



# WOMEN OF JUSTICE

A four-part Bible Study exploring how we can work to see God's Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.



POLICY, RESEARCH  
& SOCIAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT  
AUSTRALIA

**This four-part bible study explores how we can work to see God's Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.**

Produced for the Salvos Women Resource Manual 2019 (NSW/ACT Division), this study challenges us to look at our own lives and question how we can be more like Jesus.

Based upon the social justice principles\* of 'Including the Excluded', 'Challenging Harmful Cultural Practices', 'Confronting the Powerful', and 'Advocating for the Oppressed', each study uses the example of a Salvationist woman and the contribution she has made to the work of The Salvation Army, and to the advancement of God's Kingdom.

We hope this study will foster meaningful discussion and inspire women to live, love, and fight to see our communities changed and God's Kingdom come.



\* Principles developed by The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission in its resource, 'Jesus & Justice'. You can find this at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9)

# INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED



*This study explores the social justice principle of 'Including the excluded'. For a further look into how Jesus included the excluded, check out The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission's resource 'Jesus & Justice' at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9)*

## SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 8:1-3
- John 20:11-18
- Luke 18:15-17 (NIV)

## REFLECTION

When we look at Jesus' life, we see someone completely committed to bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. As Christians - followers of Jesus - we have decided to follow or imitate Jesus' example. Thus, God is calling us to join Him in working to bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

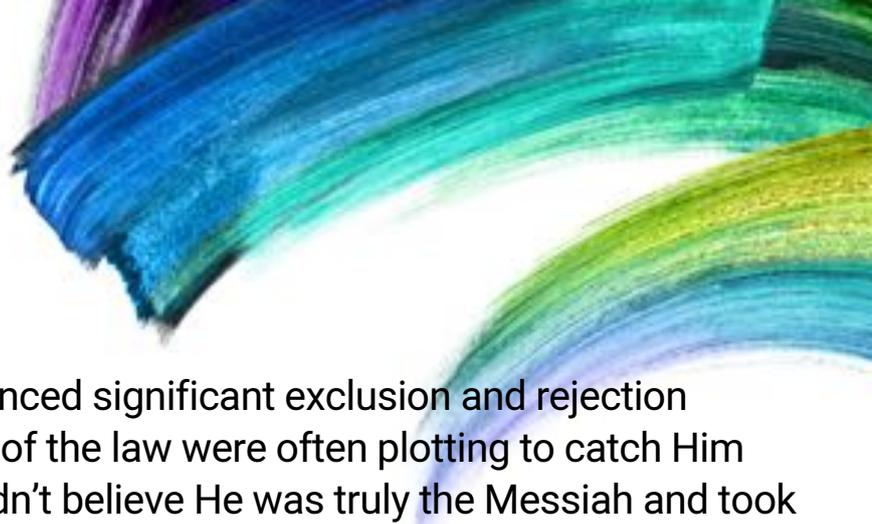
Our world can be an unkind place. Social systems exclude many from enjoying everyday activities that most of us take for granted. As Christians we are called to live, love, and fight alongside those who are excluded, following the example of Jesus. Throughout the Gospels we see numerous examples of Jesus doing just that – engaging with those who were deemed 'unclean' such as lepers, engaging with those forced to the margins of society such as women, and engaging with those who were never really thought of as important in their own right, such as children. If we are truly following Jesus, then our lives must be engaged with those who are excluded.

## A WOMAN OF JUSTICE

*Katharine Dale, a Sydney Salvationist, came to faith in Jesus as a young woman and soon after felt that God was calling her to use her skills as an Occupational Therapist in some way that served the Kingdom of God. Following God's calling on her life, Katharine willingly gave up a successful career here in Australia, swapping comfort for cold showers, long days, and distance from family and friends. Her obedience to this call would see her spend 13 years in Ghana at various Salvation Army health institutions, working with those who society excluded – disabled kids and their families. People with disabilities were often seen as 'cursed', which would lead to great amounts of shame and exclusion for the whole family. Katharine and her team worked hard to break down this societal barrier for these families, loving them and engaging with them, just as Jesus did with lepers, women, and children.*

*Katharine recently returned to Australia and now works for the Multicultural Ministries Department, continuing to dedicate her life to including the excluded.*

# INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED



While Jesus was on earth He experienced significant exclusion and rejection himself. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were often plotting to catch Him out; people in His own home town didn't believe He was truly the Messiah and took offense (Matt 13:54-58 NIV); people even agreed to have Him crucified. Yet even though He was excluded, Jesus set very clear examples for us in how he treated others who were excluded. As people who love Jesus, we want to include and love people as He did, and see them in the same way He did.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) Who are the people excluded from your local community or from your Corps/church?
- 2) Jesus often pointed to the excluded to teach us a Kingdom lesson – what might God be teaching you when you consider those who are excluded?
- 3) Reflect on other examples in Scripture where God provided for people who had been excluded. Which one resonates with you and why?
- 4) Katharine and her team were able to help change attitudes towards those who were excluded. When thinking about your own community or Corps, how can you help overcome those things which lead to people being excluded?
- 5) In Matthew 8:1-3, Jesus is very intentional in his actions towards those who are being excluded. “Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man”. In the same way Katharine was intentional in her actions. How can you be intentional in including those who are excluded? How will you live, love and fight alongside them?

## PRAYER

*Creator God, we are all your people – created in your image. We pray today for our world, our community, ourselves and for all that divides us to be removed through the love you show us. We pray that every man, woman, and child will know that they are valuable in your sight, and that we may at all times be carriers of that message. May we be a welcoming community with you at the centre, open for all to come and find a place of healing, comfort, and refuge. We pray this in the name of the One who was excluded – and who came to bring inclusion – Jesus. Amen.*

# CHALLENGING HARMFUL CULTURAL PRACTICES



*This study explores the social justice principle of 'challenging harmful cultural practices'. For a further look into how Jesus included the excluded, check out The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission's resource 'Jesus & Justice' at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9)*

## SCRIPTURE

- John 4: 3-30, 39-42 (NIV)

## REFLECTION

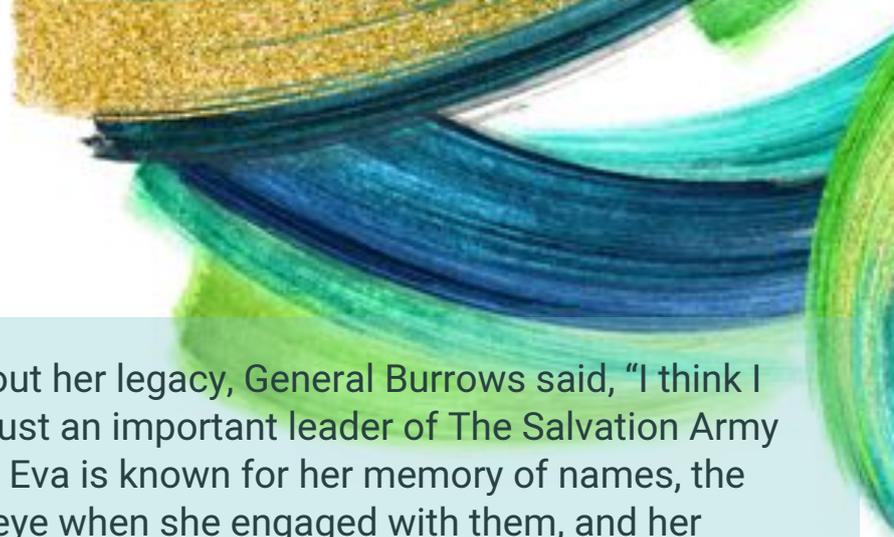
When we look at Jesus' life, we see someone completely committed to bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. As Christians - followers of Jesus - we are to follow or imitate Jesus' example. Thus, God is calling us to join Him in working to bring the Kingdom of God on earth. There are certain things we hear again and again when talking about God's Kingdom here on earth. The phrase 'love your neighbour as yourself' is one of them. It's both impressed in us as an age old command, and bandied around as the trite cliché of 'The Golden Rule'. However, its worth is only truly known when we have experienced it. This love is both beautiful and transformative when it is demonstrated.

Consider how the disciples must have felt when they stumbled upon their leader sitting at Jacob's well with a Samaritan – let alone when he chose to stay a few days and live amongst a people group they had been taught to hate. They were surprised to find him talking with a woman – but they kept their mouths shut. They had a lot to learn from Jesus' approach, and so do we. Perhaps the greatest rebuke is not so much in what we do – but in what we fail to do. Rather than simply moving on, Jesus takes the time to cross the cultural barriers, and to sit down and engage with the woman's deepest need. In that moment, an everyday activity became an encounter with the profound. From that moment of connection – a village came to know the Messiah.

