



“Very Fine People!”

Spirit of Truth Cathedral
Sunday Worship: Veterans Day
Sunday, November 11, 2018

Preliminary Remarks:

This afternoon, God wants to challenge us concerning our self-perceived notion of **morality**; which if unchecked, could result in a hypocritical view of not only ourselves but our fellow man. Today’s message to the church today, in response to the recent political climate of perfectionism, is: “**Very Fine People!**”

Text:

Matthew 19:16-24 [King James Version ~ *The Rich Young Man*]

- ¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, **Good Master**, what **good thing shall I do**, that **I may have eternal life?**
- ¹⁷ And he said unto him, Why callest thou **me good?** There is **none good** but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, **keep the commandments.**
- ¹⁸ He saith unto him, **Which?** Jesus said, **① Thou shalt do no murder**, **② Thou shalt not commit adultery**, **③ Thou shalt not steal**, **④ Thou shalt not bear false witness**,
- ¹⁹ **⑤ Honour thy father and thy mother:** and, **⑥ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**
- ²⁰ The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: **What lack I yet?**
- ²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be **perfect**, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.
- ²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
- ²³ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.
- ²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Perfected in the Word Ministry

Introduction:

Saints of God, it is extremely rare that I inject politics within the delivery of a homily or message to the body of Christ on any given Sunday or speaking opportunity. However, this afternoon I am compelled to mention two perverted and misguided situations in which our current national leader has super-imposed his self-serving values of morality upon the nation with such reckless abandon, that it has become incumbent of me to expose its relevance to the words of Jesus Christ to all of Christendom as well as the instructions of God (himself) to His servant Moses on the top of Mount Sinai.

After the death of a young woman protesting against a massive white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 12, 2017, President Donald Trump stood in the lobby of Trump Tower in Manhattan and drew the most infamous equivalency of his time in office. In his remarks he said (and I quote): “I think there is blame on both sides. You had some very bad people in that group” [referring to the white nationalist groups rallying against removal of a Confederate statue].” Then Trump blatantly said: “But you also had people that were **very fine people**, on both sides.”

Again, during the recent US Supreme Court Confirmation Hearing of Brett Kavanaugh before the Senate Judiciary Committee – in which a credible allegation of sexual assault lodged against him by Dr. Christine Blasey Ford became tenuous regarding the outcome of Trump’s hand-picked nominee – he could not resist weighing in. Trump said he watched the saga and watched Kavanaugh suffer “with false statements made about him, things that never happened.” Then he egregiously stated: “There were many, many false things that were said about a very, **very fine man** and would have destroyed his family if this

Perfected in the Word Ministry

didn't happen." Trump said, referring to the confirmation: "It all came together in the end and people realized it was false accusations and false statements."



Perfected in the Word Ministry

I. Good Master? [Matthew 19:16,17 ~ Ironic/Sarcastic]

Matthew 19:16,17 [King James Version ~ *The Rich Young Man*]

... **Good Master**, what good thing shall I do, that I may **have eternal life**? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me **good**? There is **none good** but one, that is, God:

The backdrop of this message speaks to the character of a truly great person, and the requirements of that person to use his or her greatness in the service of others, just as Jesus did. At first, on the perimeter, the rich young ruler appears to approach Jesus with an honest question pertaining to life eternal – of which he must have invariably heard through religious acquaintances or some knowledge of the existence of a life apart from the physical reality. But upon further analysis, he is most likely an **agnostic** (one who is not committed to believing in either the existence or the nonexistence of God) – like doubting Thomas [John 20:24,25]; or worse, an **atheist** (one who does not believe in the existence of a god or any gods) – like one of the malefactors which hanged on a cross beside Jesus and railed on him, saying: “If thou be Christ, save thyself and us!” [Luke 23:39]

So, sarcastically and with ironic purpose, this wealthy individual (a ruler of a kingdom or nation in his own right) tested our Lord – perceiving him to be of a pure life and of a divine nature – by first **patronizing** Jesus ... calling him “**good master**” ... believing himself to be more intelligent or better than Jesus; and then implying that he (the young ruler) who by **self-reflection** and **self-righteousness** must have it all – save possibly one more “**good deed**” or “**thing**” which he most-certainly could afford! “**Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**”

Perfected in the Word Ministry

Webster defines the adjective “**fine**” to mean: **good**, acceptable, or satisfactory – used in an *ironic* way to refer to things that are *not good* or *acceptable*. Also, as an adjective, “**good**” refers to **high quality**: of somewhat high but not excellent quality; correct or proper; of a **favorable character** or tendency.

