

How to Not Go Away Sad

Mark 10:13-33

#29 in Jesus Stories series

Peter Hiett

February 1, 2015

Prayer

And so Lord, thank you that you've always loved us, you always will, but we confess that we kind of don't know that. We say that, but deep inside our hearts, maybe we don't know that. So we pray that this morning you would help us to preach your word, in Jesus' name, amen.

Message

This week's message is a continuation of last week's message, so it would be ridiculous to judge this week's message without first listening to last week's message. But now I'll at least remind you of what we said last week. At the start, we told a story—the legend of a holy man who lived each moment in joy and wonder. His life was like a dance.

One night, this holy man camped outside of a village, and a man came running to him from the village yelling, "Give me the stone! Give me the stone!" "What stone?" asked the holy man. The man said, "Last night the Lord told me in a dream that you would give me a precious stone that would make me rich forever!" The holy man rummaged through his bag and pulled out a stone: "The Lord must have meant this one. I found it on the path the other day. You certainly may have it." And he handed the stone to the man from the village with a smile. The man gazed in wonder. It was a diamond, easily ten pounds (the largest in the world). He took the diamond, but all that night he tossed and turned, unable to sleep. Early in the morning he went back to the holy man and said, "Give me the wealth that makes it possible for you to give this diamond away so easily."

We asked, "What kind of person could give away a ten-pound diamond so easily?" And we realized a little child could give away a ten-pound diamond so easily. And a little child could receive the kingdom of God so easily. A little child trusts and follows easily. A little child doesn't believe he or she is responsible for love, so he or she can respond to love. A little child could give away a ten-pound diamond with a smile, but a rich young ruler cannot. And unless you can give away ten-pound diamonds with a smile, it appears that you cannot be saved.

Well, last time (and even the time before) we preached that Jesus came to give us a mirror – a mirror that turns rich young rulers into little children.¹ For it tells us who we truly are: We are children dearly beloved by a Father who is Love and has all power. Jesus gave us a mirror like this:

A bunch of adults are shown dancing in front of a window, all seeing images of themselves as little children playfully dancing in the window reflection. The commercial ends with an old lady approaching the window scene with her dog. She starts dancing and her pink-sweatered baby reflection looks back at her with an "Oh, my" astonished expression; mouth closed, eyes wide open, and chin tilted downward, like she is looking through granny glasses.

That was last week's sermon. Now, let's take another look at our text and dig a little deeper.

¹ The mirror is a sword that cuts away our resume, our false self, our adult self, our flesh. It cuts away the false and reveals the true.

Mark 10: 13-17

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What must I do to inherit?"

That's a strange question, for to *inherit* something you don't *do* anything.

Unless you are the uncreated creator, you inherit everything (all you have and all you do, all that you are, and even your will to do it). Unless you have created yourself out of nothing, you must inherit everything. Little children are aware of that. Rich young rulers seem to have forgotten that.

You didn't create the diamond. You stumbled across someone else's diamond. And if you consider it to be your diamond, then you have stolen that diamond, the Creator's diamond. Well, anyway, like I was saying, to inherit something, from someone, you don't do anything, unless of course, you were to kill the someone from whom you'd like to inherit the something.

The rich young ruler wants to inherit, "eternal life" and Jesus said, "*I am – the life.*"

"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10: 18-22

And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.² You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

He went away sad, because he had great possessions. He went away sorrow – full.

And Jesus seems to have great sorrow for him. He feels genuinely sorry for him – for he possesses things, or the things possess him, or both. Jesus looks on him and loves him, that's why he says these things to him. So please note: Jesus doesn't need this guy's money (as we've seen, Jesus can find money in the mouth of fish and turn water into fine wine).

² God is good and Jesus is God with us. The rich young ruler wants knowledge of the good. You know that it was rich young rulers who wanted knowledge of the good, that took the life of the good in a garden on a tree that we call a cross. "*No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments.*" The commandments are descriptions of love. The commandments are knowledge of good and evil. The rich young rulers take knowledge of the good to justify themselves and thereby crucify the Life and lose the life, revealing they are evil and dead.

We pastors often preach to rich young rulers so we can become rich young rulers of rich young rulers with rich young churches. But Jesus doesn't need this guy's stuff. This guy just needs to get rid of his stuff. Jesus says, "*Give it to the poor.*" And I don't think Jesus is worried about the poor. If anything, he's worried about the rich. In Luke, he says, "*Woe to you that are rich now,*" and "*Blessed are you that are poor, of such consists the kingdom*" (Luke 6:20 & 24).

He also said that about little children, "of such consists the kingdom" (Mark 10:14), and all little children are poor. "*Blessed—happy are the poor.*" In Mathew 5 He says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*" I think that means, if you're physically poor, but you want to be rich, then you're not poor in spirit, but like, woe in spirit. That is, you're greedy.³

1 Corinthian 6:10 The greedy...will *not* "*inherit the kingdom of God.*"

Watch the BBC World News. This past week they reported that: The 85 richest people in our world possess as much as the 3.5 billion poorest people in our world. They also reported that the top 1% will soon own more than the bottom 50%. They went on to say that if you possess property worth \$800,000, you are in the top 1%. But listen closely: Jesus wasn't just talking about the top 1%. I think He was talking about everyone that *wants* to be in the top 1%. I think he was talking about anyone that has two coats and is unwilling, or doesn't want, to give one coat to the man that has no coats.

He's talking about anyone that couldn't give away a ten-pound diamond with a smile. And please note: Jesus didn't say, "Give ten percent." In other words, this is not a story about "smart money management;" this is a story about no money management because you've given it all away.

Now you may say, "Jesus didn't say this to everyone." And I suppose that's true. In fact, in 1 Timothy 5: 8, Paul writes that if a person doesn't provide for their family, they're worse than an unbeliever. But then he goes on to say (1 Timothy 6: 8), "*But if we have food and clothing we'll be content,*" not "if we have Disneyland, we'll be content." But it's not as if Jesus hates Disneyland or doesn't appreciate fine things. It's that He appreciates everybody appreciating fine things. And He really appreciates giving away fine things like ten-pound diamonds with a smile. He even likes giving away work.

In 2 Thessalonians 3: 10, Paul writes, "*If a person is not willing to work – let him not eat.*" "*Let them not eat*" until they will to work, for even work is to be a blessing. So not giving to the poor that won't work shouldn't stop you from giving to the poor that will to work. You can always find them. There's what, four or five billion of them, at least.

³ 1 Corinthians 6: 9 – 10

. . . "*do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*"

Everybody gets hung up on that homosexuality part . . . and seems to totally ignore the greedy part! And by the way, I think greed is a genetic predisposition as well as something shaped by the environment. No one consciously chooses to "be greedy," but they are "greedy" and every one of us chooses to do "greedy things." We're Americans for God's sake!

So maybe Jesus didn't say, "sell all" to everyone, but He did say to everyone, in Luke 12:33 "Sell your possessions and give to the poor." And check this out: In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes, "If I give away all I have, and I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

So, unless you are willing to work and sell your possessions and give to the poor and do it all because you want to, and love to and not because you have to; I think you may be greedy and the greedy will not inherit the kingdom.

I think we're all rich young rulers, or want to be, and the rich young ruler goes away sad because he has "great possessions." Maybe you're sad because you have great possessions. And now the Gospel: Jesus feels sad for you and He looks on you with love.

Mark 10: 22-23

Disheartened by the saying, [the rich young ruler] went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have chrema (wealth, business, responsibilities) to enter the kingdom of God!"

Luke records that this man was an *archon*. That's the Greek for ruler. He was a *ruler* with *responsibilities*. I'm definitely rich compared to most in this world, and if I'm not rich compared to you, . . . well, I am the ruler of the Sanctuary Downtown and in Foothills, and I feel extremely responsible for what I rule.

