

The Rich Young Ruler and the Blind Beggar

by Art Katz

Jesus teaches that true salvation requires total surrender and a willingness to give up everything in order to follow him, and that this is a difficult requirement for those who are attached to their wealth and possessions.

Duration: 1:01:45

Scripture: Matthew 19:16-24, Mark 10:17, Mark 10:21, Luke 18:18-31

Topics: "Blind Beggar"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the encounter between Jesus and the rich young ruler as described in Luke chapter 18. The speaker emphasizes that this encounter is not just a momentary episode, but a significant eschatological statement with implications for the last days. The rich young ruler asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, highlighting a Jewish mentality that one can earn salvation through good deeds. The speaker also discusses the parallel episode with the blind beggar, highlighting the desperate condition of proud Jews who were dispossessed and cast out as beggars.

Transcript

Well, everybody looks so attentive that I'm almost tempted to begin and launch right into the word, and we'll have time later to worship maybe even more profoundly because of the word. So if you'll turn with me to Luke, chapter 18, a rich young ruler, a very familiar text. A certain ruler asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? There are three accounts of this encounter of Jesus with the rich ruler.

One of them in Matthew says, what good deed must I do to inherit eternal life? What we're going to see as we examine this text is not just a momentary episode in the life of Jesus, but a classic eschatological encounter that the father had programmed as an unexpected incident in the life of Jesus, but fraught with all kinds of last days implication and significance for us. I share this with others that the older I get and the more I look now into the life of Jesus, the more I see that every episode is not just a thing in itself, however rich, but an eschatological statement. God saying something in it for the consideration of the last days.

Remarkable that it has an immediate significance, but it has also an ultimate, even cosmic significance. And that's what I hope the world will give me grace to express. Because here's a collision between not only a classic Jewish mentality that one can do something to obtain eternal life, which bespeaks a whole value system, a whole thing predicated on an understanding about man and an understanding about God that is at fault, that is in contradiction or in opposition to God's own view.

So this is not just a momentary two men happening to meet. What is represented in the rich ruler and Jesus are two classic counterpoise, two classic views of man, of righteousness, of God, of eternity that are an absolute contradiction. And the one expressed by the rich young ruler is still the prevalent notion of Jews in the world.

And beyond that, I would say probably the world itself. It centers in a view of man that is in contradiction to the way in which God views man. And what this rich young ruler is doing is projecting that view upon Jesus himself and trying to suck Jesus into an agreement with him that would take the Lord off of divine ground and bring him into the earthly place that men desire him to be.

But Jesus will have none of it. Why callest thou me good? I'm not going to receive your compliment for if I do, I am acceding that what you're saying is valid. But don't you know that there's no man good but God? You don't know it.

And you think to seduce me by your compliment that you I would we would be in agreement together. And then from that place, we will negotiate the issue of eternal life. Jesus says, no, no, no, no.

You've got it all wrong. There's nothing you can do to inherit. Inherit is something that is given through the death of another without any qualification of yourself in terms of the merit of your acts or what you are in yourself in terms of your own virtue.

We need to note the way in which Jesus is addressed as good teacher. Certainly, that's true, but it's not true enough. It's only a partial truth.

It's not the whole truth. And therefore, we know that truth is only true when it's altogether true. And what is partial is a lie.

However complimentary that that acknowledgement might be. Notice the frequency of the word good, good teacher. What good thing must I do? Why do you call me good? The word good.

We need to take it out and showcase it because that word resonates a whole mentality that pervades mankind. And it's totally, as I'm saying, in opposition to the mind of God. So this is not just a little chance encounter.

This is cosmic. This is a clash of kingdoms, clash of mentalities, a clash of worldviews of perceiving and seeing even the issue of reality itself. Because this guy not only holds this view, he is the exemplification of this view.

He has kept all the commandments since his youth. He is good, but it does not qualify him. No one is good, but God alone.

But you know the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, shall not murder, shall not steal, shall not be a false witness. Honor your father and mother. I've kept all these things since my youth.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, there's still one thing you lack. I think it's in Matthew and Mark. It says, looking upon him, he loved him and said to him, there's still one thing you lack.

So there's nothing in the Lord's heart that is condemnatory for the man. It's a heart of love and compassion that he's a victim of a mentality that is coined in the world, but disqualifies him for eternal life. And if he remains in that, he's a dead duck.

So what Jesus will now say to him is the issue of his own eternity. And what he's saying to him, Oswald Chambers says today, that's how I was led to this text, is the hardest saying that Jesus can say to any man. And it seems altogether bloodless and cruel.

There doesn't seem to be any mitigating sympathy. This one thing, one thing you lack, it's like a knife. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven.

Then come follow me. Who of us who could have been in his place and have heard that would have said, thank you, Lord. Yes, I will.

