

"The Man Who Missed
Something"

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A.M.

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Matthew 19: 20. "All these have I kept observed; what do I still lack?"

Introduction:- We of today are not greatly disturbed about our sins. Though we may confess that we are "heartily sorry", our confessions as a rule, are not red with shame or wet with tears. We may be sorry, but too often we are not sorry enough to "amend our ways". Having cheaply confessed that we have gone in the wrong direction, we continue to travel the same disappointing road. Somehow it seems hard for us to believe that even God is greatly grieved over our very respectable and decent sins.

But if we are not disturbed by any deep sense of guilt, we are disturbed by the gnawing hungers and burning thirsts. Though the day laborer now has luxuries of which no ancient monarch ever dreamed, we are still restless and dissatisfied. We are the same as was the young man who came to Jesus with the age old question, "all these have I observed; what lack I yet?"

I.

Suppose we take a rather close look at the young man. At first glance, he seems to lack nothing at all. Who he was we are not told. But through the ages that have gone since he was on the scene, he has gone by the name "the Rich Young Ruler".

He was rich. Of course, we are aware that no amount of money can satisfy the deep longings of the heart. Yet wealth is not something to be despised. Money is power. It may be a source of vast good or of vast evil. It is dangerous only when we relate ourselves to it in a wrong way. As a master it is a devil. As a servant it can work wonders. This man, being rich, was therefore possessed of great power to do evil or to do good.

He was a ruler. That does not mean that he was a

governor of a state. It rather means that he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. He was a part of the highest court of his day. He was wellborn. It is a great privilege to be well born. It is fine to have a family tree. This is true, in spite of the fact that if we climb high enough up any family tree, we are likely to find something that is not an apple. This young man, being wellborn, had FOR THAT REASON ADDED POWER EITHER to hurt people or to help them..

He was young. He faced life with shoulders unbent by burden bearing, with eyes undimmed by the years or by the sorrows of life. He had a whole life to invest in the service of the highest. It is a great thing to be young, but I am having a better time now as I am slowly coming toward the afternoon of life. I nevertheless congratulate the young people, the manly and womanly young people, because you have the opportunity to dedicate your lives to God and climb upward to an ever increasing climax. The door was open to the rich young ruler.

This young man was further possessed of a deep moral courage. When he heard that Jesus was passing he gathered his garments about him and ran to fall at his feet. People do not often run in that land of leisure. He ran when nobody else was running. He knelt when nobody else was kneeling. It does not take much courage to stampede with the crowd, but to run alone and to kneel alone, that takes courage of the highest order.

This young man was a ruler. The man, Jesus Christ, to whom he bowed was a peasant. He was alone in thus showing honor to this carpenter. He was a man of the highest moral courage.

He was a religious man. He had taken his religion seriously. When Jesus asked him about the moral law, he was able to look Him in the face and say, "All these have I observed from my youth." What he said was true for Jesus looking upon him loved him and moved Him to say, "And Jesus looking upon him loved him."

Now it was this young man, rich, religious, clean

and lovable, who said, "I have missed something!" What was the thing he had missed in life? Jesus said to him only, "You lack one thing!" Jesus found in the young man a nearly perfect example of a young man.

II.

What did he lack? It was not decency, uprightness, integrity. It was not earnestness and high courage. It was not reverence; he was still able to bend the knee. What, I repeat, had the young man missed? He had missed eternal life. He had missed the life that comes from knowing God through Christ. "This is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent!" Thus he had missed the one thing that can satisfy in time and eternity.

There was a certain unlettered minister, who went one day to see a rather cruel agnostic, who took delight in exposing the ignorance of the ministers who came to the backwoods village. He was graciously received. They went to the library and the agnostic handed him one book after another, with the question, "have you read this?" To every question the preacher answered "No."

At last, when there was a moment of silence, the minister said, "Now I would like to show you my book. I have a book here that I deeply love. If you don't mind, I would like to read a word from it." Consent was given, and he read, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."

Then he prayed. His prayer went something like this. "Lord, this is the smartest man I ever saw. He knows everything, it seems. That is, he knows everything except you. He don't know a thing about you. That breaks my heart!" Then, he, the agnostic, fell upon his face and "got religion!"

Even so, this young ruler, had everything except God. But as he knelt at the feet of Jesus, his face one eager with wistfulness, our Lord told him

now he might find what he had missed.

III.

What did he tell him? He told him, "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow me". He was to part with wealth, wealth of a sentimental value since it had probably come to him touched by the fingers of his fathers.

He was to sell all and give it away. Why did he demand it of this young man? Because, He, Christ, saw what came first with him. He saw that, while he was eager for eternal life, he was yet more eager for things. He had great possessions, but his possessions had him.

Then, the command "follow me" was the crucial part of the whole command. The rich young ruler might have complied with the first part of Jesus command and still not have become a disciple of Christ's. Does not the Word of God say, "If I give all away that I have, if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing". What Jesus was after was not the selling and giving, what he was after was the man himself. He was after obedience. That is Christianity, the whole of Christianity

IV.

What reply did this young man make? "He went away for he had great possessions". He did not have to go, but he went his own way. Jesus saw him go, and said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God".

The disciples could not believe what they saw. They turned to Jesus with a gasp of amazement, and said, "Who then can be saved". That is the question. Who indeed. No one who refuses to meet the conditions, no man who turns away from Him who is the life.

Matthew was also a lover of money. He loved it so much that he sold his good name for it. But when he met Jesus his sorry bargain began to well up in his heart. He heard the words "follow me", and he arose and followed Him. Did Matthew give

all his wealth away? I do not know. Did he sob when he heard Jesus demands? I do not know. But I do know this; he did the one essential thing. He did that which brought him newness of life. He "rose and followed Him". Thus by obedience he won what this excellent young man had longed for and missed.

Young man, young woman, older man, older woman, have you missed something? Is that which you have missed, the knowledge of God through Christ? If you have missed thus far, you can find it, by walk-
the path of obedience.