Food for Thought: [Rhetorical Questions]

- What is your definition of “**very fine people**?”
- What are the qualifications of a “**very fine person**?”
- What makes for someone to use the term “**very fine person**” as a description of another person?
 - Does keeping the commandments?
 - Does morality or moral turpitude?
 - Does your unblemished civil record?
 - Does wealth?
 - Does personality?
 - Does power?
 - Does character?
 - Does lineage?
 - Does a giving heart?
 - Does a forgiving spirit?
 - Does self-sacrifice?
 - Does giving to the poor or to charitable organizations?
 - Does a ministerial collar?
 - Does integrity, principle, or resolve?
 - Because you’ve lived an upstanding life?
 - Because you have impeccable credentials?
 - Because you are a man of integrity?

Perfected in the Word Ministry

Examples of Very Fine People: *[Who Is a Very Fine Person?]*

- Those who stoned Stephen?
- Those who crucified Jesus?
- Judas Iscariot?
- Bernard Lawrence Madoff -- former stockbroker, investment advisor, financier?
- Donald J. Trump -- billionaire and President?
- White-Nationalists (neo-Nazis) who protested in Charlottesville, Virginia?
- Paul Manafort?
- Hurricane rescuer?
- NFL player?
- NBA player?
- Veterans?
- Supreme Court Justice?
- Supreme Court nominee Brett Michael Kavanaugh?
- Because you go to church?
- Because you sing on the choir?
- Because you're a bishop?
- Because you're an evangelical?
- Because you're more respectful than a harlot?
- Because you're not a rapist ... or murderer ... or thief ... or child molester ... or liar ... or homosexual ... or fornicator ... or idolater ... or adulterer ... ?

1 Corinthians 6:9-12 *[King James Version ~ Lawsuits Among Believers]*

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor **effeminate**, nor **abusers of themselves** with mankind, Nor **thieves**, nor **covetous**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers**, nor **extortioners**, shall **inherit the kingdom** of God. **And such were some of you**: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Romans 3:10 *[King James Version ~ No One Is Righteous]*

As it is written, **There is none righteous**, no, not one...

Isaiah 41:26 *[King James Version ~ The Helper of Israel]*

Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? And beforetime, that we may say, He is righteous? Yea, **there is none that sheweth**, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words.

Perfected in the Word Ministry

II. The Commandments [Matthew 19:18,19 ~ God's Law]

Matthew 19:17c,18,19 [King James Version ~ *The Rich Young Man*]

But if thou wilt enter into life, **keep the commandments**. He saith unto him, **Which?** Jesus said, ① **Thou shalt do no murder**, ② **Thou shalt not commit adultery**, ③ **Thou shalt not steal**, ④ **Thou shalt not bear false witness**, ⑤ **Honour thy father and thy mother**: and, ⑥ **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**.

In response to the rich young ruler's patronizing question – "**Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**" – Jesus masterfully responds with divine discernment and authority, suggesting that there may be several "**good deeds**" or "**things**" which our *self-reflect*ed and *self-righteous* "**very fine person**" must consider if he ever desires to *have* or *possess* life eternal – specifically, the written **Commandments**! Then, to add insult to injury, the young ruler had the audacity to respond: "**Which?**" as in "**Which one?**" – signifying that he presumed that he only needed to perform one singular (and therefore affordable) simple task in order to gain access to or *purchase* eternal life after his consequential death!

The first four commandments speak of **mankind's relationship to God**. However, Jesus doesn't even concern himself with those commandments, especially since he has already deduced that the young ruler is (in fact) an **atheist**! So, instead, Jesus calls to his attention elements of the remaining six commandments; which concern the **relationship between mankind-to-mankind** – how we interact with or treat one another! Jesus' direct and concise response to this **atheist** was that he abstain from breaking any of the commandments which relate to humanity relationships! What a blow to the ego of this "**very fine person**"!

