

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 14 Jesus, Part II

By

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I guess you could call these lessons on servanthood, “The Nature of Jesus.” And in the last lesson we looked at four of those parts to the nature of Jesus. But let me just march with you through some specific Scriptures that I think will help us sort of get it together before we look at the final parts of the first half.

[Matthew 18:1](#) says,

- 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”
- 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,
- 3 and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.”

And in [Matthew 20:16](#), it seems that it is almost thrown in, it says: “So the last will be first; and the first last, for many are called but few chosen.”

[Matthew 20:25-28](#) says,

- 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.
- 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.
- 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—
- 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Then in [Matthew 23](#), beginning with verse 1 it says,

- 1 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
- 2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.
- 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

Look down to [verses 11 and 12](#):

- 11 “But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Now go with me to [Mark 9:33](#),

33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them [He is asking the apostles] “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?”

34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

36 Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,

37 “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

In [Mark 10:42](#) it says,

42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Now go with me to [Luke 22:24](#). If this sounds repetitious it is because it is.

24 Now there was also a dispute among them [I love these apostles], as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'

26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.”

Now there are other Scriptures to bear this out, but now we have basically all the words that we are going to need in order to complete our list. In the last lesson we began looking at what Jesus said about Himself in His “greatest in the kingdom teachings,” which I believe very well describes who He is because He is greatest in the kingdom. Jesus said, “He that is greatest must be servant of all.” Well, we talked about that last time. And then we looked at how He compared Himself with the kingdom of the world or the Gentiles. And He said, “You must not lord it over others.”

And then He compared Himself with the religious kingdom or that of the scribes, the Pharisees, those who sit in the seat of Moses or the seat of authority, or corollary—those who were considered the greatest in the religious kingdom. And He said, “They love to lay heavy burdens on others but they themselves will not lift a finger to carry the load” (cf. [Matthew 23:4](#)). He says, “Do as they say, but do not do as they do.” So the only way we can lead in the kingdom of God is by example.

By the way, in [John chapter 13](#), which we will look at later, Jesus uses this very word—example.

And then the fourth thing—He that is greatest must be humble. Now that is where we got to last time. Humility, of course, we discovered to be not putting ourselves down, or having some hang-dog attitude. But it is being honest about oneself. It is being “what you see is what you get”—transparent. It is living without pretense, without hypocrisy.

Now, you will notice that as we were reading the Scriptures, one of the additional phrases that we heard was “as a child.” So let’s write that down as point number five: He that is greatest must be as a child.

One of the things I noticed about children is that they are rather humble. A small one at least is humble. Have you noticed that a small child is, if they are happy they cannot pretend they are sad. Have you noticed that? And if they are sad they cannot pretend that they are happy. Wasted words to a crying child is, “Don’t cry.” My children were never able to pretend that they liked spinach. “Poison! I am going to report you.” So children tend to be who they are.

I always enjoy watching parents trying to get their children to do certain things, especially small babies. They like to say, “Wave to the people.” And the child refuses. I tell them, “I would not wave at me if I were you either. Don’t worry about it.” But a child tends to be who he is.

Another thing about a child—and it is the same thing as humility, actually. But I want to pull it out separately here. A child is unable to deceive. Have you ever seen a two-year-old trying to learn how to play hide and go seek? They do not quite have the concept.

Whoever is “it” counts to fifty and says, “Here I come, ready or not!” When he turns around the two-year-old is right there, covering his face and thinking: “I do not see you. You do not see me.”

My own children would sometimes say to me, “Daddy, I am going to go hide in the kitchen. You come find me, okay?” I love it. They did not know how to hide, in fact when my son was about five, he saw a magician somewhere and decided he wanted to be that. But it never worked for him because, you see, magic is totally dependent on deception. And he did not understand deception. He tried and said, “Daddy, I am going to play a trick on you, okay?” “Okay, son.” “I’ve got a rock in my hand, Daddy, and I want you to tell me which hand it is in. Okay, ready?” “I am ready, son.” He makes an effort with his hand and of course nothing happened because he just did not know how to deceive.