## A WOMAN OF JUSTICE

An example of someone who challenged harmful cultural practices was General Eva Burrows. General Burrows was the second Australian, the second woman, and the youngest person to be elected as General of the Salvation Army. Living in Australia, the United Kingdom, Africa and Sri Lanka, she tirelessly served in pastoral, missionary, training and administrative roles within The Salvation Army before becoming General (world leader) in 1986. She was a strong woman, taking a firm stance against apartheid in South Africa and ensuring the return of The Salvation Army to communist countries. Of all these achievements, it was the way she loved that led to her being known as

# CHALLENGING HARMFUL CULTURAL PRACTICES



‘the people’s general’. When asked about her legacy, General Burrows said, “I think I would like them to think of me not as just an important leader of The Salvation Army but someone who touched their lives.” Eva is known for her memory of names, the way she looked people straight in the eye when she engaged with them, and her ability to truly know and communicate with people from all ages and backgrounds. It is this kind of engagement with people that breathes the life of Jesus into the contexts where we live, love and fight.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) What cultural practices was Jesus challenging by speaking to this woman? Why do you think Jesus chose to have a conversation with this woman?
- 2) Jesus was fully aware of the woman’s past, and the way she had been living. What was Jesus’ greatest concern in this conversation?
- 3) Why was the woman’s testimony, and Jesus’ visit, so powerful to village?
- 4) Think of social barriers in your context. Do you honestly engage with people different to yourself? How can you engage in a more meaningful way?
- 5) Consider General Eva Burrows, or someone you know personally, who makes you feel valued. What qualities did/do they display that are helpful in making people feel valued?

## PRAYER

*Dear Father, thank you for seeing us and loving us, just as we are. Where we are blind to our prejudices - help us see. Where we settle for the surface – help us delve deeply into your spring of life. Help us to truly listen to those around us, and to follow your voice. Help us to fight when others give up on loving, and give us courage to challenge the expectations of those around us. Help us daily extend grace, as you have extended grace to us. Make known to us the people you want us to engage with today, and teach us your ways. Amen.*

# CONFRONTING THE POWERFUL



*This study explores the social justice principle of 'confronting the powerful'. For a further look into how Jesus included the excluded, check out The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission's resource 'Jesus & Justice' at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9)*

*(Photo from The Salvation Army International Heritage Centre)*

## SCRIPTURE

- Mark 12:13-17
- Matthew 20:20-28 (NIV)

## REFLECTION

When we look at Jesus' life, we see someone completely committed to bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. As Christians, followers of Jesus, we have decided to follow or imitate Jesus' example. Thus, God is calling us to join Him in working to bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

Working for God's Kingdom can be difficult, particularly if you live in a country where the political situation is not friendly towards our faith, or even outright hostile towards God's people. However Scripture's call to defend the needy and oppressed is never dependent upon such political safety, and in fact Jesus himself lived amongst political dangers and turmoil.

Often Jesus needed to turn the political thought on its head to challenge injustices where they occurred, pointing towards a kingdom structure where true power is found in humbly serving one's neighbour. We are people of two Kingdoms. We live on earth, but through Jesus, we have citizenship in heaven (Phil 3:20). As citizens of God's Kingdom, how much more do we want to see it, and even glimpses of it, as a reality on earth!

## A WOMAN OF JUSTICE

Lt. Col. Saratha Perieswami also lived, loved and fought for God's Kingdom amongst political danger and turmoil. She took over much of The Salvation Army's leadership in Myanmar in 1971, becoming national leader in 1985, and working right through until 1994. This was following Myanmar (then Burma) closing its borders to all foreign employees in 1965, which had a significant impact on The Army's ability to work there.

