



Money, God and the Poor. Kit build Large Group

Matt 25:31-40. Parable of the Sheep and Goats

November 2012

Doug Schaupp

INTRO

[funny story Speaker tells about himself or herself]

[comments about how the Campaign has been going this far. Story about a conversation had during the proxe on campus]

3 CONFESSIONS

Let me start with some confessions about myself at the onset.

1. I am the 1%

Last year there were sit-in's all over the country, people rising up in protest against the 1% of the world's rich. Well, let me hold up a mirror. I am the 1%. People with a college education and who make 50K per year are the top 1% of the international community. Most of you will graduate from college and eventually make more than 50K. You will join me at the top 1%. Or 2%. The top 1% of the world rich are not some bad people out there. But it is right here.

2. I AM SELF ABSORBED AND I ISOLATE MYSELF FROM THE POOR.

I don't mean to, but I follow daily patterns to isolate from the poor. The poor are messy and inconvenient, and I default to not wanting the poor in my life.

3. I NEED THE POOR IN MY LIFE TO SOFTEN MY HEART.

When I came to college, sitting in your seat, I didn't know any of those things about myself. I was tired of religion. Religion made boring people. But I bumped into



these InterVarsity people. They told me, "Every thinking person owes it to himself/herself to form an adult opinion about Jesus. Have you studied Jesus as an adult and formed your own opinion of him?" No, but I want to. So I joined an InterVarsity Small Group. I absolutely loved it. It melted my brain. The real Jesus shocked me. "Who has been hiding Jesus from me?!!"

TEXT

Before we open this amazing story together, let's play the Word Association Game.

I say one word, you shout out the next thing that comes to mind.

- Royalty.
- Homeless.
- Sickly.
- Prison
- Strangers

Now, as I read this, please think about these 2 questions:

1. How is this good news to the poor?
2. Why are there consequences for just living for myself?

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.



This is the ultimate rock concert, with lights, pyrotechnics, the works. Glory! Royalty!

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Back in our word association game, NONE of us thought:

"sickly" = "Jesus."

"Federal penitentiary" = "Jesus."

"Homeless" = "Jesus."

We don't put those words together. But Jesus does. How can this be true???

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'



Story. Seeing Jesus in the poor.

ELIANA AND THE HOMELESS GUY

Eliana was a Junior at Stanford.

She came from a rather sheltered background. She grew up believing the homeless were to be avoided.

During her junior year, her Small Group convinced her to go and risk with the poor.

She meets this homeless guy. Scraggly looking. She told me he smelled like a dumpster.

He started talking to her. Told her to take herself more seriously. God was going to use her and her college degree. His words shocked her.

When it was time to leave, the other students gave this dirty homeless guy a hug. She didn't want to. But she decided to. It was one of the most amazing experiences of her life. As she leaned in, bam, she felt like she was hugging Jesus himself. Never had such an intense moment of intimacy with her and Jesus since.

I have never had type of spiritual experience. But that is what this passage is all about.

Mother Teresa said, "When I see the poor, I see the face of Jesus in disguise"

This is what I pray for myself.

I pass people holding up signs for food, and I try to remember, "When I see that person, I can see Jesus." I try to greet Jesus in my heart when I see the poor. I try to be grateful for these moments.

I tell the homeless that I give food, not money. I do this for a few reasons. First, I want to humanize the interaction. I want to experience Jesus in the conversation. Second, maybe 90% of those asking for money will use it on drugs or booze. I don't



want my money to go toward that. So I try to always help instead of give \$. They want money for the bus, I offer to drive them.

WHO IS AT THE CENTER OF THE STORY?

Let me go back to my time in college, sitting where you are sitting.

Freshman year, I thought I had to get blessing for myself. I saw myself at the center of the story. I was living a grasping, right-fisted life. (Demonstrate a tight fist.)

Through my InterVarsity Small Group Bible Study, Jesus invited me to trust him. He said to me, "Doug, I am lavish. Trust me. Let me change your heart from being all about you to letting my love and generosity become the center of your story. Open your fists and control on life and money. Step through your fears." So at the end of my freshmen year in college, I relented. I opened my fists. I allowed myself to step out of the center of the story, and I invited Jesus to become the center of the story, where he rightfully belongs.