Actually, right before the service, as we were praying here in the back room, I heard a knock on the door at the bottom of the stairs. I opened it and this wild-eyed bearded fellow said to me, "Hey Peter, want to go with me?"

I said, "Where are you going?"

He said, "I'm going to a place where beggars and peasants are invited to sit at the King's table."

I said, "You can't be serious."

He said, "That's right, and they throw lavish parties for juvenile delinquents, bad boys, lost sheep and prodigals."

I said, "Come on, don't kid with me."

And He said, "So, are you comin'?"

I said, "Look, I can't follow you on some crazy adventure. I'm the pastor of this church and I've got a sermon to preach. I'm responsible for the Word of God."

When I got back upstairs, Kathleen said to me, "What was that about?"

I said, "I don't know, some crazy man full of wild notions."

She said, "Was he alone?"

I said, "Well, he did have these twelve guys with him."

Now, you're thinking, "Hey, that didn't really happen." And that's right – it didn't happen, and yet it happens all the time: God is love and "Jesus is the truth" and "Jesus is the life." Has Love ever asked you to follow? And you replied, "I'm sorry that would cost too much." Has Truth ever asked you to follow? And you replied, "I can't, for that might damage business, and I have too many responsibilities!" Has Life ever asked you to follow, and you didn't choose life because you wanted to be a rich young ruler? But then, you went away sad? If you think you possess the Word of God, responsible for the Word of God, you couldn't follow the Word of God, could you... even if He showed up at the back door?

Mark 10: 23-24

“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth (responsibilities) to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!”

“Children.” He calls the twelve “children.” And it’s at this point in Matthew that he reminds the twelve that they will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. To these twelve He entrusts His mission. And even by worldly standards, these twelve proved to be the most influential group of men that has ever lived. In just a few weeks, Jesus will entrust to them “the kingdom” and Peter will lead them and Jesus calls them “children.”

Mark 10: 24-25

Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Now, I’ve studied this, Do you know what camel means?

“Camel” means “camel.” And do you know what “eye of a needle” actually means? The “eye of a needle.”

C.S. Lewis argued that it is possible to get a camel through the eye of a needle; it’s just extremely hard on the camel. The only things that fit through the eye of a needle are things that are the size of what? About the size of a mustard seed. Jesus said, *“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed”* and remember: Jesus is “the promised seed,” and we will all be judged – right down to Faith, the faith of a child, and Jesus always remains a child.

Mark 10: 25-27

“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”

If someone with all that wealth and all that will power can’t do it, who can do it? *Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”*

It’s impossible for a rich young ruler to give away a ten-pound diamond, with a smile.
It’s impossible for a rich young ruler to freely choose to be a poor, powerless, and happy child.
It’s impossible for a greedy person to just decide to not be greedy.
It’s impossible for a man to cut out his own heart of stone and give himself God’s heart of flesh.
It’s impossible for a man to simply choose to love as God loves.
It’s impossible for any man to save himself – impossible – but *“all things are possible with God.”*

Mark 10: 28

Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”

Has Peter left *everything*?

He thinks he's left everything, yet he hasn't left his pride over leaving everything, or his fear that he might not have left everything.

He hasn't left his sense of responsibility for everything remember – including Jesus – the Word of God.

Remember, Jesus appointed Peter to lead His church and entrusted him with the riches of the gospel. And that must've felt like quite a responsibility to reign and rule over such an endeavor. And I hope you see the irony in this story. Jesus is the richest, youngest ruler that ever lived. And Peter will now be the richest youngest ruler alive. And every Christian is destined to reign, and rule, and live forever young.

You know there's nothing wrong with making money and leading people. God commands Adam to *"till the garden and keep it"* and Adam is to *"exercise dominion."*

There's nothing wrong with making money, the problem comes with keeping money. And there's nothing wrong with leading people, the problem comes with keeping people.