My children were never able to understand how I always knew when they had done something they should not do. It is because guilt came out of every pore in their body, you know. If they came home innocent, they just came home. But if they came home guilty, they came home whistling. And I would say, “What have you done?” “How did you know?”

I wonder what would happen if we adults did not know how to deceive? Have you ever thought about that? What would happen if we really did not know how to deceive each other? It would change things, wouldn’t it? You recall, of course, when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden that they began to hide. They became children of darkness and here began all the deception that we have suffered under for centuries.

But we are children of light! It is hard to hide things in the light. Have you noticed that? If you are going to hide something, you just tend to hide it in the dark. A child is unable to deceive.

I think when Jesus calls us to be His children one of the things He is calling us to be is a non-deceiving sort of person, the kind of person that has no hidden agendas. Well, it is similar to humility, isn’t it? What you see is what you get is how we are to be.

Jesus was a very open person. I am amazed at Him. He said He was the light of the world, which also He said of us, by the way. And He said of us that we were a city set on a hill. The Scripture says of Him that this was not done in a corner. This was right out in the open, you see. In Him was no darkness at all. That is amazing!

So a child is unable to deceive. And I think God calls us not to be deceptive sort of people—the kind of people when the world says, “Oh, you are a Christian. You are one of the honest ones, the undeceiving ones, the open ones.” “Well, if we are not deceptive, how are we going to protect ourselves?” That is God’s job, see. “Well, can we trust Him?” Of course we can! We should try it some time to see His faithfulness.

Another thing about a child that I really like is that a child is very unthreatening. Just looking you over, I do not see any of you men that I would want to meet in a dark alley at midnight. But meeting a little child in a dark alley is no threat. Isn't that amazing? They do not scare us. Has it ever occurred to you that no one was afraid of Jesus? I am amazed at that because He had all the power of the universe coursing through His veins, you know. He had this incredible power that is in billions of galaxies out in space, man. The power that created this earth! But nobody was afraid of Him—amazing!

The Sanhedrin did not arrest Him, not because they were afraid of Him but because they were afraid of the crowd. And Jesus even sends the apostles out and says, "I send you out as lambs among wolves" ([Matthew 10:16](#)). Boy that sounds exciting! Can you hear the wolves going, "Oh no, here come the sheep. What are we going to do?" Now if you are going to go out as a lamb among wolves, you learn quickly not to go on your own power.

One of the things that troubles me as I journey around is that it seems we have been training some attack sheep. Rambo-type sheep I guess you would call them—We can get them, don't we? Baaah!

Throughout Scripture this has been God's approach to the world, He takes something that was naught and speaks a universe into existence. He takes a people who were not a people and He makes them His people. God has always done that. Throughout the Old Testament He takes the children of Israel when they are weakest and wins the greatest battles. He takes them when they are trapped and destroys an Egyptian enemy—a whole army.

Even Joseph, said the most interesting thing to his brothers as the whole family was moving down to Egypt to eat. Joseph had become the number "one and a half" man in all of Egypt, you know. And he says to his brothers, "Now when you come to the border, they are going to ask you who you are and why you are coming here." He said, "Don't tell them that you are my brother. Just tell them the truth. Tell them you are a bunch of cattle herders because we despise cattle herders." Now that does not make any sense, does it? Look, if the president was my brother you would probably know by now. But Joseph is saying not to do that, "When you come to the border, just tell them the truth. Tell them that you are cattle herders because we despise cattle herders." So they get there and they say, "Who are you?" "Well, we are nobody. We are just a bunch of cattle herders coming down to eat." The Egyptians say, "Oh, cattle herders. You are no threat to us. We despise cattle herders. Come on in. In fact, we will give you our best land, the land of Goshen." And the rest is history.

You come to the New Testament and you hear of Paul saying, "Not many mighty, not many noble are chosen. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and the weak things to confound the mighty" (cf. [1 Corinthians 1:26-27](#)). That is us! We are the weak and the foolish. And the world cannot figure us out. I like that. It is the way God has always operated. Paul, the apostle says something else that seems un-American to me. He says, "When I am weak, then am I strong" (cf. [2 Corinthians 12:10](#)). See, I would have put a question mark there. But it is a declaration. He says, "His

strength is made perfect in my weakness” ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)). How strange—but that is the way God operates.

