**You still lack one thing**

Luke 18:15-30

Key Verse 18:22

“When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you

have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Life of following Jesus with complete dependency on him is glorious and beautiful life. About a month ago, missionary David Min and Suzanna Min told me their beautiful life of following Jesus in their early life in America. They were so poor at that time that they had to buy a car with $800.00. The car only moved forward and it could not move backward. So whenever they parked, they had to find a place where they could get out the parking lot by driving forward. One day their money was completely gone out. But mysteriously the school where missionary David Min attended called him and offered a free scholarship like $4,000.00. What surprised him was that he was not qualified for the scholarship but the school offered it to him. They experienced many other miracles, and indeed their life of following Jesus by depending on him alone was beautiful and glorious. But when we want to follow Jesus by depending on him alone there are things we need to overcome. So today we would like to learn from Jesus what is our one thing we still lack in order to follow Jesus depending on him alone.

My message has two parts. Part I. Receive the kingdom of God like a little child. (18:15-17) Part II. Sell everything you have and follow me. (18:18-30)

**Part I. Receive the kingdom of God like a little child (18:15-17)**

Look at verses 15-17.

**15People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16But Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”**

Jesus taught about how to receive the kingdom of God and enter it. Why did Jesus say, “**Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”?**

Jesus mentioned little children like infants because they completely rely on their parents or other adult caregivers.

I still remember how my first daughter trusted and depended on me when she was an infant. Women missionaries had a group bible study and testimony sharing meeting on every Tuesday night. So I had to take care of her on every Tuesday nights. To infants to sleep is very hard and painful. Because I noticed that whenever she was sleepy she rubbed her eyes and cried. So I took her in my arms and shoulders and walked around here and there in my Long Beach apartment. When I was tired I sat down and tried to take rest. Then she immediately noticed it and cried again. So I had to walk around. But what moved my heart so much was her trust.

She was less than one year old. So she was so tiny and weak. But what a trust she had in me! She completely trusted in me although she was completely helpless. Although she did not have any strength to protect her at all, and anyone could harm her so easily, she did not worry about it at all. She completely trusted in me and gave herself fully to me. I don’t think she even knew me as her father. I am sure she did not know who I was. But that trust moved my heart the most. I was deeply moved by her trust. I wondered how she could do so. In my mind as an adult I could not understand it. So I said, “Wow! This is what it means ‘trust’. Complete trust.”

And I am sure that is what God is seeking from us. God wants us to trust in him completely.

The same trust was revealed in the poor widow’s offering.

**Luke 21:1-3.  As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3“Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”**

What did she have? She had no money to live on. But she had “trust in God”. She relied on the Lord who would surely honor her trust and provide her with what she needed. As far as financial security goes, she had 100% assurance from the Lord which the rich people could not have.

And Jesus was saying the same truth, “trusting God” is the way for us to receive the kingdom of God and enter it. God gave us his kingdom through Jesus’ death and resurrection. He gave us the permission to enter it apart from what we did. But, we, adults, trust in what we do. We want to receive the kingdom of God and enter it by our own strength and merit. So we cannot enter it. But children have such humility to trust and depend. So Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

**Part II. Sell everything you have and follow me. (18:18-30)**

Look at verses 18-22.

**18A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**

**19“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 20You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”**

**21“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.**

**22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

The man who came to Jesus achieved such an impressive performance. He became a ruler. He was powerful in his position especially compared to little children. Furthermore, he was sincere enough to seek ‘eternal life.’ He came to Jesus and asked, **“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”**

The ruler’s questions is about “doing”. So Jesus could have told him directly, “Oh, no, you cannot inherit eternal life by doing. Eternal life is a gift”. But rather Jesus asked, **19“Why do you call me good?” “No one is good—except God alone.”** By saying, “No one is good except God alone” Jesus was indirectly teaching the ruler that the ruler was not good. Then Jesus said, “**20You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”**

Look verses 21-22.

**21“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.**

**22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

Why did Jesus ask him to sell everything he had and give to the poor? It is because Jesus wanted to help him to trust in him completely rather than his money.

Although Jesus said, ‘You still lack one thing.’ This “one thing” is ‘everything he has.’ So this “one thing” is “all of his possessions”. Jesus asked the ruler to sell everything he had and give to the poor and follow him.

Jesus revealed the limitation of the ruler’s confession, “All these I have kept since I was a boy.” The ruler was confident in his doing. The law was given to reveal our sinfulness. But the ruler only gained his righteousness through the law.

Then Jesus said, “**“You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

“To sell everything he had and give to the poor” means “the ruler will be like an infant.” He will not have anything to depend on. He will be completely powerless and helpless. The only person he could depend on would be the Lord himself.

“Trust in the Lord” would be “the treasure in heaven that the ruler would have after he sold everything he had and gave it to the poor.”

Look at verses 23-25.

**23When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.24Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Why does rich people have so much difficulty to enter the kingdom of God? It is because they have so much possibility to trust in money compared to people who do not have much money.

About two months ago, I was very surprised to know what the Lord wants from me is to ‘depend on him completely’ in every aspect of my practical life.

From time to time, I used one gallon of bottled distilled water for my nasal cleaning. It is for my sinus and cold prevention. I bought one gallon of distilled water from Ralphs. Then, I found that it was just little left. So I always tried to remember to buy but always forgot. So one day I prayed to God “Oh, Lord, I am powerless to remember to buy a bottle of distilled water. But you have great power to help me to remember. So I am making a decision to turn this necessity to the care of you, my Lord.” A few days later while I was brushing my teeth the Lord reminded me that I needed to buy a bottle of distilled water. Thank God, it was the answer for my prayer. Then I went to Ralphs immediately in order not to forget.