GETTING PRACTICAL IN COLLEGE

What are some practical ways you can use your time in college to start learning to look for Jesus in the poor?

1. My InterVarsity friends showed me how to care for the homeless. They taught me not to be afraid, but to love, to care, to listen. Not to give money, but to give friendship to the homeless. Life-changing. Like Eliana's story.
2. I took it the next step. Some of us found a local homeless shelter. We volunteered their monthly, serving the homeless and even spending the night at the shelter with the homeless.
3. In my classes, I started asking the question, "How are the poor impacted through this subject? How can God use this class to help me be a blessing to



the poor and oppresses?"

I even started selecting classes that could help me think about justice and generosity.

4. I asked God what he wanted to do with my summer. I felt nudged toward a summer in Mexico City, serving among the poor. I learned to live out of a small suitcase, to be content with little. To give away what I had with a joyful heart.
5. Our small group asked the question, "Who are the 'least' on campus?" We realized that the housekeepers and the food service people were looked down upon and paid poorly. We befriended them and even featured them at one Large Group meeting as a small way to say thank you for their years of service to the campus.

WHAT IF IT IS ONLY TALK?

But what happens if we remain at the center of the story? What happens if we do not

step out of the center, and if our hearts remain closed to the poor and oppressed?

According to Jesus, talking about love is cheap if we do not do it.

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,



43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Why do they NOT make the poor a priority?

Why do they NOT stop and change their priorities?

They think it is enough to talk about love, instead of paying the costs to love the poor and needy.

It is messy to make the poor a priority.

It means losing control of my schedule.

It means putting myself in places where I have to learn to love people very different from me.

Remember Lazarus and the Rich Man. The rich man lived for himself, he saw the blessings in his life as just for him. Every day Jesus visited him in the person of the poor at his gate. Every day he avoided Jesus by avoiding the poor.



NEXT STEPS.

How do we move from goats, from hardening our hearts to the poor, to sheep, to softening

our hearts to God's work in the poor?

1. Confession. Let us begin with honest confession that we are the 1%. That it is easier to isolate than to care. That it is hard to see Jesus in the poor.
2. Pray for God to bring the poor into your life. Pray for opportunities to see Jesus in them. To care. The people in this passage are messy and inconvenient. Jesus is messy and inconvenient. As I let the poor change my life, soap becomes life-giving. I stop being so self absorbed. (Hold up bar of soap from caregiver kit) I say soap, you say shower. I say soap, Jesus says, beautiful. Jesus says soap can save lives in Swaziland.
3. Invest in other students to love the poor with you. Don't just do it alone.

MUSTARD SEED

As you confess, pray for opportunity, and bring others with you, a little mustard seed will be planted in your lives, and you will be transformed into world changers, now and for the rest of your lives.

STORY: MARK

My senior year, I prayed, "God make me a blessing to the dorm. Help me life impact other people's lives in the power of Jesus."

How do you reach skeptical college students and build trust with them? Is it by telling them, "Hey quit living your life as the center of the story!" No. You reach guys through things like sports, as dumb as that sounds. So I got a big wrestling mat, and we had wrestling Fridays. Every Friday afternoon, about 40 guys from the



dorm would line up for wrestling. Since I was captain of the wrestling team in high school, I had an advantage.

Mark was a freshman in the dorm that year, and he was warned by the water polo team, "Watch out for Doug. He is the head of the God Squad." So he avoided me like the plague. But on the wrestling mat, we bonded, we became friends, and he started coming to Small Group. He heard the call of Jesus to step out of the center of the story, and to let Jesus and his Kingdom Reign take the center of the story.

I poured my life into mentoring him. After scripture study, I asked him, "How do you want to grow and serve together?" He said he wanted to serve the poor together. So we volunteered one day a week tutoring urban poor kids in a local ministry led by InterVarsity alumni. Our lives were less about us and more about Jesus and his Kingdom priorities.

Fast forward 20 years. Mark is now the head of an international investment firm. He has been trying to find ways to use business and money for Kingdom purposes around the globe. I love hearing these incredible stories every time I see him.

