

# The Rich Young Ruler

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Now it takes a good deal of courage to preach on old texts, familiar ones, texts that come up every so often in the Sunday school lesson, that every traveling preacher uses, but it's here, it's God's book, and I want to talk to you about the rich young ruler tonight. There came one to him, that is to our Lord, and said unto him, this is in the 19th chapter of Matthew, good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why callest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God, but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Don't you know that you're a Jew, you've been taught?

Well, he said, which? Are there some commandments I don't know about? And Jesus said, no, the regular ones, thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, the ten commandments, He said.

And the young man saith unto Him, all these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? And Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, he sorrowful, went away, for he had great possessions. Now that's the story.

And we see in it Jesus and a young man. And this young man is typical of many, young and older, that I have met, and that are everywhere around about, high in religious circles, but miserable. Maybe yet I'm getting more sensitive to it, but I think that I have never had a year in which more people, high up in church circles, sought me out to know what's the matter with them, than this year.

Now if they were only beginners, or not Christians at all, I would say that's normal. If I have never known God, or never been near to God, and have no religious standing whatever, it's quite expected that I should try to seek the way. But it is the people, many of them, who are high up, and are heard from, and whose names are current names, even in evangelical circles.

And here was one of them, a ruler of the synagogue, that would be a pastor, somebody in charge of a synagogue. The word ruler here doesn't mean with a crown, and scepter, and robe, it simply means a chairman, a president, a pastor we would say, in charge of a local worshiping group. And this young man comes to Him and says, good master, what shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And here is a young fellow, leading the worship of the ancient people, and yet himself, not sure about eternal life, or if anything is sure, he's sure he doesn't have it.

Now this is more common than we know, and I am beginning to ask, what's happened anyway, and what have they done to us? And what have they fed us? And where have they led us? That the bright, crisp assurance, the brittle, bright, shining assurance that our fathers knew, scarcely find it any place anymore. Hardly anyone knows. Hardly

anybody has the inner witness that rings bright, and clear, and sharp, and he knows where he is, and knows why, can stand up, and smile, and grin at the whole world, and lift his hand to heaven, and say, I know that I know, there's very little of that much anymore.

Now, here was this young fellow longing for eternal assurance. He wanted something more than a conclusion drawn from a text. He wanted more. He wanted the knowledge in his own heart that he had entered into a state of eternal benediction, a place, we call, that I may have eternal life. And he's asking the way, and you'll notice his question is, what good thing shall I do that I might have eternal life?

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ had never studied the books, but He was a master in dealing with people. He was a master psychologist, which means simply that He knew the ways of men and how their minds work. And that's all psychology is, is how your mind works. When they make philosophers out of them, and soothsayers, and nerve healers, and all the rest, then they're no longer psychologists, nor students of how the mind works. They're quack doctors.

But Jesus was a great psychologist in that He knew how the human mind worked, and He heard what this fellow said. And He appraised him quickly, with a flash, and knew that here was a young pastor who had come to Him to find out how he might have eternal life. He'd been reading in the Psalms of Zion, and he'd been reading the great, noble, sonorous Hebrew Scriptures from the Psalms, and from Isaiah, and from Moses, and from the Minor Prophets.

And he had been lifting his hands to God, and leading them out in prayer, and still this young man was miserable because there was an aching lack within his own heart. And Jesus knew that, and read into what he, the young man, said infinitely more than you and I could have done. So He took him where he found him, and for the sake of the argument, He accepted him at his own estimate.

And He said, now, here you come to Me, and you lay this matter of your relation to God and eternal life, you lay this on the foundation of doing good things to obtain life. Now, he said, in that case, let's go back, and let's think about it. Just how good would that thing have to be, young fellow? Just how good would that thing have to be, because you know there's only one good, and that's God, and if you're going to do something good enough to move God to give you the gift of eternal life, how good's that going to have to be? Seeing that there's only one good, and you don't think I'm God, so you called me good master, and you talked about a good deed that would bring you eternal life, and you called me good master, good teacher, all in the same breath.

Now, if you want to start there, I'll argue with you on that basis. If you want to move out into the realm of good deeds and merits and virtue that wins life, why, all right. How good is this going to have to be? There is only one who is good, and that's God, and how are you going to be good master? If there's only one good, and that's God, and to win anything from God on those terms, you'd have to do something good enough for God to accept.

