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Living Up to Our Potential for the Kingdom, and Seeking Wholeness Healing & Spiritual Warfare with Bob Canton Charismatic Meeting Saturday, September 7, 2000 St. Isidore Ministry Center, Bloomingdale, IL

Opening Prayer

Bow with me in prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and open our hearts to the message of peace that he sends us today. And we ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thank you, Teresita, for your kind words.

Mt 11:25-30

I would like to begin with a quotation from the Gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 11, verse 25. “At that time Jesus said, ‘Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I thank you because you have shown to the unlearned what you have hidden from the wise and learned. Yes, Father, this was how you were pleased to have it happen. My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I put on you is light.’” The gospel of the Lord.

Sabbath Rest

Now friends, this message of Christ is something we need to reflect upon carefully and quietly. He invites us into his rest, which in Hebrew is “shabbat.” That, of course, is the name of the day of the week that we are having today; this is the “Sabbath.” It is the last day of the week as the Hebrew people reckoned the week, and it reflects the day of rest that God took when after six days of creation, he rested. So let us enter into the rest with Christ.

49th Generation—Perfection

If you read the Gospel of Matthew, in the very beginning, the very opening passages, it goes through a series of many names: “This one begot, this one begot that one.” And you might say to yourself, “Who cares?” Well, of course, the reason why Matthew put that in there was to show how many generations—how many generations—had existed before Christ. And according to his addition there were forty-eight generations before Christ, and now with Christ is the forty-ninth generation. And forty-nine, as you know from your classes in arithmetic, is the product of seven times seven. Seven is a perfect number for the biblical people; it is symbolic of perfection. Seven times seven is perfection of perfection, and therefore God has now done everything that can be done in Christ. Christ is the perfection of perfection.

Healing on the Sabbath

And now God can truly rest because he has finished—but not really, because if we look at Christ himself, Jesus in his early ministry, what do we see? He is constantly working—he is not resting—he is working. And what day does he choose to work most? The Sabbath! He heals constantly on the Sabbath. And this, of course, irritates the religious leaders who say, “Hey, you’re not allowed to do that!” In this morning’s gospel from the morning Mass, which will probably be the Mass we will celebrate this afternoon, the gospel is all about how Jesus is walking through a field and there’s standing grain, and the disciples kind of break off some grain and they start chewing it. And the Pharisees say, “Hey, wait a minute; that’s harvesting! You’re harvesting! That’s not allowed on the Sabbath!” So there is a lot about the Sabbath in the gospels.

Invitation to completeness

And Jesus is always using the Sabbath to make a point—to make a point. For example, there are many sick people in Israel. There are those who are blind, deaf and paralyzed; and he chose the Sabbath primarily to work—to show something very important, to show that sickness and blindness and deafness and all of the things that ail us are really not God’s will, but it’s our own incompleteness. But in Christ, where God now can fully rest, in Christ we can come to perfection, that is, we can come to health; we can come to restoration of the purpose and the plan God has for each of us. And so Jesus invites us into his rest, he is inviting us into his completeness, his perfection, the totality of life that he embodies.

Continuing Creation

And, of course, it is very important to note that the leaders of the religion of Jesus’ day were irritated by Jesus’ actions because they had already excused or explained away sickness, poverty, blindness, handicaps—they explained this all away by saying, “That’s God’s will. We don’t have to worry about that.” Why? Because their idea was that God has already done everything God wants to do. That’s how they misused the very idea of Sabbath and the story of creation itself: in six days God has done everything God is going to do; now God is resting. Well, again, yes and no. God rested on the Sabbath because he had created his own image and likeness in Adam. And in God’s own image and likeness, which is ourselves—we are Adam—God now is expecting from us that we will carry on the creation. We are made in his image and likeness; and therefore we have the power to carry on God’s work.

Fall and Redemption

But sin intervened in God’s plans and waylaid the human race for centuries and millennia. Again, God is not to be forever frustrated; and so through his Son, again, he brought about his own will, so that at least in Jesus his will is accomplished. But outside of Jesus, his will is not accomplished; and so we need to enter into Jesus, enter into Christ, so that the perfection and the fulfillment of our lives can come about, and we can live as God wants us to live, which means full of life.

Christ's Mission

And the rest of Christ—that is the rest, the Sabbath, that is in Christ—is not rest in an ordinary human sense. It is rest from anxiety, yes. It is rest from fear. And God promised that to Abraham. God promised that we would be able to be free from fear and worship him and him alone all the days of our lives. That's a promise! So in that sense it is like normal rest; it's resting from fear. It's resting from anxiety. It's resting from worry, but it isn't resting from all action—no! Christ is the perfect rest, and he is full of action. He is the Word of God in action! And he goes out with the power of divine love to touch. He goes out with the Word of God that he is—he is the Word of God—he goes out with the Word of God to bring light into the darkness of human culture and even human religion, darkened and distorted as it can be.