It really is a lot of fun when you stop and think about it. It is the thing that makes life such an adventure for us because the world cannot figure it out. Frankly, we cannot understand it either, but boy, is it ever an adventure!

In fact you come into modern time and you find it so. In 1978 I met a Christian leader from the country of Nepal. Now at that particular point Nepal was perhaps the most closed country in the world to the gospel. Some things have changed just recently and it is better, but it was very, very difficult back then. And he said to me, “Please pray for us. The birthright of every Christian in our country is seven years in jail.” He said, “If you get baptized they throw you in jail for seven years. If you do the baptizing, then they throw you in jail for fourteen years.” So he said, “Pray for us.”

I’ll be honest with you, I thought: “Why pray for you?” But I discovered later that the church in Nepal for years doubled in size every year. How did they do that? “It is elementary, my dear Watson.” When someone gets baptized, they throw him in jail. The other prisoners ask him, “Why are you here?” “Well, I became a Christian.” “What is that?” “You really want to know?” So other prisoners become Christians and when they are released and go home, their family asks them, “What kind of rehabilitation program did they have in that prison?” The ex-prisoner says, “They did not have one.” “Well, why are you so different?” “Well, I became a Christian.” “What’s that?” “You really want to know?” For years the country of Nepal built prisons as fast they could just to house the church!

In 1948 when Mao Tse-tung took over China, they could only find about 250,000 Christians in the country at that point. They were not welcome. At first they thought they would kill them all. They decided that might be a bit messy. One of the police bureau members, I am told said, “I know something about these Christians and I know they have to meet with each other all the time. So if we can separate them from each other, they will die out.” So they started looking for places where there were no Christians and they would send one there.

At that point Mao Tse-tung became the director of the world’s largest missions’ agency. And I understand that in some parts when they would get Christians into these villages, they did not want to give them an important job because after all, they are Christians. So, they would give the Chinese Christians what amounted to the lowest job on their particular ladder—the postman. They paid them to go house to house. Way to go, Mao! And now when the door to China opened up again—at least it did for a while where we could do some surveying—we discovered that there are millions and millions of Christians there.

How can they do that in Nepal and in China? They were so weak. All they had was God. This is not a bad thing. Just as a child is unthreatening, when we approach life in that way

and we lean on God what begins to happen then is beyond anyone's understanding, isn't it?

Let me tell you a story. I was serving a church once where on Thursday mornings the ladies would come for a prayer meeting and they would put their preschool age children in the church nursery and have their prayer meeting—to which I was not invited even though my name is Gayle. I loved those children and I would take about thirty minutes on those Thursday mornings just to go and play with them. I will never forget the first time I did it. You know how church nurseries are, this double door prison that we build. I opened the top half, leaned over with proper pastoral pose, “Hi, kids! Pastor Erwin here. Let's play.” One of them ran in the other room terrified. The rest of them just went about their business. Well, they did not seem to understand who I was. So I opened the bottom half, walked in and stood among them with proper pastoral pose. “Hi kids! Pastor Erwin here. Let's play.” Another one ran in the other room terrified. The rest of them just walked around like: “Did you hear a noise?” By now my ego was involved because the nursery attendant who was watching all of this was beginning to giggle. I wanted to grab one of kids and shake him and say, “You are going to play with me, kid, and you are going to enjoy it!”

Then the Holy Spirit helped me to remember what life was like for me when I was that size and what adults looked like to me. They seemed like giants, man! My world was kneecaps. And immediately I knew what to do. Without saying another word, I just got down on the floor. And in thirty seconds every one of them was right on top of me. “All right! We are going to play!” My hair went one direction and my dignity went another, and neither have returned.

At that point, I learned something about what we call the incarnation, God becoming man in Jesus. And in a sense getting down on our floor where we can look Him in the eyes and say, “All right. It is party time in the kingdom!”