So, young fellow, if you insist on buying your way in, I've got the answer. Keep the commandments. That's the way you do it. If you want to buy your way in, keep the commandments. You know the commandments. The young fellow said, which ones? He said, you know the commandments, the commandments of God, the will of God for you. And the young man stood there and said these words to him, all these have I kept from my youth up.

Now, that young man, no doubt, had kept certain commandments from his youth up. I doubt whether that young fellow had ever murdered. He probably had never committed adultery. And I suppose that he never stole. And I would suppose that he might have honored his father and his mother.

The Jews did that as a rule. But one of the strangest things that I know is how a whole population of religious people down the years from that time on have completely, each one has completely misunderstood this thing and have accepted this young man's testimony as being valid. That he had kept these from his youth up.

And many a sermon has been preached in which this young fellow has been made a Sir Galahad, whose heart was as the heart of, strength was as the strength of ten. Was that Galahad or somebody else? I don't know. Somebody whose heart was as the heart of ten, strength of ten, because his heart was pure. And they've made this young fellow out to be a wonderful young chap.

Now, he was what we call a moral man. That is, he was good enough to deceive himself and bad enough to damn himself. But he didn't know that. Because he was good enough, he deceived himself, and because his goodness prevented him from knowing his badness, he turned his back on God and walked away.

Now, people say, any kind of religion is all right. I just want to ask that question. Is any kind of religion all right? Is any kind of a mustard plaster all right for a cancer? Is any kind of food all right for a baby? Is any kind of an old wreck all right to put fifty people in and take them three miles up in the air?

No, my friends, sometimes having anything is worse than having nothing. And if I were going to go to hell from anywhere, I'd rather go to hell from the Baliem Valley than from Chicago, Illinois. Because in the Baliem Valley, they don't know much and they don't think they're anything.

And I would rather, much rather, have no religion at all than to have just enough to deceive me. And that's exactly what the young man had. He had just religion enough to deceive him, and he was just righteous enough to make himself think that he was all right.

Now, had he kept the law of God, I want to ask you whether he had or not. The Bible says, Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Doesn't it say that? It does. And I believe that Jew and Catholic and Protestant and all of us together would agree that whatever comes before God is God to the man. And that whatever shuts God out and stands between the soul and God is an idol. It's a God. Thou shalt have no god before me. I must be first in your life.

And here was a young man who was very rich, and when our Lord put to him on his own terms the question of selling everything and giving it away and becoming a theological student, going to school, to him and following Him, he turned his back on it. He turned his back on God because he had another God that he wouldn't admit.

And here was a young man in a synagogue, a young pastor in a church, raising his hands solemnly to heaven and praying in the great noble words of David and Isaiah and Moses and leading out in the Psalms of Zion and reading the Scriptures and worshipping with his people. And yet unknown to them, he had a God tucked away, and when the chips were down, he chose the God of gold instead of the God of his fathers.

That young man was not a keeper of the law. He shattered and smashed the first one like a glass on a pavement, because when the God of his fathers said, sell everything and follow Me, he turned his back flat upon Him and walked away.

And then it also said, not in the Ten Commandments, but our Lord summed the Ten Commandments like this, so it's here, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. And when it came down to a question of love for God or love for his wealth, he went away because he had great possessions. So, he broke this summation of all the commandments, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Now all around about him were the poor, lying by the gates beautiful and lying by the pool of Siloam, and begging as they do still, they say, crying, Bacchus, Bacchus, begging on the streets in the Middle East. And there they were by the hundreds and multiplied hundreds, I suppose running up into the thousands, and this young man had a big sock and had it full. He had great possessions, the Word says, great possessions.

But all around about him there were the poor. All around about him were old ladies starving and old men. And there they were, and there were little children with hardly a crust to keep them alive. And there were the lepers picking and grubbing roots to stay alive and eating grasshoppers and snails and worms to keep their poor emaciated bodies from falling apart. And yet this young man could stand in the temple and pray and lead out in song and glorify the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and yet he was a rich man with poor people all around him.