Our Mission

So Jesus says, “My burden is light.” But it is a burden in this sense, that we are expected to do something; we are not called into some passive dream state. That is not what it means to enter into the rest of God. It is not entering into passivity. It's not entering into utter relaxation. It does not mean entering into utter comfort. “My burden is light,” but it is a burden! It's a small burden and you can carry it; but you do have to do your part because you are created in the image and likeness of God, and God really wants you to cooperate and share in the continuation of the creation: in yourself, in your family, in your society, in your culture, in your world, in your business, in everything! So the rest of God does not exclude that action; in fact, it impels us into it without anxiety and without fear and without passion. It is done easily. “My burden is easy.”

Parable of the Talents

Now as we look at the parables, Christ tries to teach precisely what we must know and do. And we have to think about them. No parable explains itself to us. We have to really go into it and root out its meaning. Now the parable I want to refer to at this moment is the Parable of the Talents. Now the word “talent” in English I know refers to abilities. That's not what it means in the parable. In the parable it is a unit of money like a dollar. So instead of talking about the Parable of the Talents, talk about the “Parable of the Dollars.” One person is given ten thousand dollars. Another person is given five thousand dollars. Another person is given one thousand dollars. That's a very important parable because it's about how we are expected to be in action in life. Our lives are to bear fruit. “Your fruit must remain,” Jesus says. So how do our lives bear fruit? Well, we have to do something with what we have. Now the money is just a metaphor; it's an image, a symbol, of the potential God has given us.

Now in this parable we see, what? We see that those who have more have to give more. “Those to whom much has been given, much will be required.” That's part of divine justice. Now the point of the parable, however, is beyond that; it's not just that. It's that, guess what? The man with the ten thousand dollars—he made twenty thousand dollars. He had something to show. He took the power God gave him. He had something to show when he came, you might say, to make an account of his life. Now the man with ten thousand, he had twenty. The man with five thousand, he ended up with ten. And that's perfectly fair and just as we can figure out. He started with less; he

ended up with less, but that's still fair. What happened to the one with one thousand dollars? This poor slob was condemned by God, rather the master in the parable who represents God, of course. And the master said to him, "You worthless, lazy lout!" Well, that's not very nice. You mean God isn't very nice? Well, God does ask something from us and he does require more than just keeping the ten commandments!

Burying Our Power

That's Jesus' point. You know, the Hebrew people, the Jewish people, they had the ten commandments and they had lots more commandments, six hundred and thirty-six in the Old Testament written down, and then many more oral ones. And he was violating them all the time because that's not the point. Here's the point. You have ten thousand dollars or you have five thousand dollars or you have one thousand dollars, whatever it is, you must bring something to the Lord—what you have done with this. Now which one does the master condemn? The one that started with the least, and that is the way human beings are. That is our nature, because those of us who are perhaps less blessed with power, we think because we're less blessed with power **we don't have to do anything**—and in fact we deny our power; we bury it. That's what he did; he buried his power in the ground. We bury our power too. We deny it. We say, "Well, I can't do anything. No one ever listens to me. I don't have an education. I don't have a good job. I don't have this. I don't have that." And you know what? All that bad-mouthing is really insulting to God because there's no one in this room and there's no one on earth who does not have some power.

And incidentally in the Latin language the word for "power" and the word for "potential" is the same word, "potestas." We are born with potestas. We are born with potential. We are born with power. Every single one of us! And we know it's true because we affirm it every time we see a little baby. Every time someone comes to a little baby they say, "Oh, isn't this wonderful!" And we think about how great this little baby is and how it's all potential. But as we live we start squandering our potential. We squander our power. We give it away. We bury it in the ground in lots of different ways. And we have got to start studying how we are doing this. And Jesus is saying with this parable, "You know, way beyond the ten commandments—here this is an offense against God, the squandering of your power, the squandering of your potential." That's an offense against God. You have something, and that something has to be put to work for the kingdom. And it's not a burden that is heavy; it is not. It's a light burden. It's not a yoke that will strangle you; it's an easy yoke—but it is a yoke! You are required to do something to pull your weight in the world.

Health in Balance

Now if you talk about healing. You know, we are not compartmentalized people. It isn't, well, I have an emotional part, a mental part, a physical part, a spiritual part, a social part, and a public part. Well, this part is okay, and that part is okay, and that part is okay, but that's not okay. Well, no. Health is balance. If you are really seriously physically ill, you are going to feel physically ill in your emotions, and your mind is going to be affected, and your spirit is going to become vulnerable. Or if you are mentally off-kilter, out of balance, that's going to affect the way you feel, and it's going

to actually affect your body; it's going to affect your mind; it's going to affect everything. Everything affects everything else. We are one human creation of God.

So when we go to God we have to be looking for the rebalancing of all of who we are. And this means we have to take action to grow and develop according to God's plan for each of us. It is really wrong for us to seek someone fixing some little part of us as if we really know what's wrong. We really don't know what's wrong. Oh, we might know we have a backache, but do you really know why you have a backache? Maybe you do. Maybe you actually know that. But is that related to something else? Very possibly, or it will be. For example, recently I was at a therapist. The therapist was going to work on my back, so she was pulling my arm. Pretty soon, my back hurt all the worse! Why? Well, it's all connected. Now I think it's going to work out eventually. Sometimes it hurts to get better. But actually, my back is all kind of crooked, so if it's ever going to be straight, it's going to hurt putting it in the proper order. And it will even not feel right for a while. That's the way it is. Do I really want to remain crooked? No. Well, that's going to require some kind of pain, some sort of discomfort to straighten up.