If you're a businessman, the currency with which you measure success is money. If you're a preacher, a pastor, or a fisher of men, the currency with which you measure success is men. And if you think those men are your possession, then you're not just sad, but wretched. And if you think the grace of God and Jesus the Christ are your possession and your responsibility, well, aren't you Satanic? *"Get behind me, Satan."*

Well, Peter hasn't given up everything. To save his ego, he'll soon deny Jesus and be sifted by Satan. Like a camel, forced through the eye of a needle, he will die to himself, but then rise with Jesus and give away ten-pound diamonds with a smile. He will give away the Kingdom of God with a smile.

Mark 10: 29-31

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Jesus said, *"Give your possessions to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven."* He also said, *"Heaven is at hand."* Like, you can keep your money in a bank or you can turn your money into bread and keep it in the belly of a hungry child and that child is your *"heaven at hand."*

Years ago, I stood in a half finished church building in Maputo, Mozambique. We were showing the Jesus film and the place was overrun with little children – really happy children. And then I noticed an old man acting very young. He was covered in little kids, as if he was the life of the party and I thought, "How strange." Through the interpreter, I discovered he had been a very wealthy and successful businessman in Brazil and extremely sad and lonely, until he liquidated his assets and began building churches in the slums of Maputo, Mozambique. And now, he'd routinely travel from Brazil to Mozambique, not because he needed to, but because he wanted to, for those children had become his home – his treasure, and his heaven, his house of endless love.

Mark 10: 30

. . . a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions (This is no 'health and wealth' scheme/formula), and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

The great Bible scholar Joachim Jeremias wrote that, in this instance, "*many*" means "*all*."

In Matthew 20:16, Jesus just says it plainly: "*the last will be first and the first last*." And now, if you're still not offended, you're just not paying attention: "*The first will be last*."

If you've been judging the "rich young rulers" thinking, "I'm best at not being one," you're actually the worst, and you are one: "*The first will be last and the last first*." Imagine if they announced that at the end of the Superbowl: "*The first will be last and the last first*." Could there be a harsher judgment upon all human striving and the way of this world? I mean can you even imagine such a world? Such a kingdom – such a place? So Jesus says, "rich young ruler, if you're the first, give all you have to the last." And the rich young ruler goes away sad.

So I'd like to ponder this question:

***Why can't the Rich Young Ruler
give away his 10 lb. diamond?***

Why did the rich young ruler not give away his ten-pound diamond?

***Why can't the Rich Young Ruler
give away his 10 lb. diamond?***

- He doesn't trust that God provides.

1) The rich young ruler did not trust that God provides.

When my kids started school, we discovered that we had to give them exact change with which to buy their lunch. For no matter how much I said, "Listen, you need to bring home the change," they'd never bring home the change. And they never lost it nor spent it on themselves. Invariably some other child would say, "I'd like a cookie or I'd like a pop, but I don't have any money," and my child would say, "Well, you may certainly have this money." And like the holy man with the ten-pound diamond, they'd give it away with a smile. So, I'd have to sit them down, but what would I say? "Stop giving my money away! Stop it! That's irresponsible! It's not like money grows on trees or appears in the mouths of fish. It's not like water turns to wine. It's not like the sun shines and the plants grow and the rain falls and the fish swim – all for free! You have a father that provides you with all you need, but it's not like I have a father that's good enough or strong enough to provide me with all I need. Stop assuming that I have faith in God like you have faith in me. Stop being so faithful." Is that what I should've told them?

Now you might say, "Well, if you don't teach them that money comes from work, they'll never work." But you see, that's the crazy thing: Little children work, and work, and work until they

pass out. They work, but we call it “play.” They work, but they don’t believe that their work is the source of their provision. So, why do they work? They work because they like to “play.” They like to do whatever they see their Father doing.

