continued from Sunday, June 25th

Zechariah 4:6 & Luke 18:18-23 & 1 Cor. 2:9-12

6 So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Zechariah 4:6

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

18 A 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. 20 You 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.’[a]”
21 “All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.
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.”
23 When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.

Luke 18:18-23

9 However, as it is written:
“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”[a]—

the things God has prepared for those who love him—
[10] these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.
The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. [11] For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. [12] What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

1Corinthians 2:9-12

If we want to understand what God has done for us, our spirit needs to be developed through the feeding of God's word. It is spelled out fully in 1Corinthians 2:10, which tells us why and it says it very clearly: "God hath revealed those things (things beyond our imagination) to us by His Spirit (your mind can't tell you the things of God, the world cannot tell you the things of God.). For the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) searches everything (for those who love God), all things, even the deep things of God." (Even the deepest things of God. Look at what the Holy Spirit revealed to John on the Island of Patmos).

The average Christian cannot know the deep things of God without developing a spiritual relationship with the Holy Spirit. Plants that flourish are plants that are loved. Plants that are not fed, nourished, or cared for do not do well. People who love their plants talk to them. They make sure they get enough sun, and nutrients so the plants will grow. They take good care of their plants. The plants know they are cared for and respond in turn. This is what happens to your spirit when it is nurtured. The nurtured spirit, the cultivated spirit, the spirit that loves Jesus, continues to grow their relationship with the Holy Spirit. For that person, faith is no longer shaky, or uncertain. You will have moments of uncertainty sometimes, but your spirit,

because of your faith, shakes that uncertainty off and enters in, and enables you to stand firm. The Holy Spirit can then grow your spirit because your spirit is being nurtured and developed.

The reason this can happen is found in 1 Corinthians 2:12: “Now we have not received the spirit of the world but the spirit that comes from God.” The second part of this verse 12b tells us why we have received the spirit from God: “So we can understand the things that were freely given to us by God.” Now let’s look at this carefully. We were given the spirit of God so we can understand the things that God gives freely. Grace is free; mercy is free; forgiveness is free to us, paid for by Jesus. Peace is free, joy, wisdom, and faith is free, and necessary to fight the battles we find ourselves in. Our spiritual holiness and sanctification are free. All of this is free. For this, we should be grateful that our worship of God is more complete because of what God has done in Jesus Christ.

When our spirit grows, we will desire more of Jesus. Our spirit will long for the Holy Spirit. This spiritual growth and transformation takes place in total opposition to the systems of the world. This spiritual transformation will cause you to love unconditionally. This will place you in total opposition to the world and the way its systems function. You will love those the world and the system tell you not to love. You will love those who are not like you. You will love the homeless; you will love the racist, not his/her behavior but him or her. You will love unconditionally and will see things in people that the systems in this world refuse to see. You will see potential in the gang member. You will see potential in the poor. You will see potential in the thief. It’s not that you can change them; that’s God’s job. Our job is to see the potential in others as God’s children. Our job is to touch lives; God’s job is to change them. Our job is to help prepare the way. God’s job is

to get them to get on the path. The rich ruler did not come to Jesus for conversion. The rich ruler came to Jesus for confirmation. The rich ruler came as a truly impoverished soul. Jesus wanted to make him truly rich. Jesus tells the rich man in Mark 10:21, “One thing you lack.” In Greek, it says, that one thing “is” lacking. You lack this right now. You are not in control of your life. The things you have, and your possessions are in control of you. Riches, things that are in this world, cause addiction, and because the rich ruler was addicted to the world of things, the rich ruler walked away sad.

It’s hard to follow Jesus when you are weighed down by your desires, by the things you are addicted to in this world. Hebrews 12:1 says, “Having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us and throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin that so easily entangles us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us.” When we make ourselves, when we make what we want to do, what we want to possess, a priority over Jesus, we become the sin that so easily entangles us. The definition of sin is missing the mark, not being on track, and not being centered. The only time we sin is when we make ourselves the priority over Jesus in anything we do. When what we want to do becomes the priority over Jesus, we sin. The things we want, the things we want to do, are at the center of every sin we commit.

The rich ruler could not remove himself from the center. The rich ruler was controlled by the system he was living in. How much are we controlled by this system, this world culture? The world and its systems are selling drugs called power, fame, and status. How much have we purchased? How addicted are you? How hooked are we? Will our addiction cause us to walk away from Jesus? If we are addicted, Jesus has a rehab program. The rich ruler would not sign himself in.

However, we can. The center is S.U.R.R.E.N.D.E.R. TO JESUS REHAB CENTER. It is guaranteed to help anyone recover from the addictions of this world. All we need to do is put Jesus first. All we need to do is let go and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. Take your hand off your life and allow the Holy Spirit to become your guide.

We don't have to walk away. God specializes in second chances. God specializes in one more time. God specializes in do-overs. God specializes in people like you and me who can never get it right the first time. "It is written, ye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians. 2:9) When you grow your spirit, you grow your faith. When you grow your faith, you grow your ability to believe and trust in God's word. I pray you begin to grow your spirit today. Examine who you are in Christ, not what you are in this world. We can only do this when we surrender fully and completely to Jesus.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool