

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Follow Me

PART

4

TITLE

I Will Be Your Treasure

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 19:16-30



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Well, Providence, it's good to see you. I hope that you have had a great week. If you are new with us here at Providence and a guest, we are thrilled that you have joined us. It's always an honor of ours when we have guests. Welcome. We're glad that you are here. We have been praying, I hope that you have as well, for a lot of families, a lot of people who are hurting all over our state and region. There's been lots of people who, rightly so, have asked, "How can we as a church family help?" There's a wall on the back as well as on our website. There's four ways that we would urge you to help. One is to pray. There's a lot of people who are really in need of what only God himself can give. Would you be praying faithfully for people? As the weeks draw on, we'll be more distracted with just the whole reality of life and the storm will seem so far away, but they need our prayers.

Second is to give. We love to partner with a group. It's called Baptist on Mission. It's really a lot of churches all over our whole state and they partner and 100% of the funds that they receive goes to flood victims. If you want to give and know that it's going straight to those families, that's a place you can do that. The third thing is you can go. You can actually sign up and what we are doing is I would say in the next two weeks to probably a year out, we'll be sending out teams that will be populated from folks just like you who actually go and say, "I can go and help." If you want to go, what that means, for the next month or six months, most of the homes and the work, you don't need a whole lot of skill, you just need a lot of willingness.

It's a lot of mud in the houses. It's just a lot of stuff that you have to just take out of the homes. In time, we'll need a little bit more skill to help them build back their homes and their lives, but right now, it's just willingness. You have to be 14 to actually sign up and go. If you're less than 14, we thought it'd be great for us to do one more thing. The fourth is you can actually donate. What we want to do is that every team that goes out, we want them to go with a bunch of hygiene bags. If you want to help us do that, there's two bins in the back lobby. If you can build one or more of those bags that, when our teams go out to the various homes to help them, we have something to give them as a gift. We would love for you to engage in that way.

Let's pray for them now. Father in heaven, thank you for your great love for us. We thank you for your mercy that's been poured out to us, your great love for everyone on the earth. There are people, hurting people, that you know. You know their name. You know their heartache. You know their loss. They're in our state, in our region, and even on the other side of the world. So many people that are grieving the loss. Lord, in our own state, the 32 people who died as a result, we know they all have a family. We pray this morning for their families, that you would comfort them, that you would support them, that you would draw near to them. We also pray for those that lost their home or who are even right now still in a shelter. I pray, God, that you would support them, that you would encourage them. I pray for those who are in need of food and good, clean water, God, that the roads, Lord, that the water would, Lord, that it would reside it and that, Lord, those trucks with the food and with the water could get there.

We also pray for those who are helping and serving, who are feeding, who are rescuing, who are working on power lines and working with people. All of these responders, would you please be with them? Would you give them strength and endurance? Would you, Lord, fill their hearts with mercy towards people? Even in their weariness, would you sustain them? Again, we pray for all of these individuals and pray that you would help us as a church family to rightly respond to the love that you give to us in our need as we see need all around us. We look to you in faith. Help us, Lord, to be organized to help. We also thank you for your word. As we open it up to Matthew 19, we thank you that this was recorded and it's been preserved for us. I pray that you would speak through weakness, that you would give us the gift of belief as well as courage to put what we see into practice. Would you help us to see where we fit in the story and how to respond? We look to you in faith as we open up your word. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, I want to ask you to do something that a third of the people in the world can not do. That is would you turn to Matthew chapter 19? As you do that and if you are just consciously aware of the fact that over a third of the people in the world do not have a Bible in their language, I hope that you'll turn there also with gratitude. If you don't have a Bible, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one at home, you take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have that. We're in a series that's called Follow Me. This is one of these passages where we find Jesus interacting with a real man. He encourages him to follow him. Yet, at the end of the story, the man rejects Jesus, and he walks away, and he doesn't follow him. It's sad. It's terrifying. It's sobering because we're a part of this story as well.

