

# END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

1 NO POVERTY



*The poor you will always have with you...*

*Matthew 26:11*

**Poverty, in this goal, is specific. It talks about reducing the number of people in the world living on less than \$1.25 per day to zero by 2030, as well as a host of other measurements. It is about numbers, hard cash and economic deprivation, it may sound crude and inappropriately material, but we know it matters.**

It matters to Christians too. Christianity, from the creation of heaven and earth, through the incarnation, to the renewal of all things is a very material faith – stuff matters. Various attempts down the years have attempted to over-spiritualise life and faith, sometimes out of sympathy for the poor, but they ultimately fail. Poverty – hard, real, grinding poverty matters to God.

When the Bible talks about the poor, as it often does, it almost always means the materially poor. Occasional talk of the ‘poor in spirit’ should never blind us to that or cause us to re-interpret the whole. A whole host of verses from all over the Bible make this point. Suffice it to say, take the call to fight the injustice of material poverty out of the Bible and we are left with a text full of holes.

But one verse remains. A stark, seemingly irritatingly clear verse, made all the more so as it comes from the lips of Jesus himself and is repeated in three of the four gospels. A well-known and dangerous verse because it has the capacity to self-justify our ambivalence, to provide a God ordained reason for our negativity, our lack of action, and our disobedience. If ‘the poor will always be with us’ then Goal 1 is a non-starter. We can do our bit, but our ambition is invariably limited, our hopes diminished, our enthusiasm quashed, all on the say so of Jesus. But what if we have got it wrong, and this record of a conversation between Jesus and Judas is not the bold statement of absolute, inevitable, eternal truth that we so easily and conveniently take it for? What if Judas is being reminded that to engage in a specific act of worship need not get in the way of the ongoing requirement to serve the poor, who will always present a pressing claim to his attention? We are not Judas. We live in the first generation in history that has the capacity to eliminate extreme poverty. Between 1990 and 2015 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty, that is half of the total.

As Christians approach this goal, justification is hardly required. More encouragement is needed that it can be achieved and it is God’s heartfelt desire that poverty should be ended, now!

## GOAL 1

**By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty (people living on less than \$1.25 per day), making sure everyone has access to food, healthcare, education, shelter and clothing**





**BETWEEN 1990 AND 2015 1 BILLION PEOPLE  
HAVE BEEN LIFTED OUT OF EXTREME  
POVERTY, THAT IS HALF OF THE TOTAL**

## GROUP DISCUSSION

- What is your dream for children living in poverty?
- What Bible verses or stories immediately come to mind when you think of 'poverty'?
- Are you comfortable with the interpretation of Matthew 26:11 given here or do you think it means something different?
- Did you know 30 million children are growing up poor in the world's richest countries? What is your church doing to lift children out of poverty in your community?

## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

**Personal** – Sponsor a Compassion child, support their RESPOND Initiative or become a Prayer Partner.

**Local** – Develop a plan for your church to help support those living in poverty in your community.

**National** – Go and see a 'Compassion Experience' at various events across the country.

## GOAL 1 IN ACTION

Global poverty is a broad and complex issue. *Compassion* strives to impact Goal 1 – NO POVERTY – with a relentless passion to empower every child left vulnerable by poverty. Its approach to eradicate poverty is church based, child focused and Christ centred.

*Compassion* works in developing countries in partnership with local churches and connects children in critical need to a caring sponsor. It tackles the broader effects of poverty on a community through its RESPOND programme. *Compassion* empowers children to break free from poverty, by providing access to medical care, food and education. Its holistic approach tackles poverty in all forms including spiritual, physical, social and economic poverty. *Compassion's* long-term goal to eradicate poverty is reflected through its involvement from pre-natal care all the way through to leadership development with occupational training for young adults. This ensures that the most vulnerable children are supported from birth to adulthood.

[www.compassionuk.org](http://www.compassionuk.org)



**Jane Alam grew up in a slum community of 10,000 people.**

He became the first person from his community to go to school after he was sponsored through Compassion. Today, Jane is not only a Compassion graduate with a Masters degree, he works full-time for Compassion UK.

*Jane says, "I owe it to someone who had the courage to share my child profile, probably at a church event. I owe it to the person who spoke up on my behalf and encouraged a man called Tom to become my sponsor."*

