

**Detach, Release, Let Go.**  
**Sunday, July 16, 2023, 10:00 a.m.**  
**All Saints Church, Pasadena**  
**The Rev. Alfredo Feregrino**

What do I yet lack?"

This is the question that the rich young man asked Jesus after he approach him with the expectation that Jesus knows the answer to the ultimate question about how to obtain eternal life.

*we can presume to imagine his interaction with Jesus*

Yes, Jesus, I have kept and obeyed the commandments that Moses gave us to the letter, one by one. I have not killed anyone, I have not committed adultery, I have not stolen, and I honor and respect my parents,

I have behaved well; in fact, to the extent of my knowledge ...

I am a good person.

*We can just presume to imagine this interaction.*

If this young man were living in our time, he might have told Jesus, Jesus I am good student, I get good grades, I obey the laws, I do not play loud music after 10PM,

I respect my neighbors and even though I live in Los Angeles, I drive at the speed limit.

In short, I am a good person indeed.

Yes, you are a good person indeed, Jesus could have answered, but you are missing something, you still lack something...

Jesus answers this rich young man question by telling him that he must do something more ...something that has never occurred to him, and that is to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor.

In a way this is a paradox, (and sounds like a contradiction) ... what you feel you lack, It is actually, something that you have to get rid of...

You have to detach, you have to release, you have to let go, (2)

What do I yet lack?"

Precisely this:

Detach, release, let go,

That is what you lack.

We need to pay attention here, because the fact that Jesus asks the rich young man to sell what he owns and give the money to the poor is not advocating for this man to enter into poverty.

You know, Jesus does not romanticize or encourage a life in poverty; on the contrary, his concern was to ensure that no one should be in **want**.

Jesus wants to alleviate poverty of **others** and avoid at all cost the economic injustice that affected so many in those times.

One interesting point if you pay attention here in this gospel, is that Jesus did not command all his followers to sell their possessions.

Jesus made the demand **only** to this rich young man specifically.

Inviting him to participate in his own liberation.

Inviting him to have an abundant life.

Inviting him to see that another way of being in the world is possible.

Jesus is inviting the rich young man to detach, to release to let go... of the things that are holding him back.

You see, the rich young man embodies an example of the elite class in the Palestine of the first century. He was a beneficiary of the dominant economy of his day, **presided** over by Rome and by those who accepted Roman authority.

In the words of Walter Brueggemann, a bible scholar, this was an economy of **eXtraction**.

That is one of the reasons that so much attention is giving to the tax collectors in the Gospels. The tax collectors were agents who helped to **extract** money and possessions from those who literary produced everything and to **transfer** the same money and possessions to those who enjoyed the position and ownership of all the wealth produced.

Not much difference when compare with our current context right?

That economy of **eXtraction** was organized and ordered by the elite who enjoyed all the wealth.

The wealth that sustained the “unproductive elite” was produced by the labor of those who lived on the edge of survival.

Most of this labor was in agriculture.

Grains, wheat, olive oil and wine were the staple commodities at that time. So... you can imagine.

According to another scholar, the defining mark of this economy of **eXtraction** was debt (**det**). And the poor people who remained constantly in debt, due to taxation and rents, would eventually lose their land.

We see this unfortunate reality throughout many stories in our sacred scriptures.

And to some extent it seems that these stories from the past are still so alive in our world today.

(Predatory Lending, Payday loans, Student debt, Credit card debt, Medical debt)

Where we can see people who despite working more than full time have inadequate income to cover their basic cost of living. This can lead to regular and urgent needs for cash to make ends meet.

Unexpected illness, or discriminatory lending practices due to race, ethnicity, age, or disability, complicates this picture even more.

Yes, these stories that we hear about in the Bible are unfortunately still current in our time.

When Jesus asks the rich young man to sell his possessions and distribute the money among the poor, he is proposing an alternative economy in which no one lacks anything.

The rich young man is not a “bad person”; he is simply part of the system in which he is stuck as well.

And it is by sharing his resources with which he benefited from the system that exploited the poor that this rich young man could have broken the cycle of injustice in which he was participating.

Jesus is inviting him to see that another way of being in the world is possible. He is inviting him to a total transformation of his own self. He is inviting him to a new way of life in the world.

What do I yet lack?” The rich young man asked Jesus...

Precisely this:

detach, release, let go, (2)

That is what you lack.

So, I wonder,

How do you see yourself in this story?

What stops you from seeing that another way of being in the world is possible?

The story of this rich young man is just one example of many attachments or bonds to things that do not let us move forward... the things that prevent us from fully participating in a life with God.

You know, God wants us all to have life, and life in abundance, (it's that simple)

In the case of the rich young man, it was only the material attachments that were holding him back, from a new way of being.

The attachments that do not let us move forward **are not however only** to material things. (2)

So, I wonder again,

What **keeps** us from having a life of fulfillment?

What are the things that **blinds** us to see that another world is possible? ...

It may be our ego, our reputation, our self-image, the need to be right, the need to have everything under control?

So, what do **WE** yet lack? (2)

Jesus would answer:

Detach, release, let go.

You know,

Letting go is an important aspect of self- transformation.

Sometimes you need to let go of judgments or assumptions.

Sometimes you need to let go of a role, (pretending to be someone that you are not)

Sometimes you need to let go of a relationship, a job or a way of life.

Sometimes you need to learn to detach from what other people think of you. (2)

Detach from needing praise or validation.

And in order to move forward, sometimes you may need to let go of your past or let go of the future too.

In essence, you need to let go of all your worries.

There is a popular story in the Buddhist tradition,

Once upon a time, a senior and junior monk were traveling together, when they came to a river with strong currents. They were preparing to cross the river when they noticed a beautiful woman also attempting to cross. And she asked the monks for help. (Help me to cross please...)

There was a moment of uncertainty as both had taken vows (**vaus**) not to touch a woman. After a brief silence, the older monk picked the woman up and carried her across the river.

The junior monk was surprised and confused, obsessed and preoccupied with his own thoughts but he said nothing at that moment.

After about an hour of walking, the junior monk asked the senior monk, “hey...as monks we are not permitted to even touch a woman, why did you then carry that woman on your shoulders?”

To this, the senior monk replied, “Brother, this happened many miles back...

I set her down on the other side of the river over an hour ago...

So brother, I have a question for you ...**Why** are **you** still carrying (**kering**) her?”

So, what do **WE** yet lack? (2)

Jesus would answer:

Detach, release... let go.

So, I invite you look at your life right now,

Look at the things, people and situations in your life.

Is there anything that you would like to release?

Ask yourself what are the things you need to detach from, release or let go of in order to step into a new way of being in the world.

This is not just about the rich young man; this is about all of us.

Ask yourself what is holding you back, and then let it go. This is the true key to empowerment and liberation. Think about it....

And If you are comfortable, I invite you to close your eyes...

visualize that past event, belief, person or situation that you are holding **on to** ,

that thing that you know needs to leave you in order for you to move forward,

I am sure you can think of something,

Think about it....

now take a depth breath and ask God to help you let it go, release it with love...

And ask God to help you see that a new way of life and new way of being in the world... is possible.

**AMEN!!!**

***A note from the preacher:** Because sermons are meant to be preached and therefore prepared with emphasis on verbal presentation (i.e., are written for the ear), the written accounts occasionally deviate from proper and generally accepted principles of grammar and punctuation. Most often, these deviations are not mistakes per se, but are indicative of an attempt to aid the listener in the delivery of the sermon.*