You see, every single one of us, we all sort of make assumptions about celebrity, about these people out there that we know their face and we know their name, but we really don't know who they are. We make assumptions of what they're like and what they talk about and if they laugh a lot or if they don't laugh a lot. It's interesting is that sometimes when we have the opportunity then to actually get in front of somebody that we have sort of admired or wonder how wonderful it must be to be around them, suddenly we see the real them and it may be stunning to us. We may be really discouraged. The most amazing thing happens. This happens to Jesus in the story.

You see, people make assumptions. They make assumptions about who Jesus is and what Jesus is like and what Jesus says and has said, what he requires, what he demands, and what he promises. Then, people get in front of the real Jesus. We see it in a story when he was actually on the earth, but we also see it today when people open up a story just like this. There's going to be many of us that actually sadly will do the very same thing that the man in the story will do. He'll walk away and conclude that, no, that's not the Jesus that I want a part of my life. You have to understand this is the real Jesus though. This man comes in front and suddenly he sees the real Jesus, and he walks away stunned and sorrowful.

Let's read it. It starts in verse 16. This is what he says, "And behold, a man came up to him," that's Jesus, "saying, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you call me about what is good? There's only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'All of these I have kept. What do I still lack?' And Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect or complete, then go and sell what you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then, come. Follow me.' When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, I tell you 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.' When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and he said, 'With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.' Then Peter said in reply, 'See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' And Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my namesake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.'"

What we find here in this passage is a pretty remarkable young man. He's wealthy in a number of ways. First of all, he's just wealthy. He's rich. He has many possessions. He has a comfortable bed. He has a comfortable home like many of us. The second thing we learn about this man is that he was morally upright. He was someone who not only knew that when Jesus was citing commandments that those commandments came from God because he was somebody that read the Bible. He read his Bible. He was aware of the commandments, but he gave obedience to the commandments. It's interesting that these commandments that Jesus cites, he doesn't tell us everything that the Old Testament commands, every command that God has given. He actually narrows them just to a few. The ones that he narrows them to are actually ones that other people would be able to know if he's actually keeping them. They're all public commandments, adultery, theft, loving your neighbor, honoring your parents. In other words, what is he saying? He's saying you can go to my parents and you can go to my neighbors and you can go to my friends and you can tell them, ask them about my life, and they also will conclude, they will tell you that I'm a man who's characterized by moral integrity.

The third thing we know about this man, that he was young. He was energetic. He was spry. He had a plan. He was working his plan. The fourth thing we learn about him we actually learn from Luke's account of this same story in Luke chapter 18. We're told there that he was powerful, that he was a ruler. Now, we have no idea what he was ruling, but we do know that, as a ruler, he had influence, he had authority, he had responsibility. What we find here is a man who kind of has his life together.

You might think that this is the ideal follower. If you were going to plant a church somewhere in the world, this would be the kind of person, someone who has means and morality and energy and influence to go about and help you work. This is the kind of person that you want as part of your small group. His life is not tumbling like a tumbleweed. He has a plan, and he's working his plan. Yet, he's empty.

There's something that's simply not right. In fact, his life is so together he's even able to admit how his life is not all together. There's a measure of it's okay that I don't know all the answers. It's okay that other people know that. He comes and he says, "Jesus, the thing is I've got a plan. I'm working a plan. I have a ladder. I've tilted the ladder up. It's going to hopefully get me to heaven. I'm working towards this ladder. I'm crawling up this ladder. Yet, I get all the way to the top and it doesn't seem to reach heaven. I'm accomplished in so many ways that the world tells me that I should be accomplished, and yet I look at my ladder and it doesn't rest against the doorstep of heaven. What's the next step? Is there more rungs in the ladder? What else can I do? What is the last good, right thing I need to do to inherit eternal life?"