Enduring the Pain of Change

Now that's true for all disorders and all problems. And everything is connected to something else. This is a real simple one I just brought up, but it could become complicated. If we mentally adjust to what's wrong with us physically, then we don't ever want to endure the pain that is required in order to change in order to be right. If emotionally we cannot take any kind of suffering, well, then we will never endure what it takes to become healthy. And all of this affects our spirit. A spirit of a disciple is a spirit that is willing to take on the yoke of Christ. The spirit of the disciple is one that is willing to take on the burden of Christ and endure what must be endured for the sake of the kingdom and for the sake of our own wholeness.

“Thy Kingdom Come”

And don't forget when Jesus taught us to pray he said, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth”—first—before he ever prayed for things like “our daily bread.” Yeah, we need bread; of course we have to eat. And “our daily bread” symbolizes everything we need—true. But first the kingdom of God—let that come, and let us want it first. Let that be our priority in our hearts, in our desire. In other words, let's forget about me and let's think about God and God's kingdom. “Thy will be done on earth.” Let's recognize that God's will isn't being done on earth sometimes because of me! Sometimes I don't do the will of God on earth, and sometimes I ignore my responsibility to bring the will of God to earth.

Self-centered Priorities

A lot of people blame God all the time, you know, because things go wrong. Some child gets leukemia. “Why did God do that?” God didn't do that! God doesn't go around giving people leukemia! If God went around giving people leukemia, it would be a crime, it would be a sin, to do research on how to overcome leukemia. But the Church has always promoted medical research and medical professions and medical services and medical practice. Why? It's God will for us to be healthy. We always have believed

that. So we blame God when our expectations in life aren't met. We don't realize that God's expectations aren't being met either! And they are not being met partly because of us, partly because we don't go along with the will of God, and partly because God's priorities aren't our priorities. We want **to be taken care of** first.

I remember going to the hospital once and talking to a man who was dying. And I said, "Well, do you want to talk about anything? Would you want to go to confession? Do you want to be anointed?" He said, "Father, let me get better first!" I said, "Good luck!" I never saw him again. Maybe he never got better! There was another man, and he was actually a very nice man, a good Catholic, I mean he went to Mass weekly. And he had a heart attack. He was a hard working man. Worked himself to the bone. Had a lot of money. Never enjoyed it. Didn't have time. He had a heart attack. Another associate of mine went to the hospital. He said, "Father, I can't talk to you now. I got to get this stuff done." He died that night.

When are we going to put God's priorities first? When are we going to accept the burden that the Lord wants us to carry, which is light—he promised that? When are we going to recognize that we need to be yoked to purposeful action in the world? God gave Adam, that's you and me, dominion over the earth. We look at the earth. We look at the world. Do we see everything wrong? Guess who has dominion? We do! I've often been perplexed by hearing prayers of the faithful or prayers in prayer groups, petitions, where people ask God to do all the things God told us to do. "God, please feed the hungry. God, please take care of the poor. God, please"—that's your job! That's my job! Now God will help us. It's the yoke which is easy, the burden that is light—it's a part of it.

Cooperating with God

But also as we engage in purposeful life, and when we have a purpose which is not just our own personal survival or what we want in life, but what God wants, we will be moving toward health. It will be divine health. It will be spiritual. It will be emotional. It will be mental, and it will be physical. And it won't ever be perfect—not as long as we're on earth. As long as we're on earth, something is going to be wrong. The day there is nothing wrong, pinch yourself—you're dead! This earth is for us to live in, work in, enjoy, and contribute to. We have been gathered together by the Lord to be his disciples and we have power—every one of us has something. If you ever deny your own power, that's the saddest thing you can do to yourself; and God will not be pleased. So we take whatever it is, whatever potential God has given us; we use it; we grow. We try to find the areas in our lives where there are things that are quite off.

Emotional Health

Now physically that's going to be more obvious, not so emotionally, necessarily. But read the Bible. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? Charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, goodness, mildness. Are those qualities you have? If not, you need emotional healing. Those are the fruits of the Spirit, and they are all emotions. They are the emotions of the healthy person, a person who is healthy in Christ. We're never going to learn this by watching television. We're never going to learn this by reading books,

unless they're by spiritual people. Because look at all these fancy, handsome, pretty, sleek, well-groomed people on television who behave so terribly badly and who feel so terribly badly. Physically—yeah, they're attractive. But every other way, they're losers. Read the Bible. Read Scripture. That will give you an idea of what it is to be emotionally healthy, mentally healthy. Read Christ's teachings. They are the source of mental order and health. "My yoke is easy, my burden light."

God bless you!