Isaiah had no romantic view of the poor and needy... they were every bit as sinful as their rich oppressors
2. one of the greatest obstacles against consistent, sacrificial ministry for the poor is how sinful they are...
3. Isaiah never denied this, but addressed it fully

***Isaiah 9:17 Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks vileness. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.***

4. it is not the beggars who go to heaven but the spiritual beggars! Those who know that spiritually they have no hope
5. thus even the most wretched and oppressed people are still sinners in need of a Savior

D. Christ the Coming King: The Only Ultimate Answer to Poverty

***Isaiah 11:4 with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.***

1. Christ comes to establish an eternal kingdom of righteousness
2. Christ comes to judge oppressors
3. Christ comes to be refuge for the poor and needy against their oppressors

***Isaiah 25:4-5 You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall <sup>5</sup> and like the heat of the desert.***

4. Christ comes to save sinners... including those among the poor and needy
5. Christ's coming reign is the only answer to all of this... both for the rich oppressor and for the poor and downtrodden
6. later chapters speak of the vindication of the poor and needy... and humbling of the arrogant unbelieving rich

***Isaiah 26:5-6 He humbles those who dwell on high, he lays the lofty city low; he levels it to the ground and casts it down to the dust. <sup>6</sup> Feet trample it down-- the feet of the oppressed, the footsteps of the poor.***

***Isaiah 29:19 Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.***

7. The Beginning of Christ's Ministry: His Sermon in Nazareth

***Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion***

- a. From the very beginning of Christ's ministry, Christ's desire to lift up the poor and needy was clear
- b. Christ came to the weakest, the most rejected, the most despised people
- c. They were the ones who received Him most readily, most eagerly
- d. That's not to say that Christ did not care for the wealthy... His encounter with the rich young ruler proves that Christ had a saving desire toward rich people as well as poor
- e. However, it is clear that Christ saw his mission in terms of lifting the poor and needy and saving them... he came to preach good news to the poor

Of all the passages in the magnificent book of Isaiah on the poor and needy, however, there is one in particular that powerfully speaks to me of our obligation to a consistent ministry of mercy...

Isaiah 58

## II. The Call of the Lord: Spend Yourself on Behalf of the Needy

### A. Context: Addressing Israel's Faulty Religiosity

- 1. Isaiah captures their attitude powerfully

***Isaiah 58:1-5 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins. <sup>2</sup> For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them. <sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high. <sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?"***

- 2. the people seem to think their fasting puts God in a debtor's position

- a. as though God owes them something for doing it

***vs. 3 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'***

b. as though their single day of fasting obligates God to answer from on high and do whatever they want Him to do

c. but they fast in the midst of their rebellion and sins: verse 1

**vs. 1 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins.**

d. their eagerness to know God's ways is merely a façade... they claim to know God but by their lives they deny Him

**vs. 2 For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.**

e. they seem to want God to draw near to them, but their sins have driven Him far away

3. but even the fasting itself is polluted by their sinfulness

**vs. 3-4 "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. <sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.**

a. The deprivation of food has left them hungry and snarling like junk yard dogs that haven't fed in a day

b. They quarrel with each other and have arguments... even fistfights

c. Sometimes fasting can uncover the greatest wickedness in man's heart... the hypocrisy

Illus. Islam has a whole month of fasting—Ramadan—during which no food can be consumed from sunrise to sunset; yet amazingly, more food is consumed in that month than any other month in the Islamic calendar!!

d. God rejects this fast entirely

**Vs. 4 You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.**

B. Deeper Issue: Exploitation of the Poor

**Vs. 3 "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.**

1. yet if we look closer, it's not just the irritability of the fasting men... not just their bickering and quarrelling with each other... not even just their fistfights that so appalls Almighty God

2. far worse in His eyes is this: their exploitation of the poor workers whose labor enriched them
3. these poverty stricken workers could be poor Jews whose adverse circumstances forced them to abandon their ancestral farmlands and sell themselves into bondage to pay their debts
4. the Law of Moses provided for a cyclical pattern of debt absolution and for the emancipation of all Jewish servants
5. yet the prophet Jeremiah speak in his day of how wealthy Jews were refusing to allow their fellow Jews who were slaves to go free