Perfected in the Word Ministry

The Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20:3-17 [King James Version ~ Excerpts]

- Thou shalt have no other gods before me. [vs 3]
- Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... [vs 4]
- Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. [vs 7]
- Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. [vs 8]
- **Honour thy father and thy mother.** [vs 12]
- **Thou shalt not kill.** [vs 13]
- **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** [vs 14]
- **Thou shalt not steal.** [vs 15]
- **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.** [vs 16]
- **Thou shalt not covet** thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. [vs 17]

Deuteronomy 5:7-21 [King James Version ~ Excerpts]

- Thou shalt have none other gods before me. [vs 7]
- Thou shalt not make thee any graven image [vs 8]
- Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. [vs 11]
- Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it. [vs 12]
- **Honour thy father and thy mother.** [vs 16]
- **Thou shalt not kill.** [vs 17]
- **Neither shalt thou commit adultery.** [vs 18]
- **Neither shalt thou steal.** [vs 19]
- **Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.** [vs 20]
- **Neither shalt thou desire** thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's. [vs 21]

Perfected in the Word Ministry

III. But I Am Perfect! [Matthew 19:20,21 ~ Self-perceived Perfection]

Matthew 19:20,21 [King James Version ~ *The Rich Young Man*]

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: **What lack I yet?** Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be **perfect**, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come and follow me.

Saints, in paraphrasing this “**very fine person**” – I mean rich young ruler – in his last-ditch effort to assuage his obvious mental thrashing by a far-more superior intellect, he attempts a final counter-offer with the intent of securing eternal life – as though eternity could be purchased with a **lottery ticket**! “**Now What?**” “**So**, [in his own mind] **I have already kept the commandments that you are speaking of! What else do I have to do to purchase eternal life?** – As though eternity were an **acquisition**!

Romans 3:10 [King James Version ~ *No One Is Righteous*]

As it is written, **There is none righteous**, no, not one...

As it is written, **There is none [morally good]**, no, not one...

As it is written, **There is none [perfect]**, no, not one...

As it is written, **There is none [that follow the religious (or divine) laws]**, no, not one...

Jesus perceived that this “**very fine person**” thought himself to be “**perfect**” and therefore morally upright. So Jesus concludes with a final gut-wrenching punch to the young man’s ego, by authoritatively declaring [and I paraphrase]: “If you really want to be “**perfect**,” then go and sell all of your riches (your luxury homes, properties, company and private acquisitions, family inheritance, investments, stocks, bonds, etc.) and give it all to the poor and needy, and only then will you be rewarded with **treasure in heaven**: and after you’ve done all that, come and follow me as a disciple of the faith, which you have not really professed or believe!”

Perfected in the Word Ministry

IV. But I'm Wealthy! [Matthew 19:22-24 ~ Self-proclaimed Riches]

Matthew 19:22-24 [King James Version ~ The Rich Young Man]

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for **he had great possessions**. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That **a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven**. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for **a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God**.

Realizing his vast wealth and how much personal substance he would have to give up in order to receive something that he really **did not believe** in (since he was an **atheist**), this “**very fine person**” decided that it just was not financially feasible for him to loose it all (everything he had worked for or accumulated in his short-lived life) just for the potential of an unknown ... that is the intangibility of life after death (especially since he believed that he had much more life to live in this present life)!

Hebrews 3:3-19 [King James Version ~ Warning Against Unbelief]

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, **To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in **departing from the living God**. But exhort one another daily, **while it is called To day**; lest any of you be **hardened through the deceitfulness of sin**. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, **whose carcasses fell in the wilderness**? And to whom sware he that **they should not enter into his rest**, but to **them that believed not**? So we see that **they could not enter in because of unbelief**.

Perfected in the Word Ministry

Saints, I want to impress upon you the fact that the Almighty God knows where you live ... in your heart of hearts! For this “**very fine person**,” Jesus already discerned that (being an **atheist**) his **wealth** was his god! Therefore, giving up his self-made god became both a challenge to his intellect as well as his lack of belief! Unknowingly, he did not realize that he (in fact) had failed to keep any of the first two commandments:

Exodus 20:3-17 [King James Version ~ Excerpts]

- Thou shalt **have no other gods before me**. [vs 3]
- Thou shalt **not make unto thee any graven image**... [vs 4]

What difference does it make to be **morally righteous** if you are **spiritually bankrupt** ... you must first believe! This is the **sin of unbelief**! This underscores the real reason why it is nearly impossible for a wealthy man to receive eternal life!