How many of us with our best well-meaning intention, hearing the totality of that requirement would blanch, the blood would drain from our faces. We would make a quick accounting of all that we have and not be so quick to run and kneel at this man's feet and ask, what must I do to inherit eternal life? We'll have, we'll have second thoughts. We got to go back to the drawing board.

Let me consider this. What you're asking is so ultimate, so utter all that I have. I'm willing to be liberal with my ties and gifts and offerings, but to require all, not just my possessions, not just my wealth, but my categories, the things that I hold dear, my ideology, my constructs, my theology, my doctrines.

It's not that they are necessarily wrong, but your possession of them and the way in which you hold them as dear keeps you from the totality of the relationship to me that is salvational. You've got to give all in order to follow me. And when he heard that, he turned sorrowfully away.

He became sad for he was very rich. We're going to compare this with the next one that Jesus meets right in the same place, the blind beggar. So what a remarkable contrast, a happy coincidence, first an episode with a rich Jewish ruler and then the next with a destitute Jewish blind beggar.

Is that an accident or is that a setup? Is there a contrast there? One recognizes Jesus and the other only calls him a good teacher. And it may well be that the difference in the recognition of Jesus is the issue of whether a man is caught up in his own wealth and his own convictions and all the baggage that he carries that blinds him and allows him only to see in part. But the man who is blind is able to see in full.

Thou son of David? When Jesus heard that, he stopped. What a recognition of myself as I have not heard anyone yet in Israel acknowledge. It's the deepest acknowledgement and it comes from one blind who's a beggar.

Here's what I'm going to say. Here's the way I'm reading this prophetically. Israel today is symbolized by the rich young ruler.

But until it becomes identified with the blind beggar, it will not be able to recognize Jesus as the as the son of David. It will have to go from the one to the other. And we shall observe soon the factors taking place that will move them from the one to the other.

And those who began rich will find themselves at the roadside blind and begging. And that the issue of eternal life and the kingdom of God and its entry is of so great moment that God does not think it too extravagant to bring an entire people from the one to the other. That's how I saw this this morning.

And that's how I believe the Lord wants it to be communicated. So then Jesus looked at him and said in verse 24, how hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. Indeed, it is easier for a

camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the for his highest.

This is what Oswald Chambers takes up in today's selection. The end of it, he writes, I can be so rich in poverty, so rich in the consciousness that I'm nobody that I shall never be a disciple of Jesus. And I can be so rich in the consciousness that I am somebody that I shall never be a disciple.

Am I willing to be destitute even of the sense that I am destitute? I mean, how poor can you get? Am I willing to to void and to lay aside even my dearest doctrines and understanding of the faith and of God? Can God require that as being the all that that one must be willing to give up? I don't think it'll be a permanent forsaking. You'll get it back, but you'll get it back in a way that you never had it originally. But if you cling to it because it has to do with your identity, your spirituality, your convictions, as Oswald Chambers says, sometimes those convictions are more dear to us than the Lord whom they celebrate.

There's a subtlety in spirituality. In fact, I would say spirituality is the ultimate trap. Carnality is kid stuff, but spirituality is deadly because it's rooted in correct things.

But how we hold it can be for us that our riches that we're unwilling to relinquish even to follow him. That's why the totality of the requirement, sell all that you have. But Lord, my identity, my self-esteem, the way I perceive myself as a guardian of the faith and the truths of the faith, I'm to give up that also? Unless you're willing, you'll not enter the kingdom.

You'll be in the religious world and be acknowledged and you'll have some place, but you will have missed the uttermost. Am I willing to be destitute of even the sense that I'm destitute? This is where discouragement comes in. This discouragement is disenchanted self-love and self-love may be love of my devotion to Jesus.

Only Oswald Chambers can see that and say that no one else that I know goes that far and that deep as even to raise the issue of the love of Jesus as a form of spiritual wealth that we covet and enjoy more than the Lord himself. We enjoy our love of the love of the Lord. And the problem that I have mostly with Christian Zionists is their identification with Israel, their attachment to Israel.

They're unwilling to give up that attachment. It does something for them. There's a depth of psychology in this I can't even express.

There's a word for it. Maybe somebody can remember it, cathartic, where you, like a symbiosis, where you get something from your involvement with another. That's what Jewish mothers do with their children.

They ring their fingers that my son, the doctor, my son, the lawyer, they're getting them through Hebrew school that they might be bar mitzvahed, not because there's a particular virtue to the bar mitzvah, but a satisfaction that comes to the Jewish mother who has worked her fingers to the bone for her son, because the son is for the mother, the deepest satisfaction of her own soul. Many sons have bit the dust, have suffered the consequence of smothering Jewish motherhood because it is not impartial, because it finds its gratification in an earthly, soulish bond with that son and doesn't allow him to become the man. So even to relinquish motherhood in that sense, that giving all is what the Lord is after, and there's a place for that even in our own spirituality, our own identification with Israel, our own identification with the Lord, that we don't find ourselves loving Israel in such a way that we so enjoy that attachment, we don't want to relinquish it.