### C. Isaiah's Call: A True Fast of Ministry to the Poor

***Isaiah 58:6-10 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? <sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, <sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.***

1. God states what truly moves Him... what kind of religious action He desires
2. He calls it "the kind of fasting I have chosen"
3. look at what's listed
  - a. to loose the chains of injustice
  - b. to untie the cords of the yoke
  - c. to set the oppressed free
  - d. to break every yoke

all of these refer to unjust laws and legal circumstances that are binding the poor so they can't escape their oppressive circumstances

- e. to share your food with the hungry
- f. to provide the poor wanderer with shelter

g. to clothe the naked

this refers to basic ministry of mercy to the poor and needy... caring for those who have no food, clothing and shelter

h. and not turn away from your own flesh

and God intended this ministry to go on not just to native Jews, but to all human beings, no matter what their racial backgrounds

the NIV adds “and blood”... blood generally refers to race

but the Hebrew just says “flesh”... **and not turn away from your own flesh**

the whole human race has basic physical needs in common... when you see someone hungry, naked, homeless... something should move in you to want to meet the need

***Isaiah 58:6-10 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? <sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. <sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, <sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.***

D. Key Phrase: Spend Yourself on Behalf of the Hungry

***Vs. 10 ...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry***

1. “spend yourself” is NIVs translation... it implies a painful sacrificial way of life... a way of life that pinches at your comfort zone, that changes you, that affects you
2. not a life given out of the extra, out of the surplus... a life that is difficult to live
3. other translations give a sense of the Hebrew phrase

<sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 58:10** And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul

<sup>NAU</sup> **Isaiah 58:10** And if you give yourself to the hungry And satisfy the desire of the afflicted

<sup>ESV</sup> **Isaiah 58:10** if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted

<sup>NKJ</sup> **Isaiah 58:10** *If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul*

<sup>RSV</sup> **Isaiah 58:10** if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted

4. all of these speak to the act of self-sacrifice

spend yourself = next step after deny yourself

***Matthew 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.***

To deny yourself is to say NO to selfishness, to selfish use of God's resources—your time, energy and money—lavishing it on yourself

Deny yourself is the start... take up your cross is reality (it will be painful)... follow me = SPEND YOURSELF on behalf of the poor and needy

Isaiah's verse speaks of a soul drawn out to the poor and needy

- a. Draw out your soul = be moved with compassion, feel inwardly what they are feeling
- b. Compassion is the emotional state most commonly displayed by Christ
- c. "heart went out" to the widow at Nain who was burying her only son

***Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."***

- d. Genuine ministry to the poor begins with SEEING the poor and needy... turning from your own busy lifestyle and stopping and looking, and allowing the scene to enter your heart

***Vs. 7 when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh***

- e. Next, the heart is drawn out to the needy... a heart moved with compassion
- f. Then God is calling on us to spend ourselves for the poor and needy... to give ourselves to them
- g. A costly lifestyle of inconvenience, of expense, of trouble and difficulty from getting involved in their sufferings

E. The Result of the True Fast: Glory!

***Isaiah 58:10-11 if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. <sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.***

1. your light will rise in the darkness... your night will become like noonday
  - a. you will know the true happiness of God's pure light shining in your souls
  - b. you will have a clarity and purpose in your life that you have never experienced before
  - c. you will know God... and you will know why God brought you here and what God wants you to do
2. the Lord will guide you always
3. the Lord will meet your needs
4. the Lord will strengthen your bodies
5. you will be fruitful—like a well-watered garden whose spring waters never fail

### III. Who Are We? Where Do We Live?

#### A. We Are an Urban Church

1. we worship every week adjacent to the poorest part of Durham... Northeast central Durham
  - a. here the standard of living is the lowest
  - b. here the crime rate is the highest
  - c. right near us, the gang activity is pronounced
  - d. here are single-parent homes, and drug deals and prostitution
2. now I can tell you, there is no poverty in Durham that even comes close to city Soleil in Port Au Prince Haiti
  - a. American poverty is nothing compared to that found in the third world countries of the world
  - b. The suffering of Darfur and of Bangladesh and of Haiti dwarfs that of Durham
  - c. Yet for all of that there is suffering and poverty here nonetheless

- d. Worst of all is how many of these people don't know Christ as their Savior!!