And when our Lord suggested as a condition of following Him that he distribute his goods, the young man flatly refused to do it. The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Did that man love his neighbor as himself? He thought he was a noble law-keeper and could look into the searching eyes of Jesus and say, all these I have kept from my youth up. He wasn't lying, he was simply terribly deceived, for he had broken these commandments.

And thou shalt not covet is another one, the last one in the Decalogue. Thou shalt not covet, and it names a great many things, thou shalt not covet. And that word covet in the rest of the Bible and in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is made to mean want anything inordinately.

So, thou shalt not covet was another one. He shattered that one wide open, standing on his feet there. Because when the Lord said thou shalt distribute thy goods, get rid of them and come and follow me, and be like Peter and the rest of them poor and own nothing, I own nothing, come and go with me. For this is a new thing that's starting, this is the new regeneration that's taking place. Come with me. He flatly refused, he couldn't leave his bank account and his property.

So, he was a covetous man, and he was a self-lover instead of a lover of his neighbor. And he was a lover of wealth instead of a lover of God, and he had something else ahead of God. And so, the commandment was broken, the commandments were broken.

And a Jew once said, he that breaks one commandment has broken them all. And the commandments of God hang from the ceiling like links of chains. And we're down at the lower end, and if one of those links is broken, the whole chain goes to pieces. And so he had broken these commandments, and I don't know how many more.

Now my brother, what does this teach us? It teaches us a lot, but among those things, this is one that it's entirely possible to imagine ourselves to be all right when we're not all right. It's entirely possible to have so jockeyed with our conscience, and so played over the checkerboard of our conscience, that we imagine everything is all right. And we can stand in the presence of God and say, I've kept these from my youth up. I'm not as these other men.

Now I don't like to debunk anybody, but here's a young man that's been waiting to be debunked for 2,000 years, nearly. People have accepted him when he said, I've kept them. Everybody said, so long, thou hast kept them. He hasn't kept them, and he didn't keep them, and he was a lawbreaker, and a covetous man, and a self-lover, and a money lover, and he didn't love God.

Now, Jesus our Lord laid before him the terms of salvation, and those terms of salvation were three, full acknowledgment of sin, not defense, complete trust in Christ, and utter abandonment to Christ. Now those are the terms he laid down here, and he never made any different terms anywhere else.

As soon as the young man had stood there and told how good he was, and right standing knee-deep in broken laws, and dared to stand there knee-deep and say, I've never broken a law in my life, Lord. All right, he said, farewell. And then He began to expose him in laying bare and cutting to him with a sharp scalpel, until the inner life of the man was laid bare, full acknowledgment of sin, not defense.

Any man who is penitent, and will go before God in supposed penitence, and will remind God of one sin he didn't commit, is not a penitent man. Because if there are one hundred possible sins, and I've only committed ten of them, I will be so overwhelmed if I'm truly penitent, I will be so overwhelmed with the ten that I have broken, that the ninety that I haven't will never be remembered. And before the great God Almighty, I will on my knees grovel and tremble and cry out and say, I'm an unclean man, O God, remembering the laws that I have broken.

An outlaw is not a man who breaks all the laws of this country. An outlaw is a man who only breaks two or three. Old Jesse James only broke about two laws, the law that says you shall not rob, and the law that says you shall not kill. Those aren't the only two laws Jesse James broke, just two of them. And I suppose there were thousands of laws on the statute books, but he broke two or three or four at most. But he was an outlaw nevertheless, with a price on his head.

And so, when I come before my God as an outlaw returning home, as a prodigal returning back from the swine pen, and as a publican beating my breast and crying, I have sinned, I'll not be dickering with God about the sins I didn't commit. Even though I didn't commit them, I'm not likely to be conscious of that. The fact that I have broken any of God's laws or committed any sins will so overwhelm me that I will go before God as though I were the worst sinner in all the wide world.

A man one time who was one of the finest men that ever lived in the world, he'd lived in all good conscience before God all his life, and he had been the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and he'd kept the laws of his God with great care, and said, I've lived before God and man. And yet that same man who said that said, I am chief of sinners. Now, that's both true and false. It's true the way Paul meant it, but for anybody to try to pin on the man Paul as many gross and heinous sins as Bluebeard and Hitler and the rest would be ridiculous.