Well, let's go to number six. He that is greatest must be as the younger, according to [Luke 22:26](#). Now that meant far more in that day than it seems to mean to us in our day. To be elder or younger in a household now is of really little significance. But it was very significant back then. The elder brother got the birthright and with it the majority of the family's inheritance. In fact, in some of those Middle Eastern countries, the elder brother would inherit everything. The younger brother then lived at the benevolence of the elder brother. And the elder brothers were not known for benevolence. So the younger brother was the disadvantaged one. He was the one for whom the system was not a friend. The status quo was never on his side. The way things were structured was his enemy. Indeed, the elder brother came to be known, stereotypically, as the establishment man and the younger brother as the rebel, if you please.

It is interesting that Jesus says, “I want you to live as the younger.” Now what that means first is: I want you to know that the system will never be on your side. In this world the way things are will always be your enemy. So don't expect your government or the system of the world to ever become the vehicle by which the world will be won. No, do

not count on it. In fact, those great pilgrims of faith declared themselves to be pilgrims in [Hebrews 11:10-13](#) didn't they? They said, "Here we have no enduring city." Interesting. No system, no place here that will last where we can say, "This is ours." But instead they said that they "look for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God" (cf. [Hebrews 11:10](#)). So we will never have our permanent place, our restful system here. That is one of the things He was saying.

But another thing He said regarding being the younger is: "I want you to realize that you are a pilgrim. You are just passing through, so travel light."

I travel a lot and one of the things that I have learned about traveling is the joy of the journey is inversely proportional to the amount of luggage that I take. The more luggage I take, the less joy I have; the less luggage I take, the more joy. Heaven is carry-on luggage!

I think Jesus is talking about something like that. He is saying, "We are to be pilgrims, passing through." I used to hear a song. I do not hear it much anymore. I have not heard it in a long time. Some of you might remember it. It says,

This world is not my home. I am just a passing through.
My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me from heaven's open door.
And I can't feel at home in this world anymore.

I think I have not heard it much lately because I don't think I can honestly sing it much lately. I would now have to sing: "This world is now my home. I am not passing through. My treasures are laid up on Moonlight Drive in Cathedral City, California. The angels beckon me from heaven's open door and I can't go right now. I am polishing my Rolls Royce." No, I don't have a Rolls Royce.

I am amazed at what happens the more things we get. I once thought I was pretty free from all of that, until about four years ago. My wife and I moved twice in one summer. Everyone ought to do that once. They say that two moves is as good as a fire. I could not believe how much stuff we had. I thought we would pack the night before we moved. My wife was wiser than that. And hour after hour during those weeks, the boxes began to crowd us out of our rooms. I could not believe it. Where was it all coming from? When the day arrived and I had hired this big truck, I was carrying box after box up that ramp. And my back was going out. And finally I picked up this heavy box and I said, "Honey, what is in this box?" She says, "Well, that is garage sale stuff. We will sell it for fifty cents when we get over there." And I am killing myself carrying it up the truck ramp. And I realized we are into stuff. I am into things.

In fact when we were packing up we discovered boxes that had not been opened in nine years. We really needed it badly, didn't we? But we found one box that was just labeled "Stuff." just like that. And I thought, "Man, I do not remember this." And we opened it to find garbage from the house we had down here. We had kept it for nine years! I am a

collector. I am a packrat. I have dodads, thingamajigs. I have had them for thirty years. I do not know what they are but they look very interesting. And I know that when I throw them away, the next day I am going to need them. I cannot believe how I accumulate things.

Jesus dealt with a man about that in one of the most interesting stories in Scriptures. It was coming together so well and this man really seemed to have his act together. You begin reading this story and you think, “This is going to be an awesome story of the kingdom.” The man was intelligent because he knew who to come to. He came to Jesus. That is intelligent. And he knew the question to ask. You see some people come to God and ask really stupid questions. “Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?” is a stupid question. “Should we pay taxes to Caesar?” is a stupid question. “Can God make an object so big that He cannot move it?” is a stupid question.