#### B. We Are a Commuter Church

1. hardly any of us live in this community
2. hardly any of us would choose to live in this community
3. hardly any of us have ever lived in any thing like this community
4. we are affluent, well-educated, unfamiliar with the kinds of struggles that characterize daily life in Northeast Central Durham
5. and the real issue is... it may be that we don't want that to change
6. we may want to keep the sufferings of these neighbors of ours at arm's length

#### C. We Are a Blessed Church

1. above all, we have been blessed with the gospel of Jesus Christ
2. our earthly wealth and education and security is as nothing compared to our heavenly wealth and wisdom and security
3. we have stood at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ and, weeping, have confessed our sins to Him
4. we have been cleansed by His blood, adopted into His family, given the downpayment of the Spirit
5. we have been well-trained biblically and know more of the Bible's truth than many of our neighbors... we have been completely and totally blessed, covered with the goodness of God

the call on us is clear:

SPEND YOURSELF ON BEHALF OF THE POOR AND NEEDY

### IV. A Call to Pray and Act

#### A. Present Your Heart to God

1. be honest that you struggle with the lifestyle change that genuinely spending yourself for the poor and needy would entail
2. ask the Lord who left His throne of wealth and glory to descend to a place of poverty... ask Him to work compassion for the needy in your heart

3. ask Him... sue Him for it... beg Him to work in you what is pleasing to Him

#### B. See the Needy

1. Isaiah speaks of this:

***Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh***

2. so often we desire to go through life willfully ignorant of the suffering around us...

3. beggars in street always try to catch your eye, get your attention... God wants us to be willing to look at the needy and see their misery

#### C. Start With Your Family

1. mercy must begin with the family

***1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.***

Tim Keller:

“Many a Christian family has found its primary mercy ministry in the care of disabled or elderly or chronically ill members. If a family has elderly or infirm parents, uncles and aunts, cousins and other relatives in need, it must not look elsewhere! Far too many evangelical Christians today hide themselves behind the high mobility and privatization of our society to screen themselves from duties of mercy to their kin.” [*Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road*, p. 126]

2. family as ministry base

Keller advocates also that the family can and should be our primary ministry base of operations toward the poor and needy:

He cites the example of Al and Laura Miller in Pemberton Township, New Jersey

On just Al’s salary as an equipment operator at a local steel plant, the Millers have taken some four dozen homeless into their modest home during the past two years; some are victims of fire, or have been evicted from their homes; some are recovering alcoholics or drug addicts; some are teenagers thrown out of their parents’ home at age eighteen

The Millers allow no one to stay longer than 90 days. All guests must abide by the Millers’ house rules (no drinking, no drugs, no beds left unmade, no curfews violated); and they must fill out a statement of goals through which they can move to financial self-sufficiency

This is a direct fulfillment of the hospitality envisioned in Isaiah

***Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh***

D. Extend to the Household of Believers: FBC

1. the next level of commitment a Christian should have is to the poor and needy within the church

***Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.***

***Acts 4:34-35 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales<sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.***

2. there are needy persons within the walls of this church... more than you might think
3. AND the more we see our urban ministry succeed in bringing people to faith in Christ, the more church members we'll have with genuine needs
4. be certain you give generously to the deacon's benevolence fund, an offering taken after every observance of the Lord's Supper
5. go beyond that... ask questions, listen, learn what the needs are right here at FBC

E. Extend to the Community

1. start with your own immediate neighborhood
2. see if there are any neighbors struggling with grief, loss, sickness, divorce, age, disability, personal problems
  - a. ask the Lord to help you meet the needs as He directs
  - b. ask Him also to give you opportunities to share the gospel as you do it
3. go beyond that to find out what's happening with our urban ministry... are there needs that you can help meet?
4. Keller: "Stop, look, and listen..."