He was a noble man, this man Paul, a strong, noble man, and lived the best he could in the law of God and did the best he could in his unregenerate state. And he was a member of the Sanhedrin, like our Supreme Court, yonder in Washington, and nobody could pin on him the cheap, dirty little sins that you see everywhere in the newspapers. And yet the fact that he had committed any sin at all, bit down so hard on the man that it crushed him like an eggshell.

And out of his crushed heart, he cried, I am chief of sinners, I'm the worst sinner in the world. We know better, but he didn't. He thought he was the worst man in the world. And that's why God could make him one of the best men in the world, because he cried, I'm the worst man in the world.

The problem now is that we don't get that sense of being the chief of sinners. This young man didn't. He stood, he dared to stand before the very Man of whom he was inquiring the way of eternal life. He dared to stand before Him and defend himself. I've kept these laws, he said, I'm no heathen. But he hadn't. And the very fact that he could remember that he'd kept any disqualified him instantly for eternal life acknowledgement of sin, not defense, and complete trust in Christ.

There's no hope in the wide world apart from complete trust in Christ. Christ Jesus the Lord is the lifeboat, and there's got to be complete trust in the lifeboat. He's the rope down which we climb from tenth story, and it's either trust that rope or perish. He's the panacea that heals all ills, and we take that, or we die. He is the bridge from hell to heaven, and we take that bridge, or we stay in hell. And so complete trust in Christ, absolute trust in Christ.

I wonder how many people really trust Christ; I wonder. We trust Christ and this, trust Christ and that. Like the woman who was baptized by immersion, later she was baptized by sprinkling, later she was baptized by pouring. And somebody said, Madam, what seems to be the difficulty? Can't you make up your mind? Oh yes, she said, I just thought that if I took all three of them, if one didn't do any good, another one would. And so, she took all that she could.

Now that kind of thing is no faith at all. She had no faith that she might just as well stay dry, because she was experimenting. It was Christ and baptism, Christ and pouring, Christ and sprinkling, Christ and something else. And I've said before and repeat now, Christ will never stand at the right side of a plus sign.

If you insist upon having plus Christ or Christ plus, Christ indignantly walks away in His holy dignity and refuses ever to be the other side of a plus sign. Christ plus anything, and you haven't got Christ at all. And this young man had everything, or at least he thought he had, but he had nothing, an utter abandonment to Christ.

Now those are, that's all, Christ taught that all the way along, that was nothing new. He simply skillfully got that fellow into a place where He could say that to him, that's all, and said it, a complete abandonment to Christ.

And I wonder how many Christians have abandoned themselves to Christ. We are teaching nowadays, accept Christ. That's the only word you ever hear anymore. A painless, accept, an easy-believism that accepts. But this idea that you got to abandon yourself to Christ has not been in our theology.

And I think that may be the reason that there are so many high-end religious circles that are asking, coming and writing and saying, what can I do? What can I do? Have you got any help for me? Can you tell me anything? And it is a process of re-education. You've got to start all over with them. Because they've been told to accept and they've accepted, but they've never been told, I guess, apparently not, that the terms of salvation were acknowledgment of sin and complete trust in Christ and abandonment to Christ.

Now these, the rich young ruler simply wouldn't take. He just wouldn't accept these terms at all. The Scripture says, he sorrowing went away. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted something else more. He wanted to follow Christ, but he wanted something else more. And yet he was a religious man, and no doubt wore on his lapel a button showing that he had attended Sunday school so many times in a row without missing.

Now this reveals what? That not everyone that is lost is morally careless. Some care very, very deeply, but they're lost. And some that are now beyond any hope cared very deeply while they lived, but they're lost. Let us not imagine that only the careless perish. The careful perish too. This young man perished, and he cared enough to come to Jesus and ask the way of life in a reverent, tender question that's come down the years.

And it teaches us also that not everyone that is lost is prayerless. For this young man talked to God and said, how can I be saved? And in the synagogue led the prayers. And as a Jew and as a leading religious Jew, as a praying man, but he was also a lost man and a lawbreaker and a sinner and a rebel.

And the Lord revealed it skillfully. He was a surgeon. Not everybody that's lost is prayerless, let's not forget it. Some pray earnestly on their road to perdition. They want God, but they don't want God enough. They want eternal life, but they want something else worse. They want to follow Jesus, but they want something else more.