This young man in Luke’s gospel knew the question to ask. He said, “Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (cf. [Luke 18:18](#)). This is the right question. He was a smart guy. Intelligent. And Jesus listed off a few rules and He said, “You know these.” And then the man said, “Yes, and I have kept them since my youth.” Wow! This man was not only intelligent but he was holy. And he had one more thing going for him—he was rich. We call him the rich, young ruler. He was my kind of man—intelligent, holy, and rich. I would love to have him on my board. And the Bible records that Jesus loved him. It is a beautiful story. See, everything is coming together. And Jesus said to him—and I shall paraphrase slightly here—“You are doing great, man. In fact, you only lack one thing.” Hey, that is called good news. You see, I would expect Jesus to say to me, “Well let me see, Erwin. You lack 743 things.” But I can hear this man, “Just one thing? What is it? I am a can-do man and I will do it!” And Jesus says—and I continue to paraphrase slightly here. “Boy, you are doing so good there is only one thing I can see that has you in bondage still. Why don’t you go sell everything you have and give it to the poor? Then come follow Me.” “Oh.” And the Bible says that he went away sad because he had a lot of stuff.

This is so sad. If the man would have had just one bicycle he would have said, “Big deal, take it.” But he said, “You don’t understand, Sir, I have 100,000 bicycles.” How many bicycles can you ride at once? “That’s beside the point. I have 100,000.” The rich young ruler was sad. Jesus was sad. The apostles were sad. They were probably thinking, “Why didn’t we tell him to sell it and give the money to the Apostolic Evangelistic Association?”

And then Jesus said, “Boy, it’s tough for a guy like this. In fact it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” (cf. [Luke 18:25](#)). I once taught that the eye of the needle was a gate in the Jerusalem Wall, so small that a camel could only go through on his knees with nothing on his back. It is really a great illustration. So one day I decided to check it out to see if it was true. It is not. There was never any such gate in the Jerusalem Wall. So when Jesus said a camel through the eye of a needle, He meant a camel through the eye of a needle. Now I do not know if you have

ever tried to push a camel through the eye of a needle. It can be done, but you have to grind him up real fine first.

One of the things that I discovered is that as I accumulate things, it does not put me at rest. It is a funny thing. I saw the best illustration of that I think I have ever seen once when I was taking an all-night bus ride in India. Everyone ought to do that once in their lives. And somewhere in the trip this man got on the bus. It was a crowded bus and he had about ten boxes that he wanted to bring on. Well, they do not go inside the bus, they go on top. And so with great output of energy (because he did not seem to get anyone who could help him and I wasn't sure he wanted my help) he finally got all ten of them on top. And he got into the bus and he was exhausted. But not too exhausted to nearly start a fight so he could get a window seat. I thought, "At last this man can get some rest." But you know what he did? For the rest of the trip he had his head out the window counting boxes. "One, two, three, four, five, six. One, two, three, four, five, six." And when people would get off he would watch them very closely. I realized that is what happens, when I get stuff now I have to count it!

Jesus says in essence, "I want you to travel light." Oh by the way, I do personally believe that you can have things and make it to heaven. I believe that; but I also believe you need to see these things the same way Paul the apostle saw things. I will let paraphrase him slightly, He says: "I consider all these things to be dung" ([Philippians 3:8](#)). You are not offended by that word, are you? He means manure. Now if you consider your material possessions that way, you are not going to get too attached to them. If Jesus were to say, "Hey Gayle, come over here and work for Me." And if I were to say to Him, "I can't do it right now, Jesus. I am guarding a hundred tons of manure and I am expecting another load any minute." See how absurd that begins to sound. Now if you can see your "things" that way, then they will not corrupt you and you can live life as the "younger," you see.

Is this clear now? To live as the "younger," means that you understand you cannot count on the system of this world. You will always be the disadvantaged one. But that means you have to lean on His power, of course. It means to travel light.