And the same thing also with the Lord. Same thing with our doctrines, with our cause, with our own role and our own calling. And for Jews, their Talmudic learning, their traditions, the things that are dear to them, there's an all that God requires.

And the place where we're most loathe to give it up is the place where it's most dear, not because it's wrong, but because it's right. It's dear because it's correct. And therefore we think that we can have a vested interest in it as a wealth for ourselves that is valid.

But Jesus, who is himself a prophet, you want to inherit eternal life? You want to enter the kingdom? Go and sell all that you have and give it away. And then come and follow me. But when this young wulu who had kept all the commandments heard that, he couldn't pay that price and turned sadly away.

It was heartbreaking discouragement. And Jesus did not go after him. He let him go.

Talk about the love of the Father, instead of mollifying, instead of coddling, instead of saying, no, no, don't get upset. Please don't misunderstand me. I wasn't asking that you give up all in the sense of, I'm just, you know, your most conspicuous wealth, you know, let's, let's get, we can negotiate this.

He let him go. Same thing with Nicodemus, who asked essentially the same question. And Jesus said, except you're born again of the spirit, you cannot inherit.

He left the man completely bewildered, but he left the man. He spoke what he had to speak and left the result to the Father. That's love.

And probably though the man had to groan, we don't know what the consequence is. And they ultimately, as it did for Nicodemus, actually bring him into the kingdom. So we have to learn also to let go and not to pursue and trust God, that though we have occasioned a bewilderment and a perplexity in our hearers, we leave it with God to work out and don't have to placate and bring them to a happy ending in one meeting.

We are the victims of a Christianity that has to have everything wrapped up in one meeting and send them home happy. But what if we send them home perplexed? What if we send them home chomping at the bit and foaming at the mouth? When they finally come through, they will come through so profoundly as could never have been obtained if we sought to mollify and make nice and be good. Good is the enemy of what is perfect.

Why callest thou me good? There's no man good. Good is not good enough. And even the disciples were stupefied at the loss of such a feather in the Lord's cap if this man had been nicely addressed and brought into the kingdom.

Think of what it would have done to the coffers, to the bankroll, to the treasury that was depleted to have such a one on your side. What a foolish thing as to risk it by speaking so cryptically and so demandingly and so uncompromisingly. But that's the word because he's not looking at what the consequence will be for me or for us.

This is the prophet, Jesus, the prophet, solely obedient to the father, even to the stupefying of his own disciples. And they said, who then can be saved? When they're asking that question, they're not saying who then can go to heaven. What they're asking is who can be saved from what we know will be the impending judgment of the last days.

This is more than the issue of salvation as we conventionally understand it. So it's no small matter. If a man is not saved, he's going to face the prospect of the ultimate and final judgments that come first upon Israel and then all the earth.

So salvation has an apocalyptic meaning that was expressed in the first message of Peter after Pentecost. What must we do to be saved? Come out from among this untoward generation. Why come out from them? Because upon them is going to fall the judgments of God, as was spoken in Joel, where the sun will be turned to blood and the moon will lose its light and the stars will fall out of the firmament.

Jews expected an apocalyptic disaster before the coming of Messiah and of the messianic age. So to be saved was to be saved out of that impending judgment. So this is no small question.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? Who then can be saved? It was a gripping question raised by these disciples. And the answer of the Lord was with man it's impossible. A rich man can no more enter it than a camel passing through the eye of a needle.

But with God it's possible. So right after that, you know, we have to assume that the order of the scriptures is as much the issue of God's divine mind as the content itself. And right after that, in verse 31, he took the 12 aside and said to them, see, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written about the son of man by the prophets will be accomplished for he will be handed over to the Gentiles.

Now, your dear saints read this as I read this in a double meaning and a double significance. This is the is what Jesus himself must experience. Why he inserts this now after the issue of salvation is a good question, but he might well be speaking not only of his own necessary suffering, but the suffering that Israel world Jewry must itself experience before it ascends to its glory.

There's a suffering that precedes the glory in anyone who was called up to Jerusalem as world Jewry is as the is the Israel, the all Israel that shall be saved is called up to Zion for the law must go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. But anyone who is called up to Zion must first suffer at the hands of the Gentiles. This is a picture not only of the suffering of Jesus, it's an eschatological forecast of what his people call to the same priestly ministry to the nations must themselves also experience a road to Calvary as the prophets have written, not only of himself, but of them.

There's a suffering that must come at the hand of the Gentiles in the nations for Jesus. It was at Jerusalem and they will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. They will become the least of these.

