



By Elder S. Mark Palmer
Of the Seventy

Elder Cutler is here today, and I want to thank him for opening my eyes. Every decision I have made in my life since then has been influenced by that moment when I humbled myself and prayed for forgiveness, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ on my behalf became part of my life.

So the last lesson, in one statement: *experience repentance; nothing draws you closer to the Lord Jesus Christ than a desire to change.*

My dear investigator, friend of the Church, if you are listening today, you are very close to reaching the greatest joy. You are close!

Let me invite you, with all the energy of my heart and from the depths of my soul: go and be baptized! It is the best thing you will ever do. It will change not only your life but also the lives of your children and grandchildren.

The Lord has blessed me with a family. I married Renee, and we have four beautiful children. And because of my baptism, I can, like the prophet Lehi of old, invite them to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, which is the love of God (see 1 Nephi 8:15; 11:25). I can help them come unto Christ.

So please consider my experiences, and (1) take the missionaries very seriously, (2) go to church and remember spiritual feelings, (3) read the Book of Mormon and ask the Lord if it is true, and (4) experience repentance and be baptized.

I testify to you that if you pay the price of revelation, humble yourself, read, pray, and repent, the heavens will open and you will know, as I know, that Jesus is the Christ, He is my Savior, and He is yours. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

Then Jesus Beholding Him Loved Him

Anytime you feel you are being asked to do something hard, think of the Lord beholding you, loving you, and inviting you to follow Him.

Some years ago I was called, with my wife, Jacqui, to preside over the Washington Spokane Mission. We arrived in the mission field with a mix of fear and excitement at the responsibility of working with so many remarkable young missionaries. They came from many different backgrounds and quickly became like our own sons and daughters.

Although most were doing wonderfully well, a few were struggling with the high expectations of their calling. I remember one missionary telling me, “President, I just don’t like people.” Several told me they lacked the desire to follow the rather strict missionary

rules. I worried and wondered what we could do to change the hearts of those few missionaries who had not yet learned the joy of being obedient.

One day while driving through the beautiful rolling wheat fields on the Washington-Idaho border, I was listening to a recording of the New Testament. As I listened to the familiar account of the rich young man coming to the Savior to ask what he might do to have eternal life, I received an unexpected but profound personal revelation that is now a sacred memory.

After hearing Jesus recite the commandments and the young man reply that he had observed all these since





his youth, I listened for the Savior's gentle correction: "One thing thou lackest: . . . sell whatsoever thou hast, and . . . come, . . . follow me."¹ But to my astonishment, I instead heard six words before that part of the verse that I seemed never to have heard or read before. It was as if they had been added to the scriptures. I marveled at the inspired understanding which then unfolded.

What were these six words that had such a profound effect? Listen to see if you can recognize these seemingly ordinary words, not found in the other Gospel accounts but found only in the Gospel of Mark:

"There came one running . . . and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

"And Jesus said unto him, . . .

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

"And he answered . . . , Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

"*Then Jesus beholding him loved him*, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."²

"*Then Jesus beholding him loved him.*"

As I heard these words, a vivid image filled my mind of our Lord pausing and *beholding* this young man. *Beholding*—as in looking deeply and penetratingly into his soul, recognizing his goodness and also his potential, as well as discerning his greatest need.

Then the simple words—Jesus *loved him*. He felt an overwhelming love and compassion for this good young man, and *because* of this love and *with* this love, Jesus asked even more of him. I pictured what it must have felt like for this young man to be enveloped by such love even

while being asked to do something so supremely hard as selling all he owned and giving it to the poor.

In that moment, I knew it was not just the hearts of some of our missionaries that needed changing. It was my heart as well. The question no longer was "How does a frustrated mission president get a struggling missionary to behave better?" Instead, the question was "How can I be filled with Christlike love so a missionary can feel the love of God through me and desire to change?" How can I *behold* him or her in the same way the Lord beheld the rich young man, seeing them for who they really are and who they can become, rather than just for what they are doing or not doing? How can I be more like the Savior?

"*Then Jesus beholding him loved him.*"

From that time forward, as I sat knee to knee with a young missionary struggling with some aspect of obedience, within my heart I now saw a faithful young man or young woman who had acted on the desire to come on a mission. Then I was able to say with all the feeling like that of a tender parent:³ "Elder or Sister, if I didn't love you, I wouldn't care what happens on your mission. But I do love you, and because I love you, I care about who you become. So I invite you to change those things that are hard for you and become who the Lord wants you to be."

Each time I went to interview missionaries, I first prayed for the gift of charity and that I could see each elder and sister as the Lord sees him or her.

Before zone conferences, as Sister Palmer and I greeted each missionary one by one, I would pause and look deeply into their eyes, *beholding* them—an interview without words—and then without fail, I was filled with

great *love* for these precious sons and daughters of God.

I have learned many life-changing lessons from this deeply personal experience with Mark chapter 10. Here are four of these lessons I believe will help each of us:

1. **As we learn to see others as the Lord sees them rather than with our own eyes, our love for them will grow and so will our desire to help them.** We will see potential within others they likely do not see in themselves. With Christlike love we will not be afraid to speak with boldness, for “perfect love casteth

out fear.”⁴ And we will never give up, remembering that those who are hardest to love need love the most.

2. **No true teaching or learning will ever occur when done in frustration or anger, and hearts will not change where love is not present.** Whether we act in our roles as parents, teachers, or leaders, true teaching will happen only in an atmosphere of trust rather than condemnation. Our homes should always be safe havens for our children—not hostile environments.
3. **Love should never be withdrawn when a child, friend, or family member fails to live up to our**

expectations. We don’t know what happened to the rich young man after he went away sorrowful, but I am confident Jesus still loved him perfectly even if he chose the easier path. Perhaps later in life, as he found his great possessions hollow, he remembered and acted on the singular experience of His Lord beholding him, loving him, and inviting him to follow Him.

4. **Because He loves us, the Lord expects much of us.** If we are humble, we will welcome the Lord’s invitations to repent, to sacrifice, and to serve as evidence of His perfect love for us. After all, an invitation to repent is also an invitation to receive the wonderful gift of forgiveness and peace. Therefore, “despise not . . . the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”⁵

My dear brothers and sisters, now anytime you feel you are being asked to do something hard—give up a poor habit or an addiction, put aside worldly pursuits, sacrifice a favorite activity because it is the Sabbath, forgive someone who has wronged you—think of the Lord *beholding* you, *loving* you, and inviting you to let it go and *follow Him*. And thank Him for loving you enough to invite you to do more.

I testify of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and look forward to the day when He will put His arms around each of us, *beholding* us and encircling us with His perfect *love*. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Mark 10:21.
2. Mark 10:17–21; emphasis added.
3. See 1 Nephi 8:37.
4. 1 John 4:18.
5. Hebrews 12:5–6.