Hebrews 11:6 [King James Version ~ *By Faith*]

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for **he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he** is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

In the text, Jesus’ quoted words: “It is easier for a camel to go through the **eye of a needle**, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” are (in fact) literal in concept; meaning that it is completely true and accurate (and not exaggerated)! The interpretation of the Hebrew word “**rhaphis**” [hraf-ee] derives its origin from the primary word “**rhapto**” – meaning: “**to sew**” ... through the intended idea of puncturing, as with a needle (that is needle and thread)! Symbolically, Jesus is using the metaphor of a physical **camel** (representing the “**thread**”) being inserted through the eye of a **sewing needle** in order to prove the uncertainty of the wealthy receiving eternal salvation and thus, eternal life! This is indeed a hard word for us to digest!

Perfected in the Word Ministry

The “**Eye of the Needle**” has been said to be a gate in Jerusalem, which opened after the main gate was closed at night. A camel could only pass through this smaller gate if it was stooped and had its **baggage removed**.

So, saints of God, let’s carry this theme to its practical conclusion. If Jesus had been talking about the **eye of the needle** (relative to the secondary entry gate of the city), then in order for a heavily laden camel to pass through, all the weight being carried by the camel must first be removed prior to entering into the inner passage of the city! So then, the only way for a **wealthy person** (male or female) to obtain eternal life is that he/she must first **remove the heavy weight** of his/her **unbelief** ... which is only possible through belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and his/her acceptance of salvation! This is the only true way in which all mankind (rich or poor, young and old, saint or sinner) can be on equal footing toward the path to eternal life! Otherwise, the pyramids, which served as vessels of storage for the afterlife wealth of Egyptian kings and queens, would follow these “**very fine people**” into the afterlife of eternity!

1 Timothy 6:7 [King James Version ~ *Love of Money*]

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Luke 12:16-21 [King James Version ~ *The Parable of the Rich Fool*]

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, **Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?** So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Perfected in the Word Ministry

V. What Is the Hope for Our Future? [Matthew 19:25-30 ~ True Life Fulfillment]

Matthew 19:25-30 [King James Version ~ *The Rich Young Man*]

When his disciples heard it, they were **exceedingly amazed**, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto him, **Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?** And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And **every one** that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, **shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.** But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Jesus knows where every man lives ... that is, the heart of man ... that “**thing**” that governs the soul to gravitate toward that which brings material, emotional, physical or spiritual gratification! For the rich man, wealth was his motivation ... that “**thing**” which caused him make **wealth** his god! For others, it may be the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, a job, illicit drugs, children, or any other “**thing**” which causes us to symbolically make it our god; therefore, placing whatever it is before God!

Matthew 6:24 [King James Version ~ *Treasures in Heaven*]

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold [be devoted] to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve [both] God and mammon [**mammōnās** (mam-mo-nas'): **wealth** or money/riches].

But there is hope for our future – in this present world, and in the world to come! The word of the Lord says that if we “**sell out**” to Him, then we will receive a hundredfold blessing [**hekatontaplasión** (hek-at-on-ta-plah-see'-own): **a hundred times as much**), plus inherit eternal life!

Perfected in the Word Ministry

Conclusion:

Saints of God, money must not dominate our life – as exposed in the sin of this very fine person! We (as humans) give greatest thought and priority to what we really love: “**For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**” [Matthew 6:21]! God condemns obtaining or using money in the place of serving Him. Anxiety over possessions is also condemned, because it allows one to be troubled over the unknown tomorrow. Incomplete loyalty to God, love of money, and anxiety over material things are attributes which corrupt God’s intended role for material possessions. These sins are caused by greed, which robs the steward of the joy and contentment of using material things and wealth to serve God. Seeking security in possessions (instead of seeking the kingdom of God) causes much of our mental frustration. Only God provides true security. Secure in Him, we can meet family needs and serve others.

Matthew 6:33,34 [King James Version ~ Treasures in Heaven]

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

“**Very Fine People**” may not be God’s **inherited people!** The true character of a person is exhibited in how much they “**give**” to others, while in the service of God! Be a very giving person and you will obtain wealth: in life, in health, in prosperity, in hope, in eternity!

Luke 6:38 [King James Version ~ Judging Others]

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, **shall men give into your bosom.** For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