# CONFRONTING THE POWERFUL



Throughout Lt. Col. Perieswami's leadership, Myanmar was governed by military rule and saw much political and social unrest. This period was a time of great turmoil and at times violence in Myanmar, but through it all, Lt. Col Perieswami provided a steady hand in dealing with the political powers, and a God-filled heart to all she came into contact with. Today Myanmar is still beset by political unrest, however The Salvation Army is still present - standing up for the oppressed and needy and serving in the name of Jesus. Undoubtedly the current work of The Salvation Army in Myanmar is, in part, a result of Lt. Col Perieswami's faithful service despite the dangers she faced. The Salvation Army in Myanmar has recently celebrated 100 years of service.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) The Pharisees and Herodians tried to trick Jesus by creating a conflict between the State and God. How does Jesus' response help us understand our place as people of two Kingdoms – one of this world and God's?
- 2) Jesus' response to James and John challenges us about how the world thinks about power and it is revolutionary! 'Greatness' – power, success, fame – is found in our serving. In what ways do you seek 'greatness'? Is it in serving?
- 3) Think of some circumstances where in your ministry, you might be called upon to confront the powerful. What resources come to mind that can help you make the right decisions (e.g. scripture)?
- 4) The example of Lt. Col Perieswami is one of courage and determination. Can you think of other women who also stood up for their convictions and those under their care in the face of danger?
- 5) Think of countries where the political structures may make it hard for God's justice to be done. Write them down and pray for them – the leaders, the people, and those within these countries trying to serve in Jesus' name. (Note – it may be helpful to have The Salvation Army's Yearbook on hand to help you pray for The Salvation Army's work in those countries. This is available from Salvationist Supplies).

## PRAYER

*Lord, take our focus off ourselves so that we can see the needs of others. Let us be looking, ever ready for what you have to reveal to us. Give us courage to use our voices to stand for those who cannot find theirs. Give us strength in the face of difficulty, love in the midst of an angry world, and grace in the midst of chaos. Help us to be your ambassador in a world which so desperately needs you. Amen.*

# ADVOCATING FOR THE OPPRESSED



*This study explores the social justice principle of 'advocating for the oppressed'. For a further look into how Jesus included the excluded, check out The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission's resource 'Jesus & Justice' at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9)*

## SCRIPTURE

- Luke 14:12-14
- Matthew 25:31-46

## REFLECTION

When we look at Jesus' life, we see someone completely committed to bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. As Christians followers of Jesus, we have decided to follow or imitate Jesus' example. Thus, it is our responsibility to join God where we are in working to bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

One way to work towards bringing the Kingdom of God on earth is by speaking up for those who are not experiencing the fullness of life that God desires for them. This can be very challenging because it requires you to step out of your regular, comfortable space and live beyond self-interest. Advocacy is not just speaking up for others, but involves building relationships with people who are experiencing suffering, and finding out their needs from them rather than making assumptions. Advocacy is not about a quick fix but rather focuses on sustainable justice.

People face oppression of various forms, both in the past and still today. People can find themselves oppressed by things like slavery or human trafficking, financial burdens, sickness, mental illness, addiction, relationship problems, and many other things. Action should be a natural expression of our relationship with Jesus, and expressing practical love towards the vulnerable in every situation is one such example of this.

## A WOMAN OF JUSTICE

Lt. Col. Alida Bosshardt is someone who devoted her whole life to advocating for the oppressed and living out Luke 14:12-14 and Matthew 25:31-46. Lt. Col. Bosshardt risked her life during World War II to protect and find homes for more than 75 Jewish children during the German invasion of Amsterdam. She travelled around 30 miles by train, bike and on foot with 70 children, collected food and was captured by German forces, escaping two weeks later - all while keeping the children safe and hidden from the German soldiers. From 1948 Lt. Col. Bosshardt continued her work in advocating for people who were suffering and vulnerable in her community through her work in

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Amsterdam's red light district. After advocating to The Salvation Army for permission to begin work here, for 30 years she cheerfully and faithfully served female sex workers, orphans, people experiencing homelessness and those struggling with drug addictions. She worked hard to brighten their lives by visiting them, showing them love, meeting their needs, treating them as her friends and telling them about Jesus.

There is still much to be done in advocating for the oppressed, but we can choose, like Lt. Col. Bosshardt, to live, love and fight alongside people who are vulnerable in our community to help bring the Kingdom of God on earth.