Then at the back of my mind I felt a whisper or impression like “one bottle of water”. I felt like that was what my heart said. But I felt that my mind said, “two or three bottles. If you buy one bottle you have to remember and buy again. But just to remember was so challenging that you had to pray. Also when you buy one bottle you have to make another visit to buy it later. So since one bottle is not expensive like one or two dollars, why don’t you buy two or three bottles?” I went to Ralphs. I stood in front of bottles of distilled water. But my inner struggle continued. I still could not make a decision. I didn’t know what was such a big deal of buying one bottle of water. Finally I decided to buy one bottle even though it means inconvenience and more pain and suffering. And when I made the decision and put down one bottle in my shopping cart, something happened. “The Lord came back right to the center of my heart again.” I almost heard the sound of ‘click’ when the Lord came right back to the center of my heart. I did not know. But until I made a decision to buy one bottle the Lord was wandering around the center of my heart.

Why? Because there was possibility that I might rely on the amount of water rather than the Lord.

And immediately I knew why the Lord wanted me to buy one bottle. The Lord wants me to depend on him alone rather than the amount of water. I know what will happen if I bought two or three bottles of water. Since I depend on the amount of water, I will kept checking the amount. And I may even buy more for security. But the truth is I will never have complete security because my security was in the amount of water.

Then immediately I was reminded of Jesus’ teaching for the rich people in today’s passage. The rich have great difficulty to enter the kingdom of God because they have great possibility to depend on money rather than God. But little children do not have money or anything to rely on. So they can simply trust God and receive the kingdom of God and enter it. But the rich ruler had so much money that he could not trust in the Lord. He trusted in the amount of his money. That was why he failed. That was why Jesus looked at him said, “**“How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”**

Look at verses 26-27.

**26Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”**

**27Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”**

It is impossible for rich men to be saved. No one can save rich men. But what is impossible with man is possible with God. So God saved many rich people. For example, arguably, Rockefeller was the richest man in American history.

According to some methods of wealth calculation, Rockefeller's net worth was the greatest among all wealthy people including Bill Gates and Sam Walton.

But God saved him. He made one tenth offering faithfully throughout his life time. He established University of Chicago and made numerous donations for non profit organizations.

Rockefeller, at the age of 86, wrote the following words to sum up his life:

**I was early taught to work as well as play, My life has been one long, happy holiday; Full of work and full of play— I dropped the worry on the way— And God was good to me everyday.**

Surely what is impossible with men is possible with God. The Lord saved arguably the richest man in American history.

Now what is the one thing that we still lack in order to follow Jesus? If we are intellectual people, our knowledge could be our stumbling block. We may depend on it rather than Jesus. It may become our righteousness.

We all have something we depend on rather than God. If one gallon of water can be a hindrance for the Lord to be at the center of my heart, how much more all other things we depend on could be stumbling block. They would be one thing we still lack. Whatever makes us depend on rather than Jesus is the one thing we still lack. And we need to remove it. They are our idols. We break the first commandment, “You shall not put any other gods before me.”

To many of us, who are living in this adulterous generation, to remove lustful desires and thoughts from our hearts and minds could be one thing we still lack in order to follow Jesus. If we are honest, we are surrounded by all the images and things that trigger our lustful desires. They are everywhere, billboards, magazines, advertisement. Check it out where you cannot find at least half naked women are not found. Even PG-13 motives, most of the times, have sensual sins. All of these sexual images spoils the mind of many young and old men.

It is no wonder that we are tempted to watch all kinds of sensual movies. And to remove our lustful desires, and impure thoughts can be the very one thing we still lack. And we need to remove it completely out of our thought world. Then we can come and follow Jesus with completely devoted heart.

Is it possible for us to be pure in our thought world? Yes? Yes. Jesus said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” With our own strength, we cannot have pure thoughts. We cannot obey Jesus teaching, “If you look at women lustfully you have committed adultery.” But Jesus said today, “What is impossible with men and possible with God.”

Once I told you a story of one pastor who claimed that he could show all of his thoughts into the sky like a power point, but he would not be ashamed. We thought ‘wow! That is impossible.” But what is impossible with men and possible with God. So we can keep our heart and mind and thought world completely pure, making it a holy sanctuary where the Holy Spirit dwells.

In today’s passage, when Peter heard this, he was reminded that he left everything to follow Jesus differently from the rich ruler.

Look at verses 28-30.

**28Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”**

**29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”**

Jesus promised reward of many times in this age and in the age to come eternal life. The complete fulfillment of eternal life belongs to the age to come.

**The serenity prayer of American pastor and theologian named Reinhold Niebuhr shows the age to come.**

**God grant me the serenity**

**To accept the things I cannot change;**

**Courage to change the things I can;**

**And wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time;**

**Enjoying one moment at a time;**

**Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;**

**Taking, as He did, this sinful world**

**As it is, not as I would have it;**

**Trusting that He will make all things right**

**If I surrender to His Will;**

**So that I may be reasonably happy in this life**

**And supremely happy with Him**

**Forever and ever in the next.**

**Amen.**

Reinhold Niebuhr is talking about ‘in the next.” I believe it is “the age to come” Jesus mentioned.

In conclusion, no one can receive the kingdom of God and enter it by his own effort. But we can receive it and enter it freely by trusting God alone. God gave us his kingdom through Jesus’ death and resurrection. And he wants us to come to Jesus and follow him until the age to come.

One word: **You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and follow me.**