

# The poor and the broken

Nehemiah 5:1-12

Mark 11:15-18

# Nehemiah's challenge

Divided society - rich people abusing their economic power

Stressful jobs and the threat of terrorism

Poverty

- People trapped by debt and borrowing more for food/necessities
- People trapped in low-paid, zero-hours, jobs they didn't choose because of their debts

Taxes must be paid, even by the poor

# Jewish law - lending

Jewish law on lending was designed to prevent abuse of economic power

- Ex 22:25 – Interest must not be charged when lending to the poor
- Lev 25:35-37 – if someone becomes poor, then interest must no longer be charged (and food must be supplied at cost)
- Deut 23:19-20 – you must not charge ‘your brother’ interest, but you can charge a ‘foreigner’ interest

# Nehemiah's focus

Nehemiah was 'very angry' but he 'pondered' (prayed?)

Nehemiah's focus was

- God's law – social justice
- Righting wrongs in a sustainable way
- Involving the whole community
- Leading by example

# How can we apply this?

Don't just give; invest!

- Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.” (Ps. 112:5, also Matt 5:42)
- The parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30)

Invest in people

Invest your time and your love

Lending = securing your return

Investing = taking a risk to create a shared future