My brethren, they will be despised as he was despised. And after they have flogged him, they will kill him. And on the third day, he'll rise again at this last day's dealing of God with world Jewry will in fact constitute both a death and a resurrection as we read in Ezekiel 37, but they understood nothing about all these things.

In fact, what he said was hidden from them as it is presently to the church. And they did not grasp what he said. Isn't it remarkable that the present day church stands in the same kind of ignorance about the suffering that is inevitable and must be experienced by any people called up to Jerusalem as the disciples of Jesus were for his own suffering.

The parallels are remarkable. And then on the heels of that is the episode with the blind beggar. So as he approached Jericho, blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

Can you picture proud Jews in that desperate condition, having no income, no revenue, no source of sustenance, as we know from the history of the Holocaust and the first persecutions that came to Jews in Germany, men who were professors, judges, journalists, publishers, owners of department stores, living comfortably, found themselves within a short period of time, dispossessed of their businesses, their titles, their professions, their homes, their income, and were cast out as beggars on the road. There are actual accounts of sympathetic Germans driving by and throwing out of the window paper bags or bundles with food or a blanket or clothing for Jews living in the ditch. We're going to see that again.

And what I'm saying is this, the issue of eternal life and the entry into the kingdom is so great that God does not think it extravagant to move a people from being rich rulers to blind beggars in order to obtain it. In fact, except that they become blind, they'll never see. So long as they can see, they'll not see.

They'll miss who this Jesus is and at best acknowledge him as a good teacher. As Jews often say to me in my conversation, well, he was a prophet. We acknowledge he was a prophet.

Yes, an impressive son of Israel. I said, you acknowledge that? Your eternal embarrassment and shame will be the greater when you'll stand before him one day before his throne as king and be judged that you made that acknowledgement of him, but were unwilling to acknowledge the totality of what he was. You call him a prophet? And he said, if you see me, you see the father, I and the father are one.

How come that you can acknowledge him for the one, not acknowledge him for the other? Your own partial acknowledgement will condemn you. Your partial seeing is a blindness. And until what you think you see, your capacity to see is removed because you have given over all that you have, your traditions, your Talmud, your learning, your doctrines, until you become totally dependent on what comes to you as a beggar, you'll not see, you'll not recognize, you'll not obtain.

This is why there's a pathos that needs to come into the heart of the church because we sense and know already what must necessarily come to pass for Jews who in this moment, even as I'm speaking, are completely unsuspecting of what must inevitably fall upon them. They're enjoying their penthouses right now. They're in New York City right now, thumbing through the pages of the New York Times that weighs five pounds on a Sunday.

I know I used to deliver them. And going especially from the sport page to the New York Times book review section and just indulging themselves in all the things that are a delight. While they have a steaming pot of coffee and fresh bagels and lox and cream cheese and all the goodies of the affluent and comfortable Jewish life.

It will not be long. If I understand the Lord to write in the scriptures, they will find themselves out by the roadside begging. But there's a blessing for that and a blessing that can only come in that condition.

And so as he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

Then he shouted, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet. But he shouted even more loudly, son of David, have mercy on me.

Jesus stood still. Oh, oh, oh. This is not just an episode in time.

This is a timeless episode. This is eternity standing still. This is full of resonance of eschatological significance.

Jesus standing still. He would have passed by. And it may well be a last opportunity for anyone blind to avail, to have opportunity of the mercy of Jesus.

Had he not called, had he not been intrinsically a son of Jacob who cried, except you bless me, I'll not let you go. The Lord would have passed by. But those who were in front tried to constrain him.

That's the picture of the evangelical church. That's the entourage with Jesus who accompany him, but have scant respect for that blind beggar and would be just as content to pass him by. But Jesus stood still.

He was waiting for that one cry. That is the deepest of all cries of Jewish recognition. David, thou son of Jesus, thou son of David, the deepest messianic recognition of Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews.

Not some Johnny come lately independent of the whole context of Jewish hope and aspiration, but the very expression and the fulfillment that only a blind man can see, who doesn't call him a good teacher, but the son of David. I will not be shut up by those who try to constrain him, who are up front already with their proper evangelical attitudes and say, there's no place for that beggar. Jesus stopped, who cried out the louder, son of David, have mercy on me.

You can't have a more abject cry than that. No condition. It's not even the issue of inheriting eternal life.

It's not even my place in the kingdom. It's the most foundational, fundamental cry to which a man can be reduced. That is so elemental.

Have mercy on me. And that's exactly what God will do. That by our mercy, they will obtain mercy.

And that the God who is mercy will reveal himself not only to Israel in that mercy, but to all nations when they see the mercy that they will have received, because they are not candidates to obtain anything from God by virtue of their merit, their good deeds, their acts or anything else. Mercy is completely not the issue of what one deserves, but the issue of the one who gives it. Mercy is God extending himself and expressing himself as God.