Well, then Jesus says, "He that is greatest must be as the least and or the last" ([Matthew 20:26](#)). Which doesn't mean I want to be least and last to show you how least and last I am. If I ever come to you and say, "You be first and I will be last since I am the greatest," remember this is an others-centered thing. You recall when we were discussing the servant and one of the working definitions for it is to be others-centered. If I see you the way Jesus sees you, and I love you the way He loves you, then I am going to want to put you first and I really won't be noticing that I was last. I will not be saying, "Did you see that Jesus? I was last. Do I get points?" No, this is an others-centered thing.

The eighth thing Jesus says about Himself is also found in the Gospels. In the next session, we will look at six more points that we find in the Epistles, but that will be in our next lesson.

When I first saw this though, I had two reactions. My first reaction was, “Boy Jesus, I love You now more than I ever have before. I am glad to follow You.” Then I had another reaction. Have you noticed that the old carnal nature had habit patterns. These are thought patterns that every once in a while will zing through. You know what I found myself thinking? “Oh come on, Erwin. You cannot do that. You are having a rough enough time being a Christian now. You will never be able to do this.”

Ah, but I have some good news. The first bit of good news is that Jesus is “others-centered” toward us. That is good news. There have been times, for instance, in my sharing the gospel with individuals that I would offer them the opportunity to follow the Lord and they would say “no.” And a few times I had the presence of mind to ask them, “Well, would you mind describing God as you understand Him?” Boy, when they got through describing Him I would not have followed Him either. They did not know that Jesus is others-centered. How can you say no to Him? This is good news. This is the way He is toward us.

The other item of good news comes from [Philippians 2:13](#) which says, “For it is God who is at work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” It is God who is at work in you to make you want to do His will and to enable you to do His will. In other words, you are God’s fault. [Ephesians 2:10](#) tells us that we are His workmanship, His *poema*—His work of art—which is awesome.

I best understood this some years ago where I used to work. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the men of the department would go across the street to a gymnasium and during lunch hour they would play basketball. Now basketball is not my best game. Sometimes they would confuse me with the ball. And sometimes when we would choose up sides they would get down to me and say, “Look, we had Erwin last time. It is your turn this time.” So I was playing basketball for the fellowship and the exercise.

There was one guy whose name was Dave. He was about six feet thirty inches tall and He could play basketball. I loved to get chosen on his team because we would always win. By the way, I saw this guy just a year or so ago for the first time in many, many years. And he tells me, “I am most famous because of this story you tell, Gayle. When they find out that I am the Dave—‘Oh yeah, we know you.’” And he says, “I tell people that I am not as good as Erwin said I was. But Erwin is as bad as he said he was.” But I loved to get chosen on his team because we would always win.

Now on his team I only had one job: get the ball to Dave. So I would bring the ball inbounds and I would lob it over to Dave. And he would turn around and score. The other team would be amazed and then they would miss half of their shots. And it would be my turn again. I would bring the ball back in bounds. And by now I am feeling my Cheerios so I do a few Globe Trotter stunts to make them think that I know what I am doing. And if the ball got stolen it would be when I was showing off, you know. Then I would lob it over to Dave and he would turn around and score again. And the other team would go, “Whoa!” And then I would say, “Aren’t we good?” We? There was no “we” to it. It was

all Dave. I only had one job: getting the ball to Dave! Now this is the way it is with us because we are on God's team.

Let me tell you another story in the middle of this story. When I was in high school the big-name sportsmen first started becoming Christians. And they would come by my secular high school. And we would have an assembly and they would give their testimony and kids would come to Christ. It was awesome! Now these guys' hearts were right, but their heads did not always have their theology figured out. I remember this one big football bruiser that came by and said, "In football we have a first team and we have a second team. And then we have scrubs. Nobody wants to be the scrub so we get out there and we run 500 miles a day. And we eat fifteen beefsteaks an hour. And we lift 150 tons of weight a day. And we put on our pads and we run headlong into brick walls to make ourselves tough, so we can be on the first team because nobody wants to be a scrub."