It's pretty stunning. In the end, Jesus navigates this discussion in such a way that this man walks away from Jesus rejecting him. We don't know if he ever comes back. We're supposed to ask the question: Well, what is Jesus doing in his life? Why we're supposed to ask that question is because then we're going to know what Jesus intends to do in ours. What is Jesus doing in his life, and what does he want to do every single one of our lives with this text? You're supposed to read this, and the first thing you're supposed to ask is, "Am I supposed to sell everything I have in order to follow Jesus? Is that what Jesus is really doing?" I think he's really doing three things here. Let me show them to you.

Number one is this. Jesus smashes religious assumptions in those who follow him. He literally wants to smash some religious assumptions that have to be not only common but also faulty that people naturally have as we walk through this earth, thinking about what it means to be right with God. I've told you many times as a church family that our family loves to go down to a farm in Georgia. We've loved this farm for a long, long, long time, the boys, their entire life. One of the things we love to do when we get down there is to hop on four-wheelers and to go out and to cut trails where there's no trail. There's lots of acres to do this. In some places, it's really deep and really dense, and so we just blaze a trail. It's the coolest thing. When they're small trees and bushes, you can just run right over them, but, inevitably, every time we always run up into a place where you simply can not navigate out. It happens every time.

Often times, it's thorn vines and they're just all over the place. To go through them, this machine could, but it'd be tore up. We think, "Let's not do that." Often times, what we do is we back up, we go home and we get a machete so we can cut it down because we have so much of a trail. We're like, "We don't want to just end it to nothing. We would love to be able to circle this back around and keep going." Ultimately, this is exactly what Jesus is doing with this young man. You see, this young man came wanting peace at his center. He's traveled the path through the woods. He's blazing a trail. He's got a plan, and he's working his plan. Yet, he has two faulty assumptions within his heart that prohibit his ability to make progress.

What Jesus does is he smashes each one of these assumptions and he does so so skillfully that he doesn't smash the man.

There's such wisdom in how he does this. He doesn't want to destroy the man. He wants to destroy what's destroying the man. This is what he wants to do in each of our lives. What does he show? What does he teach? The first is this. Christianity, what that means is following Jesus, to be a Christian is to be someone who follows Jesus. Christianity is not something you do. This runs so counter-cultural to even some of the things that we say as people. We say, "I'm going to try to live the Christian life." Christianity is not something you do. Listen to that carefully. He comes, and he says, "Jesus, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" Have you ever thought this? Are you thinking this right now in your life? Maybe that's why you're here today. Maybe you asked the question recently, you say, "What is that one thing? Maybe I'll go to church and I'll find out what that one last thing is so that I know I can go to heaven."

Jesus says, "You know, there's only one who's good, and he has some commandments. You ought to keep those commandments." Now, you have to understand he's testing him. He's not actually telling him that the way to be saved is to keep those commandments, because Jesus knows that all people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but he also knows that if someone were to perfectly keep God's commandment, not only in thought but deed, in spirit, that that person would go to heaven. Sin is what separates us from God. If a person is sinless, he's not separated from God. What does he say? He says, "Well, why don't you keep these commandments?" The man's kind of happy. He goes, "Well, which ones?" He lists a few of them, doesn't he? What Jesus is hoping for after listing each of these commandments is for the man to recognize that in some area, in one of these, whether it was in actual spirit or in deed, that he would come, "You know what? I've not done that one perfectly," but that's not what he gets.

What does he get? He says, "This is great. I've kept all of those, every one of them. I'm batting 100%. You made a bunch of boxes and I check off every single one of those boxes." What does Jesus do? What does he do? He runs in now, and he's going to do it in a very striking way, but he's going to reveal the man's sin. This is how he does it. He says, "I'll tell you what. Go sell everything you have. Give it all to the poor. Then, come follow me." The man is thinking, "What are talking about?" We're supposed to say, "What? What's he doing?" This is what he's doing. He's saying, "So you keep the commandments, do you? Let's go to one I didn't talk about. What's the first commandment? You shall have no other gods before me. I'll tell you what. What I'm talking about there," what God was talking there, "you should have nothing that rises in your affection higher than your affection for God. Let's just test it out. Sell it all." You see, he's already said, Matthew six, it's recorded, "You can not serve God and money."

You see what Jesus is revealing, that nobody is simply one good step away. He's revealing that not a single one of us even in this room have ever even kept the first commandment, much less all the rest of them. You see James chapter two verse 10, you know what it says? It says, "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."

What Jesus is doing here is he's showing that the measuring line of who gets into heaven is not a vertical line. It's a relational line. Every single one of us, we base our confidence and our morality and it's a line where we put a ruler up and we go, "You know what? I'm 12 inches tall spiritually. Now I'm 24 inches." All of a sudden, we just put all these rungs, and we just keep climbing, and we keep climbing and suddenly find that our ladder never reaches to heaven. It doesn't matter how high you can climb. It still never gets there.

Jesus, what he does is he says, "You know what? It's not so much a matter of what you can do. It's a matter of who you're with." You see, the gospel, which is the message of the Bible, this is what it says. It says that God looked upon us and he sent his Son not to congratulate us on our morality. He sent his Son to rescue us because we didn't have the right morality. Jesus came, and he lived a perfectly righteous life. Nobody has lived on this earth and has earned the right to go to heaven but Jesus. He's the only one. Yet, he took all of our sin upon himself, and he went to a cross, and he died for that sin. He was buried. He rose from the dead in three days. He appeared to people. To the people he appeared, he said, "If you will trust in me, if you'll believe in me, if you'll first admit you can not save yourself, that you are a sinner, if you'll believe in me and you'll confess me as Lord of your life," he says, "I'll take away all your sin and I will give you my righteousness. All of the righteousness that I have accrued by my good deeds, they will accrue to you. I'll give them to you."

You see, friends, listen. You and I, we naturally look at each other and our eyes think, "I'm better than that person. I'm not as good as that person." We think about it vertically. "Am I this good? I'm better than that person. That gives me a little bit of comfort." God says, "No, no, no. It has nothing to do with what you can scale. It's a matter of who you go with." We say this much or this much, and Jesus says, "You're with me or you're not with me." Those are the options. It's not a vertical line of morality. It's a relationship with Jesus Christ. You see, what he's really saying is this, "Don't you see? Christianity is not something you do. Christianity's something I've done. If you trust in what I've done, then all the benefits of what I've done accrue to you. I give them to you." That's the first thing that was in front of him, saying, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

The second thing that he smashes down, the second assumption is that all of Christianity is simply not something that you add. After he gets done with his list and he says, "I've kept all these," he says, "What do I still lack?" In other words, he's coming to Jesus and saying, "I've done all that. I'm trying to round my life out. What's that one thing, sort of like a throw rug, like I just need a pillow, an extra pillow, an extra color." Most of us look at this picture. Okay. Look at this picture right here. We look at this. How would you fill this room out? Some of you, "You know what it really needs? It needs a throw blanket or maybe a little rug or maybe some flowers over here. It needs this color, maybe a TV and a big plate of hot wings," or something that makes that right to you.

A lot of us, this is exactly what we do with our life and with Jesus. We think Jesus is some accessory to a room that's going to fill out our life. Jesus is coming, and what he's saying is this. He's says, "Look, I'm not a necklace to fill out your outfit. I'm not a book that you put on an already full library."

I'm not a plugin to your life that supplies you with extra speed and power. I am the Son of God, the Christ, and I lay claim on your entire life." You see, when we trust Jesus Christ, he comes into our life with a big flag, he drops it into the center of our life, and he yells, "It's all mine." He has no desire to be only your Sunday activity. He is the Lord of heaven and earth.

You recall Nicodemus in John three? Our story is about a rich young man. Well, in John three, we find a rich old man. They're both looking for, "What's that last thing I need to do?" You remember what Jesus says to him? He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." Do you see what he's saying? He's saying, look, Jesus is not something you add on your already partially complete life in order to fill things out. He says you have to absolutely transformed from the inside out. Do you see how Jesus smashes his assumptions without smashing him? He does all this to the man, and yet the man can still come. He can choose to follow. Providence, so can we. See, Jesus stands before us on the road. He turns around, and he waves, and he says, "Come on. Follow me." Every single person who chooses to do so, he changes. If you find some of your assumptions were similar to this rich young man, I hope that you see how he wants to smash your assumptions without smashing you because he loves you.

The second thing we see Jesus doing here that he wants to do in our life is he wants to reveal the personal idols in those who follow him. Idols is a word that sometimes we think of like a wooden statue and the people bow down to. That's one form of idol. It's true. Often times, the Bible uses the word idol as just something that we put in place of God and we bow down to it with our heart. We attribute it is the source of hope to give us joy and contentment and peace. It's sort of a functional savior in our life. This young man, he came to Jesus. He said, "You know, I'm missing something. It's maybe a doctrine, maybe a discipline," but notice it's all academic. It's something I can learn at church. It's something I can get out of life group. It's something I can ask you a question, "Hey, what do you think?" Oh, try this. It's like history class or math class. I just need the function. If I knew the function, I could figure out the problem.

Jesus comes, and he goes, "You don't understand. This isn't about academics. This is about I'm going to look right into your heart." You see, Mark's gospel also tells about this story. He adds one critical little piece that's really amazing. It talks about how Jesus really wants to relate. In Mark's gospel in chapter 10 verse 21, it says, "Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said, 'You lack one thing. Now go and sell everything you have.'" He looked into his heart, and he loved him. He loves you. He loved this man. His love for him allowed him to read his soul like an X-ray. He says, "I see the cancer that's causing the apprehension, that's causing you to want to ask these questions, that's causing you to want to come, that causes the doubt in your life. I see the cancer that's there. This is a pivotal moment in your life. You're going to go one way or the other. I'm beginning you to go with me and not without me. Here it is. Sell everything and follow me."

We have to put this into context. The reason is because this is the only person that we find in the New Testament that Jesus gave this request. You see, selling all of our stuff is not a test. It's not a litmus test for every new believer. Are you? Well, sell it all. Let's see if you really care. That's not it. That's not what he's doing. He's using that to identify the man's heart. It's very much like what he did with Abraham. Abraham, he comes to him and he's 75 years old. He goes, "You're kind of old, but this is what I'm going to do. You're going to have a kid. You don't have any kids. You're going to have a son. From that son, from your descendants is going to come the Savior of the world." God waits 24 more years. Romans chapter four says he waited until his wife, Sarah, was barren and it says that Abraham was as good as dead. Little emphasis, just a, "Hey, this is how much it is up to you. This is what I'm going to do."

He comes to him and he's 99 years old. He says, "All right. Now it's time. This year you're going to have a baby." It's kind of like, "I'm going to have a baby. All right." Isaac is born. Can you imagine how they clutched Isaac, how they cherished Isaac? What did God go then and tell him to do? "I want you to go kill him." "You want me to do what? You just said your promise to save the entire world is going to come from my descendants. This is the only one." Hebrews says that he did what he did in faith, knowing that God would be faithful to his promise. He actually took his son up onto a hill, was almost to kill him, and God stopped him. He says, "Okay, now I know. Now I know that it's me more than anything." I don't know if that's what would have happened had this rich young man said, "Oh, is that what it takes? All right. I'll be right back." He may have said, "Stop. I now see. I see."

I don't know, but what I do know is this. Jesus was identifying his functional savior. In other words, he was identifying his competitor for this man's heart. He was identifying his imaginary strong tower. You remember when we talked about this a few weeks ago in Proverbs? Proverbs 18:10 and 11, he says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous man runs into it and is safe. The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination." If you lived in a city in ancient times, there was a wall. If you were attacked, you went into the wall. If the wall was breached, you'd run for the high tower, the last strong fortified place. Do you see what he's saying?