And nowhere will he have the greater opportunity than to a people less deserving, more apostate, more blasphemous than this people. But he'll have it for them in their blindness and in their condition as beggars when they finally will cry out, Jesus, thou son of David. It takes a blindness to see that identification.

So he ordered the man to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, what do you want me to do for you? And he said, Lord, let me see again. Here's the prophetic reading of the scripture.

Would that have passed you by? Let me see again implies that he represents a people who had once seen and no longer see and know now that their blindness is different from what they had formerly been able to see. Let me see again. Allow me to see again, because I suspect that my blindness is not altogether unrelated to your judgment.

And only the one who has judged and brought the blindness is the one alone who can relieve it. Let me see again. What a precious cry.

How can the Lord resist that? But the remarkable thing is when the blind man said, who is what's this noise? What's all this commotion? Oh, it's Jesus of Nazareth passing by. Well, if there's ever a despicable formula to discredit the Lord and dismiss that, dismiss any Jewish person from the consideration is somebody from Nazareth. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? And the way in which the statement was made to him had every reason to discredit the one going by as coming from Nazareth.

It has depicted Jesus in a way that a Jew could not really understand or receive. But despite that era of communication, the man in the depth of his own spirit or soul, and in the depth of his crisis of blindness, somehow intuited or he had heard of the power of the miracles or whatever, cried out that the deeps of Jewish recognition that goes beyond Jesus of Nazareth. David, Jesus, thou son of David.

For this kingdom is not an abstract kingdom. It's the Davidic kingdom. And everything about it is steeped in Jewish expectation and biblical foundation that even a blind man would know.

Let me see again. Jesus said to him, receive your sight. Your faith has saved you.

Well, when was that faith born? But perhaps in the very cry, son of David. What is faith but the deepest recognition of who the Lord is. And that when he says, Lord, that I might receive my sight again.

The word Lord on the lips of that blind beggar is not some kind of obsequious, cheap acknowledgement of a title the way we use it. Lord, this Lord, that Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord. But the deepest recognition of the authority, the Lordship, the kingship of this Jesus who had not a place to lay his head.

Lord, you have the authority and you have the power that I might see again. When I say Lord to you, that's in keeping with my recognition of you as son of David, which is so much deeper, infinitely more profound acknowledgement and awareness of who you are than that rich young ruler was ever able to understand. And where the rich young ruler had to turn away, the blind beggar, after he regains his sight, followed him.

He wasn't even told. But being a son of David himself and a Jacob who not let the Lord go except he be blessed. What does a Jew do but follow? I don't know of one Jewish believer in my experience who has ever become a pew sitter or a casual congregant who has not followed the Lord in the best of his understanding.

Just the nature of the thing. How much more, Paul says, when they are grafted back into their own tree. He followed him.

The rich young ruler was said, then sell all that you have, give to the poor and then come and follow me here. The invitation is not even given, but he followed him because it's the logic of salvation. It's the call of what we are as the people of God.

It follows when we will regain our sight. And that's what it says in this text. Immediately, he regained his sight and followed him, implying again that he once was able to see, but is now blind.

He's under a judgment. And now the judgment is relieved by the same God who has pronounced it, who waits only to hear the cry and the call of the recognition of who I am. I am, in fact.

When my identity will be revealed in your Jewish cognizance and understanding. Not as some alien thing, but in the deepest history and tradition of your own word and expectation of king and kingdom. As the son of David, who alone can sit on the throne of David and rule from that throne in the holy hill of Zion.

Not be salvation. So let us not be in that entourage with Jesus who wants to shut him up and move Jesus on to more profitable audiences. But not only encourage the blind beggar to cry out, but to help him to cry out.

Help him to understand that what he had dismissed as a Jesus of Nazareth is, in fact, the son of David. And I think the church has failed in that. And here's the punchline.

Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God. That is to say, not just his mouth full of praises. I'm sure it was.

But what will glorify God more than the bringing back of one from the dead and making the blind to see. Taking a nation that in their blindness has opposed their Lord and have been the very enemies of the gospel and have led in every kind of movement contrary to God. To see the Lord and to follow him and to be for him what we intended, what we were intended to be from the first.

A nation of priests and a light unto the world. God will be glorified by the restoration of Israel as he will be glorified by nothing more nor else at the end of the age. When the people who have been reduced to beggarly blindness will say God will be glorified.

That's why Paul ends Romans 11, not by celebrating Israel's restoration or the transfiguration of the church in the mystery of Israel and the church. But of him and through him and to him are all things to whom be glory forever. The issue of Israel's restoration of the of the salvation coming to a blind beggar glorifies God.

Not only in that moment forever and glorifies him in so profound a way that all the people when they saw it praised God. What can you make of that much in every way? Because all the people is a generous kind of phrase suggestive of the goyim. All the people suggest to my prophetic card, all the nations, when all the nations shall see the restoration of a people turned from being wealthy rulers to blind beggars.