Dear God, burn this in, that we may see how frightful it is, that we can be respectable and religious and prayerful and careful and eager and ask questions and talk about religion and consult people that ought to know and still be lost.

We think nowadays that if we find an eager seeker that we found a treasure. Actually, we rarely find anybody that is as eager as that rich young ruler. Where are they? Where are they that are this eager?

Nowadays, you got to go to them. You got to prove to them that you don't intend to harm them or don't demand anything of them. You got to go and joke with them, kid with them, prove that you know all about their sports and all about everything they know. Find a common ground of fellowship and be a powsy-wowsy, back-slapping fellow, and then slowly tell them in gingerly that if they'll accept Jesus, they'll have peace of mind, and everything will be all right. Amen. And they'll have good grades in school. That's modern Christianity.

And that's why not only plain people, but the leaders are coming, as it were, by night and saying, what's the matter with me, brother? What's the matter with me? Only in recent months, I have been questioned by people that I thought were high up yonder.

They say, Brother Tozer, what can I do? I'm miserable. Because they'd been leaked into the kingdom of God. They'd got in between the cracks. They'd blown in as dust. They'd crawled in a window. They hadn't come in the way of repentance and abandonment and trust. And the result, of course, is what we could expect. No inner witness, no assurance, no peace.

And now, if we think we've found a seeker, we say, that's wonderful, he'll be all right, he's a seeker. If you could see all the seekers that are in hell tonight, who were seekers while they were on earth, but they didn't seek in the right way, or having sought and found what they had to do, they refused to do it.

This rich young ruler was a seeker. And they'd have put him down on a card somewhere and counted him. He'd have been a statistic in some evangelist's book. But he walked away and left Christ cold. For he walked away cold and left Christ. He turned his back flat on Jesus.

And you know what I've seen right in this church? Now, there's no use, we might as well come in from Jerusalem, to Chicago, and from Chicago to Englewood, and from Englewood to the corner of 70th and Union.

You know what I've seen in this church? I've seen young women that I thought were Christians and had a right to believe they were Christians, and who've sung in this choir, and I've seen them walk right down those steps and right down that aisle and right

down the steps onto the sidewalk and marry some wretched tramp and turn their back on Jesus Christ. I've seen it. They wanted to be Christians, all right, and they loved Brother McAfee's joyous song leading, and he even liked my preaching, maybe. But when nature stirred, they turned their back on God and walked away. I've seen that, and I've seen some who were in high circles turn their back on the things of God and go to the world, give themselves up.

A man who once led singing from this platform, now, unless he's been restored to God within the last 12, sings beer ads over the radio, he needed money and went and got it. Don't you think that I'm being unethical either? I dare say what I want to say. And a man with a voice, silky, soft voice like an angel, singing tenor in a beer quartet, walked right out of the house of God, because while they want God, they want something else more. And brother, you can have what you want most.

And this young man got what he wanted most. I don't know anything more about him. I only know that the last sight we have of him is him walking away and Jesus looking after him, sorrowful. The two were sorrowful. He was sorrowful, but so was Jesus. And these who have walked away and out of our choir and out of our church, into the arms of sinners, haven't gone very happily.

And I've had some of them come and consult with me. And try to get a pastoral excuse for turning their back on God. Well, I've committed a lot of sins in my day, which the blood of the everlasting covenant I trust has cleansed and blotted away forever. But that's not one of them. I never told anybody it's all right when it wasn't all right. And that's no virtue.

But for every one of those virtues, as a minister that I might have practiced, God Almighty knows how many infinite numbers of sins I've committed. It's only to say that they have never succeeded in getting me to soften it up for them.

A man wrote in to me and said, dear Mr. Tozer, I have been attending a certain church and there's a young woman in that church. She and I have been keeping company and we love each other, and we want to get married. She's had a history.

Here it is. She married a young man who was in service. They lived together a while. He went into the service, I think, if I recall, and she began to lose interest in him. And when he came back, she didn't care for him anymore. She'd fallen out of love. That abominable, twice-damned Hollywood expression, falling out of love. And now we want to get married. Should I marry her or not?