## DISCUSSION

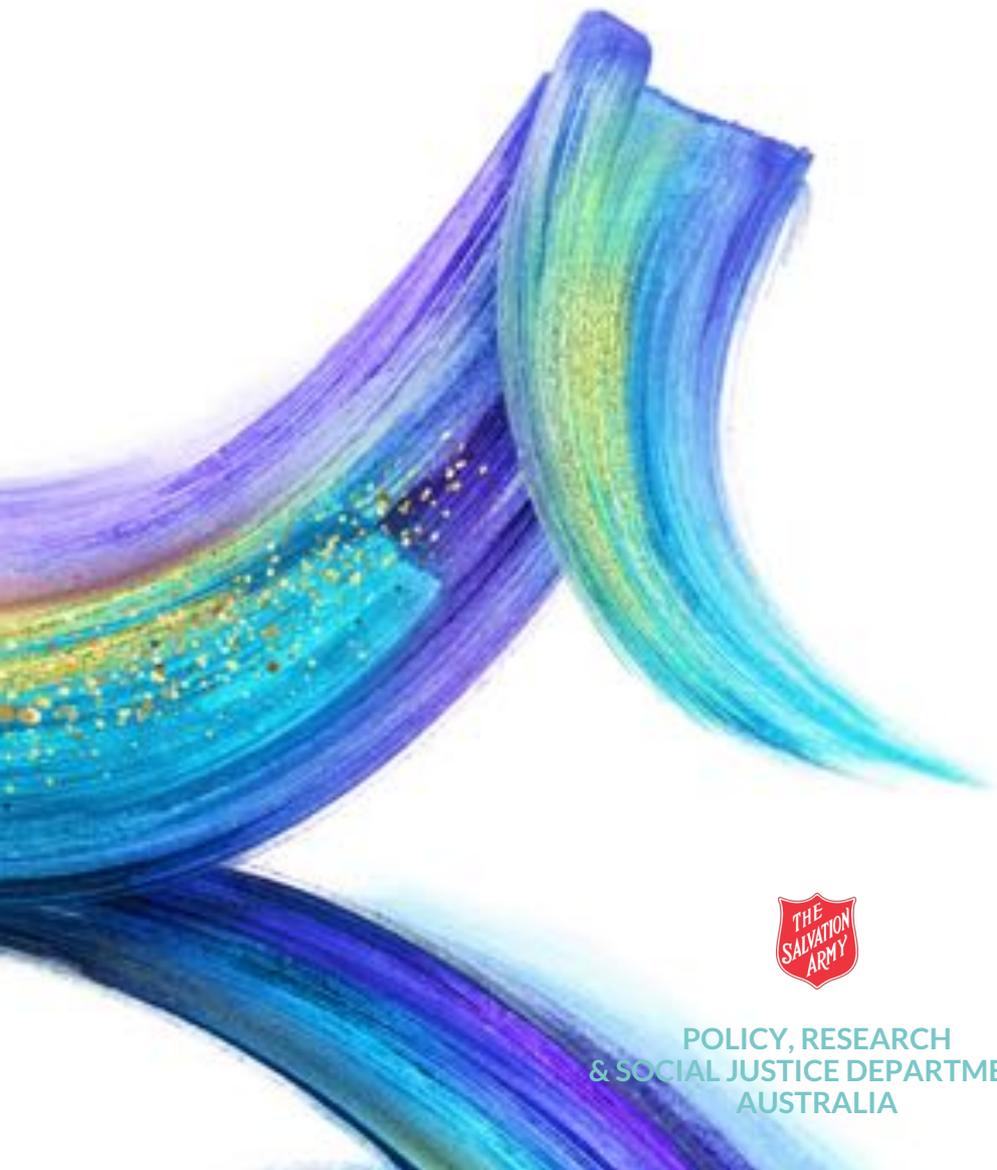
- 1) Who is vulnerable or oppressed in your community today?
- 2) What are some practical ways you can advocate for the oppressed through living, loving and fighting alongside them week?
- 3) Lt. Col. Bosshardt's life is one example of someone living differently to care for people who were vulnerable and oppressed. Can you think of other women who live differently to care for people who are vulnerable or oppressed?
- 4) Jesus said "and the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" How does this change the way you see, interact with and serve others?
- 5) In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus tell us not to invite our friends or those who can repay us to dinner, but to invite the poor, vulnerable and oppressed. How do you feel about this request? What could this look like in your life?

## PRAYER

*Lord, thank you for giving us the opportunity to join you in working for your kingdom. Thank you for people who devote their lives to advocating and caring for those who are vulnerable. God, equip us to engage in acts of wisdom, love and compassion that result in sustainable justice. Open our eyes to see injustice and move us to act for justice within our nation and beyond, prayerfully advocating for your kingdom on earth. Amen.*

For further information and resources on the Principles of Justice, see The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission's resource, 'Jesus & Justice' at [www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9](http://www.tinyurl.com/8a7h2t9).

We are grateful to the ISJC for its leadership in developing these principles, and for allowing us to extend on them.



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