

## Pharisees take advantage of poor people

Zac Poonen:

"Woe to you, Pharisees, because you devour widows' houses" (Matthew 23:14).

We don't know how exactly the Pharisees "devoured" the houses of these widows. They may have urged those poor widows to give their property for "the work of the Lord", telling them that God would bless them for it - and then taken possession of their property and enjoyed it themselves. Thus they would "even rob the widows", as Israel's unjust judges had done 700 years earlier (Isaiah 10:2).

This very same exploitation of poor people is going on in the 21st century too. Christian TV preachers are notorious for getting poor widows and pensioners to give them large sums of money by assuring them, "God will bless you and heal you of your sicknesses, if you give money to my ministry". Since most old widows and pensioners have many sicknesses and other problems, TV preachers know how to exploit this for their own benefit. They use every psychological trick and many emotional appeals and verses from the Bible to squeeze money from these poor people. The poor widows believe these greedy deceivers and send their meagre savings to them. The preachers then use this money to live in grand style themselves - buying private jet planes and property, etc.

This pattern of swindling the poor started in America in recent times, but has now spread all over the world and is now found among many Indian preachers too. Such Pharisees are daylight robbers and thieves.

What a testimony Paul had, that he could say towards the end of his life,

We wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one (2 Corinthians 7:2).  
That should be the testimony of every servant of God at the end of his life.

It is evil and Satanic to take advantage of poor believers - in any way.