Ask my secretary what I dictated back to her. Of course not. You're a Christian. Of course not. She fell out of love. God pity her and love her. She fell out of love. And so she wanted another man because she'd fallen out of love and wasn't interested anymore. But they do it like a horse snorting across a field. They walk straight out to sin against God Almighty and turn their back on Jesus Christ.

Now, the victorious life, why have I preached around here so long about the victorious life? And we have scarcely a tattered remnant of people that will say, I'm living the victorious life.

Well, I'll tell you, many are concerned and eager and inquiring, how can I be filled with the Holy Ghost? How can I die to myself and live a life in the ranges above the necessity of everlastingly tumbling around in the wallow of iniquity? How can I live a life in Christ Jesus? And you tell them that unknown to you, there's a sock of gold someplace. And you go away sorrowing. They want to live like A.J. Simpson, but they want to be worldly. And you can't have both. They want to be as saintly as McShane and as worldly as the world. You can't have both. The love of the present world, the love of the present world.

You say, if you preach against the present world, Mr. Tozer, we'll lose all of our young people, and I'll stand and cry at the door while you go. But I won't deceive, and I won't damn you by telling you that you can be a Christian and love the world. You can't.

You can be a hypocrite and love the world. You can be a deceived ruler of the synagogue and love the world. You can be a cheap, frothy, modern Christian and love the world, but you can't be a Bible Christian and love the world. And if you'll all leave me, I'll tell you that. Stand alone and grieve. But I won't lie to you. Love this present world.

But don't you think, my brother, that everybody that loves this present world is happy. He loves it and he's going to have it. But it grieves him that he's got to take it and lose so much. The rich young ruler wanted that money, but it grieved him that he had to pay such a price to get it.

But no man ever paid more for a thing than he thought it was worth. That is, if it is worth a million dollars, no man is going to pay a million and a half for it. You always think we get at least as much as we pay for it. Value received is the phrase. And if you paid ten dollars, you expect ten dollars back in value. And the rich young ruler wanted God, but he didn't want him bad enough to give up his wealth.

And he was satisfied with his bargain, but he wished he could have had both. And he chose one and grieved for the other that he lost. He chose money and grieved for the God he deserved. He chose wealth and grieved for the Savior who he turned his back on.

So, there are a lot of religious schizophrenics, with split personalities, that's what I mean. They're split personalities. I've never seen a happy backslider in my whole life. Finney used to preach on a terrible Old Testament text called, the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.

Brother, you can get filled with your own ways. I've talked to women who in an earlier time had married some rascally bum that they fell in love with and had deserted God to do it, and they're miserable now. And I know men who have given up God and walked away, but I don't know a happy one.

I know them, they plunge in like a wild horse, and they try to make up for what they lost, and they grieve because they had to give up so much to get so little, but they felt what they were getting was as much as they were given. That's what's the matter with us. There isn't a person listening to me that couldn't be filled with the Holy Ghost between now and nine o'clock, and it's 8:25 now, if you meet God's condition. But you won't meet God's conditions, and therefore we go, and the flag flies at half-mast and the battery's

down halfway, and we go weakly about our way wondering, why Master, why could not we cast these out?

So, we go away sorrowing, but the point is, we go away. We go away sorrowing, we read the book. I don't know how many people have written in to me, I don't know how many people have talked to me in person, and have said, Mr. Tozer, the book "The Pursuit of God" opened a new world for me, but I am afraid to ask them whether they walked into that world or not.

You can open a new world and turn your back on it. A rich young ruler had that happen to him. It isn't enough that you should want to know the power of a crucified life and a Christ-indwelt life and a Spirit-filled life, it isn't enough that you should want it. You must want it more than you want anything else. You must want it enough to abandon yourself to Jesus Christ to get it. You must want it enough to turn your back on whatever you know is between you and Him and walk straight into the arms of Jesus.

And you can read books and say, that was a wonderful book. No doubt that rich young ruler told the story of his encounter with Christ to his grandchildren, if he lived that long. But he was still a sinner, still a lawbreaker, still Christless, still godless, still a money-lover, still a covetous man, still a hypocrite now for his veil had been taken away.