My children always wanted to do whatever I was doing, but they didn’t trust their work – they trusted me and so their work felt like play. And even as they worked, their little hearts rested, and all their work was worship and their work abides – It still hangs on my office walls and fills boxes in the basement. I love their work.

The rich young ruler didn’t trust that God provides.

***Why can’t the Rich Young Ruler
give away his 10 lb. diamond?***

- He doesn’t trust that God provides.
- He doesn’t trust that God provides his righteousness.

He didn’t trust that God provides his righteousness (that is his *right*-ness). We all know something’s wrong in our hearts, we can feel it, and we all want to make it right. See, I don’t think rich young rulers actually care about possessions all that much, and they don’t care about ten-pound diamonds. They just think that those things will make them right. And advertisers hope you think those things will make you right. But ten-pound diamonds, possessions and McDonald hamburgers will not make you right.

A McDonalds commercial is shown:

A youthful female voice girl sings: “It’s endless,” as Wiley Coyote and Road Runner face each other with an push lever box between them that Wiley pushes and explodes into heart shapes around them. The music continues, “Do, do” we see a girl wearing black sunglasses and a bathing suit lying on a striped beach towel handing a hamburger to a shark lying on his own towel on the beach, in sunglasses, who smiles showing all his teeth as he takes it.

The singing goes on, “do, do bah, bah” as a butterfly flies by King Kong on a building making a heart shaped cloud behind it, causing King Kong to place one hand on his hip to think as it flies by. The girl sings, “It’s endless,” and an image shows red and blue fighting boxers knocking fists and then knocking each other’s blocks off, exploding into hearts all around them.

The tune continues, “Thirteen, I’ve got brand new eyes,” and a cheese-headed guy is shown handing a drink to a New England logger guy with an axe. The song continues saying, “Fourteen, everything’s a sur-prise...” A bored Siamese cat is sitting on a pillow, being handed a McDonald’s happy meal and then as it is dangling above his head, his eyes open wide. The song continues: “Fifteen, not a day that I regret,” written words appear saying “Choose lovin’.” The song continues, “Everything is end-less.” The commercial closes to a small yellow heart of happiness on a blue field. The commercial ends with Macdonald’s arches over a happy, which says “I’m lovin’ it.”

What are they selling? Hamburgers. But, they are marketing endless love. They’re attaching endless love to hamburgers, while Burger King attaches freedom to hamburgers: “Have it your way,” and Wendy’s attaches hearth and home to hamburgers, their: “old-fashioned hamburgers.” But you can’t buy a true home or real freedom and certainly not endless love. But we must think you can because all those commercials work. You can’t possess Endless Love, but Endless Love can possess you.

You know, a spoiled child begins to think that possessions can make them right. They begin to mistake signs of love for the presence of love. They get whatever they want, but no longer want whatever they get, for they've lost their capacity to want what they truly need, and that is what they most deeply want. They want love. They need love and only love can make us right. Love is what makes ten-pound diamonds right. When my boys were little, I just loved buying Hot Wheels for them when we went to the grocery store. For ninety-nine cents, I could rock their world. But sometimes I'd make myself not buy Hot Wheels, no matter how much they begged, no matter how much they laid on the floor and cried that I did not love them, for I didn't want them confusing Hot Wheels with the love that gave them the Hot Wheels. I didn't want to spoil them, for spoiled children always go away sad.

The rich young ruler is confusing his possessions with the Love who gave him those possessions.

Why can't the Rich Young Ruler

give away his 10 lb. diamond?

- He doesn't trust that God provides.
- He doesn't trust that God provides his righteousness.
- He doesn't trust that God provides his righteousness and so he thinks that he must make himself righteous.

s," and be possessed by love.

Well, the rich young ruler doesn't trust that God provides his righteousness, so he tries to make himself righteous by making himself first, which is really last, for Love makes itself last that others might be first.

I don't think rich young rulers care about possessions and ten-pound diamonds. They care about having more possessions and more ten-pound diamonds. But what if you consider your ability to give away possessions to be a great possession? I mean, could a "holy man" make giving away diamonds his ten-pound diamond?