And then saved out of that condition who have been glorifying God. When they see that they'll no longer remain alien to the Lord themselves. It is the key to their salvation so that the praise of God will go up to the uttermost corners of the earth.

For all the nations will know that the God of Jacob and the God of Israel is a lone God. But they will have seen his judgment and they will have seen his mercy because he stopped. What can I do for you? So this is a great eschatological text.

Just the conjunction of the episode with one, the episode with another. Both Jews, but one he had to let sadly go away and the other without even an inducement, the recall follows him. It's a picture of the end of the age.

The issue is, where are we at that time? What role do we play in this picture that is presented? Are we presenting Jesus as the son of David to a people who can only recognize him in that designation? Or are we presenting Jesus at all? Though the Lord has said to the Jew first, a lack in the last historically, we've not gone to them at all. Every Jew that I know that has come to the Lord, including myself, have not come by virtue of the witness of the church. We've come sovereignly by dream, by revelation, by being called by name, by the New Testament falling into our hands.

But I have to say also by the prayer intercession of an individual saint here and there. But the church as a church and its witness never heard of it. We've not presented the Lord at all.

If we have maybe as Jesus of Nazareth, which is to say in a framework that is totally alien and offensive to Jewish consideration. We have not presented him as the son of David because we ourselves have not known him as the son of David. To know him as the son of David means the deepest pathos and affinity with the whole Jewishness of the faith, the whole Hebraic root of the faith.

And we have been ourselves to Gentiles to see that, let alone to commend that to Jews. But unless they see him in that way, how will they see him? They've got to recognize him as their own. A condition is required from them, blindness and beggarliness.

But a condition is required from us not to stop them from their cry, but to evoke their cry. And if it's not the Lord passing by in himself, passing by in us, that they can glimpse in us who are Gentile, where they would least expect to see it. The resonance and the substance and the reality of the son of David, which is all the more powerful when it issues out of a Gentile face.

Maybe they can more readily see it in a Jewish face, but a Gentile face to see the son of David in one in whom it is least to be expected is a phenomenon of all phenomena. And maybe that's what the end of the age is. And the people who will stop and hear the cry and even have provoked the cry and even have the power and the ability to relieve that blindness that they might see again and regain their sight.

For what shall the return be, Paul says, but life from the dead. They're not going to be casual positors. They're going to be the foremost people of God that the Gentiles of ten nations will clutch the skirt of a Jew and say, take us to your God for you know him.

Their salvation is the salvation of the world. We have only the commission to obtain a people for his name from among all nations. They have the apostolic mandate for all nations.

Their return is life from the dead. But their return is contingent upon the depiction of their Messiah as Lord and as the son of David in a Hebraic way in which he can be recognized and called upon. When he heard that call, he stopped.

So maybe the issue for us to be to them what we ought is the giving up of all that we possess. Our favorite categories, our doctrines, our clear principles that what value can they have if they're not saved? How are they? How can they even be our brethren? Whatever our categories are, they may have some foundation doctrinally in truth. If it's an obstruction to our being to them what we ought, it will not be.

We will not be rid of it till we give up all that we have. Something is required from us that we have withheld in our correctness and our love for being correct. And our enjoyment of being correct that has kept us from the demonstration and the ministry to them that would have opened their blind eyes.

Even the desire to see their blind eyes opened. Because I have a sneaky suspicion that there are very few Christians who really yearn to see Israel's return. Most of us are like the older brother who cannot rejoice with the father in the return of the prodigal son.

We resent that return. And we say, let him eat the husks fed to pigs. They deserve it.

That's what they get. They rejected their Messiah. They slew the prophet, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

But the father runs to meet the erring son in his return and kisses him, puts a ring on his finger, a cloak on his back and makes for him a great feast and celebration. But the older son would not even enter. So full of resentment.

So there's something that we have to give up. And I can't put my finger on it. But I'm not saying that it's worldly or ungodly.

That would be easy to divest ourselves. It may be something at the heart of what's right, what's correct, what's doctrinally true. That is the obstruction.

And can only be voided when we give up all. But I hope we won't sadly turn away. We're rich in our own conviction and rich in our own truth, rich in our own identity, rich in our own rightness.

But it's the riches that keep us from the kingdom and the bringing of others into that kingdom. So anything that would compromise us, not only our possessions, but our position. What is the one thing I write in the margin that keeps us from totality toward God? And can I suggest in the moment that it comes to me that you'll know when you have come to that totality, when you have come to an affinity and an appreciation, a respect and even a love for a people that you would otherwise be, for whom you would otherwise be indifferent, hostile or indifferent.