He's saying if you're not running to the high tower that's Jesus Christ, you're still running to a high tower. Whether it's money or whether it's something else, it doesn't matter. You see, Jesus has this remarkable comfort level in violating people's personal space. He jumps right into his heart, and he says, "I see. This is your problem, and I'm asking for that." This man, he looks at his imaginary high tower, which is money. It could be something else for many of us. He has to make a decision, "Am I going to run to this high tower or am I going to run to this high tower?" For whatever reason, in his heart, he can not understand that one's imaginary and one's real, and that one day he's going to face a storm that he can't buy himself out of. He looks at Jesus, and he says, "That's not worth it. You're not worth it." He runs back to his imaginary high tower.

This is what he's doing. He's smashing religious assumptions. He's revealing personal idols. The third thing he does is he's promising greater things for those that follow him. Do you see what it says about those of us whom he has chosen? We say, "God, I follow you." You see, all these disciples, they're all watching all this happen. I can't imagine what it was like to be a disciple. See, we all read this. Many of us have heard this story many times before, and we're still startled. Can you imagine this going down for the very first time, and you're seeing it, and suddenly this happens? The man walks away, and Jesus then says, "Only with difficulty will a rich person enter heaven." Then he goes, "You know how hard it is for a rich person to go to heaven?" He says, "Have you ever thought about a needle, the eye of a needle?" If you haven't this is what one looks like. He goes, "Now, let's also think about a camel."

He goes, "There is more likelihood of a camel fitting through that needle than for a rich person to get to heaven." The disciples are like, "What? What are you talking about? Why would you say this?" He said this because it's harder for a rich person whose life is crowded with pleasant distractions to feel dependent like a child. The story that immediately precedes our story, it says that children were being brought to Jesus so that he would lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." You see what that says? Heaven is custom-built for kids and adults who behave like kids, who have childlike trust and faith. They look around, and they say, "How is this even possible?" He says, "I know it's hard," but he says, "With man, this really is impossible, but with God, all things are possible."

Same thing with Nicodemus. He says, "How is it possible to get back in my mom's womb and be born again?" He says, "Look, God can do it." Do you want to know the proof? Look in the mirror. You say, "What are you talking about?" Did you know that if you make \$35,000 US, you're in the top 1% of earners in the entire world? When you ever read the Bible and it says "and to the rich among you," you're supposed to think, just put your name in there. That's us. If you have come to faith in Jesus Christ, you are the proof that he has the power to get a rich person into heaven. It's more amazing that you're going to get to go to heaven than to get a camel through an eye of a needle. He has the power to do it. You see, we're the proof of that. Peter's been calculating all this time. He's like, "All right. Hold on. We left everything to follow you. What then will we have?"

Sometimes I just wonder, because the Bible doesn't tell us everything that Jesus is thinking. I wonder if this hurt Jesus. Do you understand what he just asked him? He says, "We've given up all this stuff, and we get you. What's in it for us?" Can you imagine when Peter died and stood before Jesus? Can you imagine? He's like, "Hey, Peter. You remember when you asked ...?" Just notice what he says right in the middle. He says, first of all, "You're going to do all this, but let's remember where I'm going to be when you're doing all that. The Son of Man is going to be sitting on his glorious throne." What's he saying? He's saying, "I am the treasure of the redeemed. You get me." In addition to that, he talks about authority, actually have a throne. He talks about a family that's a hundredfold, that whatever we left behind, he's going to give us a hundredfold in heaven forever. He talks about eternal life. You see, Jesus promises greater things.

I know many of you left something really significant to follow Jesus. I want you to know that it was worth it. Some of you are wondering today, "Is it worth following this Jesus?" I want you to know that whatever he would ask you to leave behind, it is absolutely worth it.