A disciple came to the Great Master saying: "I have come with nothing in my hands" and the master said, "drop it at once. You hold nothing as if it was a possession." Peter said to Jesus, "*We've given up everything to follow you.*" But has he given up everything?

Jesus said, "*You are Rocky and on this rock I'll build my church.*" See, I think Peter was feeling some pressure and so trying to make himself the rich young ruler of the church. He was trying to make himself righteous, but not only that; he wanted to be more righteous! So if righteousness were about selling possessions, he'd sell more possessions. If it were about letting Jesus wash your feet, well he'd ask Jesus to wash his whole body. If it were about being faithful, he'd be more faithful.

So on the night Jesus was betrayed, at dinner he said, "Look, Jesus, even if these guys fall away, I will never fall away." "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you." And that night, when Jesus needed him the most, he denied Jesus three times, the cock crowed, and Peter was sifted like a camel forced through the eye of a needle. He exalted himself and was humbled. The first of the disciples became last of the disciples. And then he became first, which is to be last; for you are "first of all" you must be "last of all and servant of all."

“The last will be first and the first last!”

Have you ever really thought about that? Have you ever seen a society like that? Where the last is first and first last?

Erma Bombeck wrote:

Every mother has a favorite child. . . . I have mine—the child . . . with whom I share a love that no one else could possibly understand . . . My favorite child, [that is: the one I consider first] My favorite child is the one who messed up the piano recital, . . . ran the wrong way with the football, and had his bike stolen because he was careless. My favorite child is the one I punished for lying {and} grounded for insensitivity to other people’s feelings. . . My favorite child slammed doors in frustration {and } cried when she didn’t think I saw her . . . My favorite child was selfish, immature, bad-tempered and self-centered. He was vulnerable, lonely, unsure of what he was doing in this world—and quite wonderful. All mothers have their favorite child. It is always the same one: the one who needs you at the moment.

I think I’ve experienced that as a father, in the society of my home—in my living room. So in my mind, and in my heart, when I ask myself: “Which of my four children was the first?” Well, I think the answer is the one that considered himself, or herself, to be last:

- The one that hid the beer bottles under her bed.
- The one that told me she secretly felt so incredibly sad, like, all the time.
- The one that got caught in his lies.
- The one that thought I loved his brother more than him.

Who does God the Father love most? Jesus? Or maybe the rich young ruler? Or maybe Peter? Or maybe Judas? Or do you not think/believe that “the last will be first” and that “the first of all” made himself “last of all and servant of all”?

Well, imagine if all the children loved the Father, and all the children loved each other, the way the Father loved the children – that is, the way Jesus loves each one of us.

- It would be like a great party, wherein the moment someone is perceived to be last, someone else chooses to be last, so the last would be first.
- It would be like a great game of “pass the ten-pound diamond.” Wherein the joy is not in holding the diamond, the joy is in passing the diamond.
- It would be like Revelation, chapter five, where the saints constantly cast their crowns before Him and He must then constantly put them back on their heads—Where all humble themselves and are thereby exalted.
- It would be like a great dance, in which you can’t tell who is first and who is last.
- It would be Heaven!

And if the last *are* to be first, there could be no torture chamber of endless horrors that we call “Hell.” For any “hell” must be consumed by the great dance that is heaven.

Just as death and Hades will be consumed by Eternal Fire.

Just as every *“heart of stone must be replaced with a heart of eternal flesh.”*

Just as “the perishable must put on the imperishable.”

Just as “every knee will bow and every tongue give praise.”

God has made Himself *“last of all and servant of all”* in Christ Jesus our Lord—the slaughtered lamb standing on the throne. He is endless love, but not your own private possession.

So then, why did the rich young ruler find it so hard to give away his possessions? He didn't trust that God provides his righteousness and, so he tried to make himself righteous.

