

Proverbs 21:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

Analysis

Those who ignore the poor's cries for help will themselves cry out unanswered in their time of need. This is the law of reciprocity: God governs the world such that we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). Refusing mercy to those in need hardens one's heart and forfeits divine mercy. Jesus taught this principle repeatedly: the unmerciful servant, the rich man and Lazarus, the sheep and goats judgment. God identifies with the poor (Proverbs 19:17); to oppress them is to despise their Maker. The merciful receive mercy; the hard-hearted encounter only justice. This doesn't earn salvation but reflects the changed heart that true conversion produces. Those who have received God's mercy naturally extend mercy to others.

Historical Context

Mosaic law included extensive provisions for the poor—gleaning rights, debt forgiveness, prohibitions against oppression. Israel's failure to observe these contributed to exile and judgment.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Do you respond generously to those in genuine need, or do you harden your heart?
2. How does receiving God's mercy in salvation compel you to show mercy to others?

Interlinear Text

אִם	אָזְנוֹ	מִצֶּקֶת	לְ	גַם	הוּא	! קָרָא
Whoso stoppeth	his ears	at the cry	of the poor	H1571	H1931	he also shall cry
H331	H241	H2201	H1800			H7121
לֹא	יִשְׁמְעָהּ:					
H3808	himself but shall not be heard					
	H6030					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 1:28 (Parallel theme): Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

Matthew 6:14 (Parallel theme): For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Matthew 7:2 (Parallel theme): For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Proverbs 28:27 (Parallel theme): He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.