And then he applied that spiritually and that is where he got off just bit. He said, "That is the way it is with God. God's got a first team. He's got a second team. And then He has scrubs." That's me. I'm a scrub. But he said, "Nobody wants to be that so we go to church 500 times an hour. And we read 15,000 Scriptures a minute. And we witness to 6,000 times a second. And we give 150% of our income, so we can be on God's first team because nobody wants to be a scrub."

But folks, that is not the way it is with God at all. He has only one team and He calls it a body. See, I would never come to you and say, "Is that your first team, nose?" "Well, of course it is. It is the only one I have." Well, that is the point, you see. So we are all in His body. We are on His team and we have got one job. Get the ball to Jesus! Jesus said, "Without Me you can nothing!" How much is nothing? All right. We got that solved, okay?

So I bring the ball in bounds and I lob it over to Jesus and He turns around and scores. And Satan goes, "Whoa!" And he misses half of his shots. And I bring the ball back in bounds and by now I am feeling my spiritual Cheerios so I do a few spiritual Globe Trotter stunts to make you think I know what I am doing. And if the ball gets stolen it will be when I am showing off. And I lob it over to Jesus and He scores again. And Satan goes, "Whoa!" And then I say, "Aren't we good?" But there is no "we" to it. It was all Him. I only had one job—get the ball to Jesus. "Without Me you can do nothing" ([John 15:5](#)).

[Hebrews 12:2](#) reveals to us, "Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith." Incredible. Not the author and abandoner of our faith. What He starts He has the power to finish. Isn't that great? He is the Finisher. I am the author of the unfinished job. My wife gets a little upset about it. I have these unfinished jobs around the house. There are little piles of tools and parts and I am say, "I am just waiting on a part, honey, and then I will finish this." "He who has begun this work in you will be faithful to complete it" (cf. [Philippians 1:6](#)). It is not, "He who has begun this work in you will really get tired of you after a while and say, 'Okay, you are on your own.'" No, He will complete it.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling. Who is the “Him” that it is unto? You? No. Jesus.

So I have learned in my old age, as I have experienced and watched all kinds of different theologies, to hold onto them very lightly. But I hang on to Jesus for dear life, man. I am looking unto Jesus. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

I have a brother three years younger than I who is an expert sailor. And every time I go and visit him, we go sailing. Now this has brought about a certain tradition—a legend almost at our house. My mother goes into immediate intense prayer. And she calls the coastguard and says, “Gentlemen, start your engines. The Erwin boys are on the ocean.” Now the reason for that is we always go aground and have to be rescued. This happens because my brother turns the helm over to me. And he says, “It is real easy, Gayle, just go toward that red light that flashes red once every two seconds and we will be okay. No problem.” But there is a problem. It is not the only light out there. And the top of the ocean looks pretty much the same everywhere. Have you noticed that? I see another light. “Oh now, that is red and it is flashing twice a second. That is easier to follow. I will follow that one.” And then I see another light and it is moving too. Now I think that we will really get somewhere. And sure enough, after a while my brother comes running back, “Gayle, what happened? What happened?” “I don’t know, Jay. I am just following this light.” “What light?” “It is there.” “That is the wrong light!”

And that is what happens to us spiritually sometimes. We see the light of the world and we begin to follow. You discover that there are some other lights out there. Look at that one, it is flashing a lot faster. Boy, there you go. We can go that way. Yeah! And then we see another one that has pizzazz to it. And it is really moving. Now we will get somewhere. But sure enough, after a while what happens? We have our eyes off of Jesus. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

Now I am telling you and I wanted you to see this too. Not so it can put you under some burden of “Oh boy, look at what I have to do now.” No, I want you to see what He is doing in you. This is like the pattern He writes on you. And says, “Now I want you to see what I am going to make you become.” Oh, what a goal! It beats any goal I have ever seen. And my heart cries out, “Yes, Lord Jesus!”

Let’s pray.

Lord, You are so good to us. And our hearts do go up to You in worship. We thank You, Lord. Work on us. We open ourselves to You and ask You to make us like You. Work out Your will in us. Draw us to You and to Your likeness. Fill us with the knowledge of You and Your will. I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.