**Why can't the Rich Young Ruler
give away his 10 lb. diamond?**

- He doesn't trust that God provides.
- He doesn't trust that God provides his righteousness.
- He doesn't trust that God provides his righteousness and so he thinks that he must make himself righteous. is more powerful than love.
- He doesn't believe that his Father is love and there is no person more powerful than Love. more powerful than love,” becomes

diamond? Because, you see, I think we at the Sanctuary have stumbled upon a ten-pound diamond.

How do we not “go away sad?”

How does Peter not “go away sad?”

How does the rich young ruler not “go away sad?”

Well, we have to give away *all* we think we possess!

Juan Carlos Ortiz used to talk about how they preached this thing at his church, in Argentina, about Jesus' Lordship and giving, and before long the church had been given so many “possessions” that they didn't know what to do with all the “property.” So they said, “If you give your car to the church, we'd like you to care for the car and drive the car – our car. And if you give your house, we'd like you to live in the house – our house. If we ever need to use the house, we'll call and say we'd like to use our house and our land and drive our car. We'll make you stewards of our land, house, and car.”

And Jesus taught that you are a steward, so you must surrender all your possessions to Him because a steward owns nothing. You must surrender all your possessions to Him and then ask him, “Would you like me to live in your house? Would you like me to drive your car to your job and then take your money – and buy some of your food to feed your kids? And would you like me to take them to Disneyland?” And don't be surprised if He says, “Yes” for He likes Disneyland and even ten-pound diamonds. You're a steward, caring for His family, and you are His family and He loves you.

In 1 Peter 4: 10 Peter writes that we are each stewards of God's varied grace. You know Peter was the chief steward of the gospel of grace and that's easily as valuable as a ten-pound diamond. Peter was charged with giving it away, but over the years the church began to not give it away. The church began to market the ten-pound diamond. The church began saying things like: The Father loves you if...; God forgives you if...; Jesus died for you if..., the first of all became servant of all if...; all things are possible for God. . . if you make them possible for God.”

The pastors, priests, and popes became rich young rulers that would not surrender the diamond, and I bet that's because they felt responsible for the diamond. They felt responsible for love and could not respond to love freely, receiving love and freely giving love. They felt responsible for grace. They believed grace was their own possession.

And now we hold the ten-pound diamond. We know God is love and nothing is more powerful than love and you know I feel responsible to comprehend that message and explain that message and proclaim that message. But I often go away sad, feeling crushed by the burden of that message.

On Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that message. He was poor, but rich. He was powerless, yet profoundly powerful. He was not a rich young ruler, and yet he was the greatest, richest, youngest ruler walking the face of the earth at that time, and he didn't go away sad. He was like a superhero on which the church of Christ was built. He was filled with the Spirit of Jesus. And like we said last time, Jesus was the richest of all rulers and even Lord of time – richest youngest ruler, and He gave it all away. He was first and became last so the last could be first.

It's impossible for men, but possible for God and Jesus is the Son of God. And Jesus had a mirror; the eyes of his Father were His mirror. He'd look in the mirror and hear the Father say, *"Behold my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* Children don't "do" to become beloved. They trust that they are beloved and so they do.

Jesus believed He was beloved and that His Father is Love, and nothing is more powerful than Love. And so He gave Himself away, and all things with Him.

He humbled Himself, and God has highly exalted Him.

He is the richest, youngest, Ruler.

He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

He is the Savior of the world.

He's the *Eschatos* Man, Super Adam, Super Hero,

And yet, He forever remains His Father's child, for He has a mirror.

How could Peter bear the weight of his calling—to preach the gospel of salvation and lead the advance of the new creation upon the face of this fallen world? How could he do it? He couldn't do it without that mirror and the heart of the child. Jesus suffered, died, and rose again to give Peter his mirror so he could look in that mirror and do what he did (what he was called to do) with the heart of a child.