When you have come to a relationship with the Jew in his present condition, even as a rich ruler, obnoxious as all that is, and have an attitude of a sympathetic love and affinity for that person, that to me is the evidence that you have given up all that you have. Because it's totally unnatural. It is something that is out of God's deepest heart to those who are in communion with that deepest heart because nothing interposes itself between your heart and his.

Whatever that was that can't even be defined or identified has been voided when you have given up all. The fact that you have not given up all and have clutched the things that are dear to you, doctrinally and otherwise, keeps you from that identification. I'm not talking about sentiment.

Anybody can come to a cheap sentimental affinity with Jews, but I'll tell you this, they grow up like a puff when they're no longer cute. But the identity of God's heart for them, he loved him even as he said, sell all that you have. He looked at him and he loved him.

We will not come to that so long as we're holding any treasure, however correct that treasure is. It keeps us from that place with God that will reveal to this people their own David and reveal him in ourselves. That remarkable? We who would not have even looked that way will stop for them, stinking blind beggars that they are, and have an authority in ourselves in our communion, union with God, that they might regain their sight.

So what is it that keeps you from this totality that you cannot afford to lose? Is it something that pertains to your own identity? It requires an utterness toward God. For mere zeal is not enough. And zeal is often a counterfeit and an alternative to consecration.

Because it says in the same text in Mark, as he was setting on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, good teacher, what must I do? He ran and he knelt, which is a statement of zeal, which many of us have, but consecration is the giving up of all. Isn't that remarkable? The one who ran and knelt, giving every appearance of the most zealous recognition of Jesus, when he heard the requirement, was not able to make it. And that raises a question for us, who are impressed with our own

zeal, that have we come to the place of consecration that is deeper than zeal, and for which zeal itself may be a counterfeit? There's much instruction.

I'm just touching some of the most conspicuous points for our consideration, because what is rendered here is so remarkably cosmic. What it touches is so utter. Let me read what I wrote on the top of my page here this morning.

The two unprogrammed encounters are full of eschatological significance, encapsulating the totality of cosmic categories. Do you realize what's at stake in the issue of Israel, the Jew, and the Lord? It's not just the issue of even national salvation, great though that is, it's the issue of some final dealing with the wisdom by which the world has lived its life. It's unquestioned premises about man and about God that are totally in error, that presume that man has some virtue in himself or some goodness in himself that entitles him to something from God on that basis.

This is so deep. I'll tell you how deep it is. It's so deep that it's in many of our hearts, that though we subscribe to the doctrines of grace, we live and act and relate to each other on the basis of merit, on what a brother can do, what he is, how impressed we are, and with ourselves.

We measure and evaluate by our performance. We are more Jewish than we know, in the sense that we subscribe unknowingly to the basic axioms and premises by which the world lives its life, which is totally in error and opposition with the view of God. There's no man good but God.

And so these two views are meeting head on. And it takes someone to be stripped totally of anything by which he might impress himself as having a virtue in himself, that he has to be a beggar. He has nothing in himself.

He deserves nothing. He can only appeal for the mercy of God. Have mercy on me.

I deserve nothing. I'm qualified for nothing. I'm a stinking beggar and I'm blind.

But I'm asking you, son of David, have mercy on me. When God sees that, he stops. And not only sees that in an Israel who recognized the Lord, but in anyone.

We have to realize what's at stake here, what is being touched here that is cosmic in its significance. In these two episodes, side by side, and sandwiched between them, is the Lord saying to the disciples, Don't you know that if we go up to Jerusalem, I'm there going to be persecuted by the Gentiles? I'm going to be crucified. But on the third day I'll be raised again.

That is not an inadvertent insertion. It's critical to the binding together of the two segments. And it's critical for us.

Unless we have experienced crucifixion and resurrection, how shall we be to the blind beggar people what we ought? The revelation of their own Messiah in his Braheh and Semitic reality. How do we communicate him in a way in which they can recognize him to cry out for his mercy? If we depict him in any other way than he is in his essence to be. As a son of David.

Oh, that's a... Take that onto your... Like a rare one. Let that stay on your tongue before you swallow it. Son of David is not a little title.

It's the deepest statement of the recognition of who this Jesus is. He's the son of David. He's the son of Abraham.

He's the epitome of the son of Shem. He's the altogether Hebrew of the Hebrews that exceeds Paul's description of himself. And is this aspect of the Lord that has been lost to the church in our historic separation from the people who still covet the origins that out of which Jesus comes.

I will not recognize him until he's depicted again in keeping with that understanding. And the catch is that we are called to that present that revelation. Not as one coming out of Nazareth, though, of course, technically, it's true.

But one coming out of the deepest corridors, the deepest, deepest deeps of all that is biblical, historic, Jewish in the best sense, Hebraic, Semitic. That has been lost to the church and needs to be regained in order to depict him as he, in fact, is and can only be recognized in that way by a people made blind. And they might regain their sight.

