

## **Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?**

Mission Weekend

[Luke 7:18-23](#)

**1)** Dr. Brian Fikkert was our guest preacher on Sunday, as part of Mission Weekend. Brian is an economist and the author of “When Helping Hurts,” a book that has deeply shaped the direction and focus of Covenant’s Mission Committee over the last few years. Brian challenges us to answer the question, “why did Jesus come to Earth?” The way we answer this question, he asserts, impacts everything we understand and practice about mission. Even at the end of his ministry, John the Baptist was still asking this question, and sends his disciples to ask it of Jesus himself. Jesus’ answer serves as our scripture passage, Luke 7:18-23.

• **How would you answer the question, “why did Jesus come to Earth?”**

• **After reading the passage together, how is the last line, “preaching good news to the poor,” different from the other acts of Jesus in the list?**

**2)** The second question Brian challenges us to answer is, “what is poverty?” How we answer this question, Brian asserts, determines how we help people who are poor. When we define poverty simply as a “lack of resources,” we are treating the symptoms, not the underlying cause. Misdiagnosing poverty can end up doing the recipient of our help more harm than good.

• **How would you define poverty, and what has been your experience with it?**

• **If we ask the poor about their particular experience of poverty, why might they answer differently than simply a “lack of material items?”**

**3)** Created in the image of God, we are highly relational beings who are hard-wired to be connected to God, self, others, and nature. Because of this mind/body/soul connection, poverty is always more than just material; it is connected to the underlying brokenness of our human condition in a fallen world.

- If poverty therefore is rooted in broken relationships, how does “bringing good news to the poor” apply to all of us?
- We’re all broken and in need of restoration, and thank goodness that’s what Jesus’ kingdom is all about. How might this help you think differently about

poverty, and the idea of “walking alongside someone” who is suffering rather than helping in a merely transactional way?