Three applications. Number one is this. Let's run to Christ and trust him with our life. Our imaginary high towers, they seem so strong and comforting and familiar like a security blanket even though they leave us constantly asking, "Is there more?" Today, I invite you to run to the strong tower of Jesus. He is not an accessory. He is not a religious figure because people have believed in him. People have believed in him because he's the Son of God. He's the creator. He's the sustainer. He's the one who died for us. He's the one who rose from the dead. He is the only high tower that is not imaginary. He is the only tower that you can run to for the storm that is going to face every one of us at the end of our life. It's Jesus. People believe in him. We believe in him. Whatever Jesus would ask you today to offer up in order to follow him, he offers you a hundredfold. I invite you today to put your trust in Christ. He talks about it in A, B, and C. Admit, it's really repentance. It's admitting I can not save myself. That's the one sin you have to part with in order to come to faith in Christ. Second is to believe in him. I can't save myself, but you can. I believe you can. Confess him as Lord of our life. He says that you'll be forgiven, you'll be saved.

The second thing, Providence, I want to encourage you with is let's remember that we follow a King who is often rejected. Some of us think, "I share the gospel and they rejected me." No, they didn't. They rejected him. See, our sympathy tends to land on the rich young man and on these disciples because, in some way, they reflect us, but there is only one victim in the story. There's only one person who's rejected. There's only one person who's been chosen over in the story. That's Jesus Christ. He's the only worthy one. He's the one that, when pitted against imaginary high towers, a rich man says, "I don't want you. I want this." As we go out and we try to show people the love of Jesus and tell people of the gospel about Jesus, some people are going to walk away from us sorrowful, maybe even not wanting to talk to us anymore. I just want to encourage us to remember that they're not rejecting you. Think about it another way. Jesus is walking down a path. He turns to us, and he says, "Follow." We start following. We need to remember that the person that we're following is rejected by a lot of people. That's what it means to follow him.

The third thing that we see here is this, application, is let's respond to Christ with quick obedience. You see, Jesus' request to sell everything is clearly not for every believer. One, because he doesn't give that request to others within the New Testament. Second, because he does give us many instructions to how we're supposed to manage our money within the Bible. He was revealing the man's heart. I would encourage you not to take that as a pass. We're supposed to then ask the question, "What would he ask of me? Is there anything the Lord is asking me to give in following him that leaves me sorrowful, that leaves me fearful?" Let me just throw out a few. Some of you in this room, you've trusted Jesus Christ, and the very next thing he tells you to do is to be baptized and tell other people that you are gladly, publicly, willingly able and ready to associate yourself with him. Yet, you've not been baptized. I would encourage you to be baptized. Why? Because he asks you to.

It may cause fear. It may cause apprehension. It may cause a lot of stuff, but he asks you to. You may have a sin that you've already committed against somebody else, and you feel like he's telling you to go and confess your sin to them and ask them to forgive you. You don't want to. It's embarrassing. It's shameful. It's a lot of things. You think, "I just don't want to do that," but he asks you to. You may say, "I don't want to go," or, "I don't want to serve," or, "I don't want to give," or, "I don't want to pray for these flood victims." There's probably not that many people going to say that, but the fact is sometimes we have to get back. We have to say, "Is Jesus asking us to?" You see, quick obedience is motivated by happiness, which is why I would remind you in closing that whatever Jesus would ask you to give up to follow him, he offers you a hundredfold.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for your love for us, we thank you for the mercy that you give to us, and we thank you that our only hope is Jesus. We thank you that we, among all the people in the earth, that we have been privileged to know this, to be taught this, to have the Bible. We pray, God, that you would help us to respond in faith and obedience and courage. God, whatever it is that you'd be asking of us, we look to you as the Son of God, and we say, "Jesus, it's yours." Now, as we sing and as we give, we pray, God, that you would receive the worship, you would receive our lives and the things that we have. It's an act of faith and gratitude for what you first did in our life. We look to you now. We love you, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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