He turned his back and went away sorrowful that he had to pay so much to get what he wanted. He had to pay Jesus. He sold Him as Judas Iscariot sold Him. Judas sold him for 30 pieces and he sold Him for whatever the big sock was he had back home with the money. He wouldn't follow Jesus.

Oh people, am I over serious? No, I think not. No, I think not. I don't think I've made an extreme statement here tonight or one that needs modification. And I don't think I have been as severe as the New Testament itself is. And I don't think I've said as much as Jesus said when He laid down His terms in the New Testament.

What about you? What about you? You want Him and you want His best, but do you want that worse than you want anything else? Or are you a split-personality, reaching with one hand for this precious thing you want on earth and for another for that precious thing you want in heaven? He that is not on with Me is against Me. You can't have both. You can't serve God and mammon. You can't serve Christ and the world.

So, we go away sorrowing, but we go away.

Are you too going away, said Jesus once. Are you too going away?

What about it, friend? What about it, young lady? What about it? In your young heart, you feel a yearning tonight to be all God wants you to be. But the old nature's strong inside of you. And somewhere, there's an attachment, an ambition, a boy, or an ambition, or something else, a pride, an unwillingness to pay the price somewhere. And you're hurt in your heart, and you grieve that you're not going to pay the price. And you, young fellow, you're not a pagan. You're not an agnostic, an atheist. You're not an infidel.

You're an inquirer. You're concerned. You ask questions. You like singing. You even enjoy a sermon if it isn't too long. You're religious-minded, but you want something else worse than you want God. And you'll never get God till you want Him first and most.

Would you bow your heads with me in a little time of prayer?

O Son of Man, Thou walkest as of old among us, unseen by mortal eye but visible to the heart. Thou walkest among us, thou, as Thy seamless garment has not lost its ancient healing power, and Thy delicate fingers have not lost their surgical skill, and Thy great heart has not lost its power to forgive, and Thy wide arms are not hanging at Thy side but stretched wide to receive penitent men and women.

We, not thee, Lord, we've changed. Not Thee, Lord, we. O Christ, Thou art here, saying, come unto Me. And we say, what are the terms? And we remember high school, and we remember the job, and we remember the fellows we run with. We remember the girl we go with. We remember the boy that we sit by the phone and wait for him to call. We remember, Lord, the group we play cards with. We remember these things, and we go away sorrowing.

O my God, how long shall this continue? How long shall old Satan continue to reap these harvests? We beget them, and conceive them, and give them birth, and bring them up, and teach them, and give them schooling.

And Satan reaches up as a robin grabs a ripe cherry, and plucks it off, and swallows it. And that which we've sweat over, and prayed over, and labored for, and worked for, Satan gets. How long, O my God, shall this continue to be? And how long shall the treasure of tears continue to perish?

While we wait a little moment here, before we close our prayer, are there those who would say, Mr. Tozer, include me in your prayer before you close. All right, I see you, young man back there. Who else? Who else? Yes, I see you, young lady.

Who else? I don't say, don't look around. We don't have courage enough to put up our hand for people to see. If we haven't got courage enough to address God. But you put your hand and say, pray for me. Who else? Yes, in the middle section here. Yes, sir. Two men. Any more here in this middle section? Now, yes, I see you. And who over here in the north section, to my left, to your right, over here, who would say, I want you to pray for me? Yes, I see you back there. Who else?

Now, dear Lord Jesus, we pray for these who said, pray for me. O Lord Jesus, Satan hath desired to have these that he might sift them like wheat, and he wants them. Thou didst buy them with blood. Thou didst give thy life for them, and Thy soul was made an offering for sin. Thou didst give Thyself a ransom because you loved them so.

But Satan is trying to win them, and they're caught in the middle. O Lord, we pray that they may this very night now, while there's opportunity, believe and dare to believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make them willing now to look back to see the blood applied.

Help us all, Father, help us all. Don't let any of us be deceived. Don't let McAfee, nor Merrill, nor me, nor the board members, nor the Sunday school teachers, nor any missionaries who might be present, nor any of these who witnessed and testified on the street, nor in jails or hospitals. Don't let any of us be deceived, Lord.

We want to know the whole truth now and have it over with so we can look up to heaven and say, arise, my soul, arise. Great God, help these people every last one of them.