One story he told me recently. In Rwanda, the Bill Gates foundation poured a lot of money into improving their schools. But the problem is that millions of kids have a disease where their legs swell up to double or triple their normal size. They can't walk, and they can't get to these amazing new schools. God brought this to the attention to Mark and his friends. They researched and discovered that the medicine to cure this disease was less than a dollar per child.



They rallied their resources, and have been helping millions of children from Rwanda and other countries get well and get to school. A generation of kids in Africa now have a new lease on life.

A few years back, hearing these stories of Mark pursuing God's redemption and salvation around the globe, I told him how amazing it all was. Mark is a very gracious guy. Guess what he said to me, "I am just doing what you taught me freshman year." Back in college, he and I studied the scripture, prayed for hearts of obedience and joy, and we learned to see Jesus in the poor. That little mustard seed of obedience in college has blossomed into a tree of justice and righteousness in Rwanda and elsewhere.

As you love and bring others with you to love in the name of Jesus, your eyes will be blessed because you get to see Jesus. And the poor will get good news, because they will be loved by Jesus through you.

2 INVITATIONS TO RESPONSE.

There are two ways I would like to invite us to respond to this word. First, for those who have been following Jesus for a while, some of you are feeling stirred by God and want to make a life-long commitment to making the poor a part of your faith life. This is not to be taken lightly.

Others have never committed to following Jesus. Just like my freshman year with my friends introducing me to Jesus, just like Mark and the wrestling mat, there are these turning points in life when we decide to pick a path, a direction for our lives. If you have been thinking about Jesus, and now is a good time for you to pick the Jesus path, I will invite you after this song to stand up and make that commitment. I am not putting you on the spot for the fun of it, but because learning to stand up for justice and righteousness, even if you are the only one in the room, is learning to be a world-changer.



CONTEMPLATIVE SONG

As you listen to this song, please consider these two invitations, or other steps of faith you want to take with God. (play acoustic song)

CALL TO A LIFE WITH THE POOR.

If you feel called to make the poor an intentional part of your faith live for the rest of your life, please don't take this lightly. This will mess with your plans, your comfort, your finances, your career choices, your summer plans. If you are saying yes to Jesus for that, please stand and I would like to pray for you.

Thank you. Please be seated.

COMMIT TO JESUS: "3 in 1" call to Jesus.

Some of you have been living with yourself at the center of the story. Today you have changed your mind, and you want to step out of the center, and let Jesus be the center of your story. If you go and love the poor in your own strength, you will run out of love. Sometimes people in the giving professions become the most burned out. They run out of love. Nothing to give. Shriveled like a little raisin inside.

You must have love flowing into you, if you want to have love flowing through you.

Let Jesus be your heart, your joy, your power. And you will have love to give.

If you want this, invite Jesus into the center of your life, and **please stand**. (Don't pause. Keep talking. If they stand, say, "please keep standing." And proceed.)

When Jesus wanted to describe what God is like, he told a story of a son who told his dad to give him all his inheritance. For some reason, the dad does give him everything, and that son goes off and parties like a rock star. When it finally runs out, he says to himself, "Maybe I can go back to dad. But I might get beaten down."



So he goes back. What does the dad do? He does come running out to him. But instead of beating him, he embraces him and kisses him. It is an embrace of pure, perfect love. Complete freedom. Forgiveness and redemption. Jesus says that is what God is like.

If you want to come home to God your father, for his embrace of pure, total love, this is your moment to respond to God. **Please stand.** (If they stand, ask them to please keep standing. Keep talking without much pause.)

Some of you are having a strong emotional reaction. You want that kind of love, but you don't want to stand up. Listen to your heart. Don't stand because I am saying it. Stand because God's Spirit is stirring your heart. As God is calling and stirring, listen to him. Respond to God's nudging.

Please stand.

If you are standing, please come forward so that I can pray with you. Would some others come and lay hands on them as I pray. Faith is intensely personal, but it is not private. It is a team effort. We all need help to grow. These friends want to help you make sense out of what this step of faith means for you today. Please go with them.

TRANSITION TO THE KIT BUILD.