Another Evian water commercial is shown:

Spiderman jumps off the edge of a building flinging webs and swinging through the city. He swings up into an escape ladder of a building and looks across the way. He sees his reflection in a window. He stops to look closer. As he moves downward, a little child-sized Spiderman is reflected back in a building's reflection. Spiderman looks around, tilts his head, and puts his hand to his chin as if he is reflecting or thinking on what he sees. He waves to his image and his little child image waves back. The image pans to Spiderman and his reflection standing sideways on the building looking down at their toes and at each other. Spiderman jumps backward off the building and flips onto the ground. The child Spiderman & grown up Spiderman look at each other and throw webs at each other. The little Spiderman throws a web and forms a loop, swinging it down and around into a jump rope. The two jump together—jumping faster and faster looking up and then down to the side, then waving to each other as if to say, "Bring it on."

Spiderman does a wave stepping motion and points to his reflection. Then you see his little child reflection dancing and strutting, waving it back to Spiderman. Spiderman waves his little image away and then throws out a web line to the side, turning, and moonwalking backwards. The camera backs up and you see an image of both of them moonwalking backwards. They continue dancing and spin as a taxicab drives by. Then, they jig, do an arm and body waving motion sideways, and then do a back flip to come down into a split and then lift into a crouch. The dance comes to a close with both rising from their crouch, standing, and putting their hands up to their chins and resting their elbows on their arms in a thinking posture as the sound of sirens go

Remember how Peter, Peter Parker, almost quit being Spiderman because he could barely endure the burden/ the responsibility of having to save the world? Well, imagine if he could look in a mirror and see that he was a child of a Father who is absolute Love, and who has all power, and who constantly provides all we need, including our rightness, our success, for He has already declared: *“Behold, my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”*

Imagine if he could look in a mirror like that. Imagine if *you* could look in a mirror like that. Well, you might do everything you did before and yet do it in an entirely different way. In fact, all your work might feel like play and you might give yourself and even-ten pound diamonds away with a smile.

Communion

Well on the night Jesus, the Son of man, The Super man, was betrayed He gave it all away. He took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body given to you. Take and eat it in remembrance of me.” And in the same way, He took the cup saying, “This cup is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you. And do it in remembrance of me.”

Look! This is your mirror. (Peter points down at the communion table). This tells you who you are, and this is the ten-pound diamond. This is endless love. But you do not possess this, (Peter waves his hands and looks down at the table) like some private possession. This possesses you and you are to give Him to others, like a child. You’re called to give it away.

Prayer

Let’s pray. Father in Heaven, you have given everything to us. Even the breath I breathe right now is a gift from you, given to me, and the will with which I speak is a gift you’ve given to me. Everything is a gift given from you to me. And so Lord God, I give it back to you. We give it back to you. In fact, if you would, just pray this silently in your heart. Say silently, “Father, I surrender to you all my possessions. And Father, I surrender to you the ten-pound diamond. You are Endless Love, and there is enough love for all, even my enemies. In Jesus’ name, make me an instrument of your peace. Amen.

Benediction

If you’re like me, you listen to a sermon like this and you think, “Oh crap!” You read the story, and then you listen to the BBC World News, and you think, “I’m such a rich young ruler and I better get my crap together.” Right? “I better be more of a child and less of a rich young ruler.” Well, that’s a very rich young ruler kind of thing to do.

And you need to hear Jesus: "It's impossible for men and women. It's impossible. You can't make it work."

So how do we make it work? Well, in the story, Scripture says that Jesus loved him and looked at him. But it doesn't say the rich young ruler looked at Jesus. In fact, I think the moment the rich young ruler heard Jesus say what He said he looked down.

And why did he look down?

Because he was afraid to look up!

What did he think he would see in the eyes of Jesus?

Condemnation.

But what was in the eyes of Jesus?

Love.

I imagine that his eyes said: "Look, we can do this. We can do this! We can live. We can live in freedom and truth! Come with me! I love you." But he looked down.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.