

Focus on Souls

(By Rev. Anthony Menzel, October 18, 2020)

Most of us focus on the wrong things...

Luke 16.19-31

19 “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and [h]fared sumptuously every day. **20** But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, **21** desiring to be fed with [i]the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ **25** But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. **26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

27 “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, **28** for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ **29** Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ **30** And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ **31** But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

When he was dead, the rich man realized that fancy clothes and food were not important.

Luke 12:13-21

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

14 But He said to him, “Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” **15** And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of [c]covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. **17** And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ **18** So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.” ’ **20** But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ **21** “So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Again we see that focusing on material things is not the right focus...

((**22** Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. **23** Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. **24** Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? **25** And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? **26** If you then are not able to do *the* least, why [d]are you anxious for the rest? **27** Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not [e]arrayed like one of these. **28** If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith? **29** “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. **30** For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. **31** But seek [f]the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. **32** “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.)))

***The Lord Jesus wants us to focus on reaching lost souls.

Luke 19:2-10

2 Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. **3** And he sought to see who Jesus was, but

could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up [a]and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, [b]make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” **6** So he [c]made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. **7** But when they saw *it*, they all [d]complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”

8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

9 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; **10** for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The Lord Jesus wants us to want everyone to be saved, regardless of their past...

2 Peter 3:1-9

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), **2** that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of [a]us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, **3** knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, **4** and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.” **5** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, **6** by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. **7** But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and [b]perdition of ungodly men. **8** But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **9** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward [c]us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

The Lord Jesus wants everyone to be saved.

***How can we reach the lost?

1. **Start with our own example.** If we give a godly example, that example will often draw people to Christ...

1 Peter 3:1-7 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. **3** Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— **4** rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the [a]incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. **5** For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

A Word to Husbands

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

2. Care about people.

Proverbs 19:17

He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord,
And He will pay back what he has given.

1 John 3:17-18

17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

We have to share to truly show Christ's love to other people.

We have to eliminate negative feelings we have toward others...

1 John 4:20-21

20 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, [d]how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21** And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

Forgiveness is crucial...

Even if people don't ask for forgiveness, we should ask that God would change them and that He would judge them if they refuse to change.

Mark 11:25-26

25 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. **26** [d]But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

Another part of caring about people is truly listening to them...

Mark 10:46-52

46 Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. **47** And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.”

50 And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51 So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

The blind man said to Him, [f]“Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.”

52 Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has [g]made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Even though Bartimaeus was blind, the Lord Jesus still asked him what he wanted prayer for...

The Lord Jesus listened to Him...

- **3. Make sure that the primary focus of your prayers is salvation...**
<http://www.abundantlovechurch.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Gods-Vitamins-for-People-Who-Are-Not-Right-with-God.pdf> On the Prayer Resources tab of our Web page, we have many important prayers, including the prayer above...The focus of this prayer is well being, but its initial focus is on salvation...In fact, 4/7 parts of the prayer focus on salvation in different ways, thus putting the priority on spiritual health, not just physical health...It uses Scripture as well, so it is a good model of how to pray for the salvation of souls...
- **1 John 4:14-15** **14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. One of the main ways we know that something is God's Will is when it agrees with God's Word...