So excuse me for my prophetic liberties that I'm taking with the text and know that it came this morning. Not to say, look, my no hands, but to say that if you seek him, you shall be found with him. And it just happened that today is the selection from Oswald Chambers on this text.

And the one thing led to the other and that I saw the conjunction for a first time between the ritual and the blind beggar, as I had never seen it before, because I'm a fortunate man who has the key of interpretation. I have the hermeneutical case. What is that thought? That is the centrality of Israel and the purposes of God from the beginning until the end.

I have that key. I read the scriptures with that key. It opens with a significance that I lost.

Thank you. Have you got the key? So, Lord. Yes.

Precious God on high. Have I been faithful? My God, to share your heart on this text this morning. So let not a word of it return to void.

If this is the word that was sent by you into our midst this morning to open our understanding, to see something of the cosmic significance of what is at stake with this people, Israel, both in their present condition as rich and their soon condition as beggar, then instruct us. And Lord, let us not be in that entourage with you that wants you to move on and not even stop for the poor sucker. And it wants even to shut him up as if he doesn't have a valid right to you, my God, as to the nations.

In fact, except he finds it, the nations will not celebrate you as God and glorify you as God until I see that blind beggar receiving his sight again. So it's all tied together, my God. And we are not jealous for your glory.

We'll not be jealous for this fulfillment. And I'm asking what a bestowal for us in our blindness of that glory that you have established in your wisdom in the issue of Israel, the world Jewry in the last days. And if we are too rich, my God, to have recognized our indebtedness to that people and our relatedness to them and have not caught the inflection of the Hebraic sense of things, even in their blindness that we who have sight have not seen, then make up for that loss.

For we acknowledge that the church has become far too gentile. It has lost its Hebrew origin. It has not recognized with gratitude.

It has been grafted into their trade. We have not rightly represented you to them. And if we have missed it to them, how much have we succeeded to the Greek? And so we're asking, my God, that you would call for something this morning that we ourselves cannot identify.

It's our riches that have kept us from the rightful place. We have not given up all. And the last thing that we are unwilling to relinquish, that thing that is most dear is not carnal wealth or properties or things of that kind, but our doctrine, our body of belief, our role, our identity, our understanding of the faith that is so correct.

May you have all, all, all, all, not one turning away. So give us, my God, by your Spirit, now in these moments, what that all is for us. Different for this one as from that one.

Whether there's so much as one thing that has to deal with self-interest, even of a spiritual kind, that obstructs us from that union with your heart, that loves that blind beggar as it loves the rich ruler and desires the restoration of that people and does not resent it, and is willing to be adjusted by you in the present truth in Christ Jesus and the pathos and empathy that has been unknown to us without fear of being Judaized. Then do that. Find that thing, Lord.

And you saints pray. Under your breath. Lord, you know that one thing is I can hardly identify it myself, but I sense that there's something that has not been given up.

The all, that word all. Sell all that you have, all. Lord, you know what that is.

And even if I can't identify it, I surrender it. If there's any impediment, any obstruction between my heart and yours, let alone it should be the body of correct doctrine that I so delight in espousing and defending, take that all. It's the final requirement.

And we had not thought you would ever ask it of us. But you're Lord and you know. What's at stake? Come, my God, turn your word into an event.

It's wonderful to be instructed, but it's yet greater to be dealt with. Turn this word, my God, into a requirement for us. And Trent and transact something with every soul in this room who is hearing you and is willing to surrender all.

Thank you, my God. And we'll know when we have done it, because the strangest thing will happen. A new affinity, a new respect, a new appreciation, a new love for this people in their present condition.

And even in the condition that is future but near, when they'll become despicable bums without a thing to their name, living in ditches as beggars by the side of the road, stinking. We'll stop for them. We cannot constrain ourselves because you have put something in the place that has been open to you in the giving up of all, which is your heart to that people.

It's a mystery. And we ask, my God, it's fulfillment. We're called to that fulfillment.

We are the last day saints. Come, my God, and transact with your people. Hear a prayer here and there, a cry here and there of whatever we have been retaining as dear to ourselves that is yet an impediment to you.

Feel free to pray aloud. Because if you're really giving up all, you're giving up even your sense of dignity and your sense of embarrassment. What is there to hide? What is there to conceal if the all is being given up? And the evidence is your willingness to pray aloud and let others hear your cry, your confession, your prayer.

If you're holding it back and praying privately, you're still retaining that which protects your dignity. Lord, I am sick of spirituality and respectability. Take and do what you will.

I'm fed up of holding and trying to maintain something before you that I subconsciously think that I can maintain something in order to stay saved or to retain my salvation. Lord, take all. Take all.

I don't know what it is. Just take it. Thank you, Lord.

Life, Lord, life. Thank you, my God.

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