"Do you really stop, look and listen in the middle of your church and neighborhood? If you do, you will notice a multitude of needs. There is a college student who had to drop out of school for lack of funds. Over here there are numbers of elderly folk without sufficient support from children, who need transportation, friendship, and other aid. Turn in another direction and listen hard. You will hear single parents, divorced and widowed people,

struggling financially and emotionally to be 'both mother and father' to children. 'They often don't seem all that poor and threadbare to the eye, but a sensitive ear will hear the anguish.' [Keller, p. 127]

### 5. Keller's practical ideas

... Do you have tool that others often do not have? Offer it to others. Go to the elderly couple on the corner and offer to till their garden this spring. Is there some kind of neighborhood social action you could render? For example, try taking an opinion poll about the heavy traffic on your street, and discuss what the neighbors could do about it together. Can you find some natural way to give gifts? Buy too many bedding plants or too many tickets to the big game. Make too much bread, or plant too many tomatoes in the garden. Then take the extras to your neighbors, to the folks at work, or to people in the church with whom you are trying to cultivate a friendship.

Is there some specific service you could render? You could offer the elderly lady on your block transportation to the market. You could offer free baby-sitting to a single parent. You could notice a neighbor starting to build a shed or doing some painting, and offer to help. Watch especially for crisis situations and be there to offer help.

Perhaps all of the above suggestions seem rather obvious. We do these things naturally to make friends. But keep in mind, most people only work to cultivate relationships with people they *like*, with people they enjoy being with. Christian ministers of mercy are unique in that they intentionally and systematically seek to build bridges with all the people around them at home, at work, and at church. They do this to discover needs and to create a climate in which others can share their weaknesses.

Page 129, *Ministries of Mercy, The Call of the Jericho Road*, by Timothy J. Keller

### F. Matthew Hodges' ideas for involvement in urban ministry

Applications for FBC Durham urban ministry [from Matthew Hodges]

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month after church from 12:30pm-1:00pm commit to pray for our outreach to the community.
2. During the greeting time welcome men and women who do not normally attend FBC. All you need to say is, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ welcome to FBC what is your name. How did you hear about FBC? Share how long you have attended FBC and thank them for coming.
3. At the end of BFL class, if you see an individual standing by themselves that does not normally attend go to the person and introduce your self. Ask the person if they are sitting with anyone in the service and if they are not, then welcome them to sit with you. Phil 2:4
4. If an individual ask you for any type of financial assistance direct them to the ministerial staff or a deacon and we will make that decision.

5. Meditate on the fact that we all were needy and poor spiritually and have been made rich through faith in Christ. 1 Peter 1:3-5
6. Men and women can walk the streets of Durham during the day to pray, pass out tracts and engage men and women in conversations that lead to the gospel.
7. When referring to the community let's say *the people* or *the men and women in our community* rather than "they" or "them". This terminology will help FBC members to not think they are better than men and women in the community.
8. BFL classes to commit to serve a meal and engage in conversation with the men and women at the Durham Rescue Mission men or women campus.
9. Pray about being a part of the 2009 summer mission trip to the community. (In the works)
10. All communities have been affected by sin, the degree of the sin problem has manifest itself differently. The answer to the problem of sin in the people who live in your community is the same answer to the problem of sin in the 27701 community. FBC may not be able to meet every physical need of the poor and needy, but we can be the heartbeat to meeting the spiritual needs in the community.
11. Talk to Matthew about serving on the Urban Ministry team.
12. Invite men and women from the community to come and worship at FBC. Let the men and women from the community decide if they are going to come. We cannot make the choice for anybody to come here to FBC.
13. Pray as we move forward ministering to the community **Proverbs 29:25** Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.
14. We need to look at the poor and needy in our community from a biblical worldview 1<sup>st</sup> and not from a "we don't connect" worldview. If the latter view is what we use then we will never minister to the community. Ask yourself, "Do I look at ministering to the poor and needy in our community from a biblical worldview?"