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Rick Myatt

## ALIEN SYSTEM Matthew 9

My son is vastly better than me at most things. But there is one way he is curiously different from me. He writes right handed, plays guitar right handed, and throws right handed. But when he played baseball he threw right handed and batted left handed. In hockey when he skated as a forward he played left handed, but as a goalie he plays right handed. Recently he was hitting some golf balls and it occurred to him that since he batted left handed, it was possible he might be a better golfer left handed. Though he has always played right handed, he got some lefty clubs, and, sure enough, hit the ball better left handed.

This is very different from me because with me there is no doubt. I struggled with elbow problems for several years that made it impossible for me to play tennis. At one point I decided if I were ever going to play again I would have to learn to play left handed. What a disaster. I'm not much of an athlete, but I have always had reasonably good hand eye coordination. But trying to hit tennis balls left handed I felt and looked totally uncoordinated. It was ugly. No matter how hard I tried it was galaxies beyond awkward. I just could not adapt to it, because trying to hit left handed was just too foreign. It felt like I'd never played that game in my life.

Trying to play left handed felt alien to me, so odd and so different that I could not master it. Today I want to talk about something that is completely alien to us, so alien we have trouble grasping it. It is something that is not of this world. We will catch a glimpse of this alien system in Matthew 9.

### JESUS AUDACIOUSLY FORGAVE SIN

Matthew has Jesus returning to Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was drawing standing room only crowds. He spoke at a house on this particular day that was so packed late comers couldn't get anywhere near him. A group of 4 men intended to bring their paralyzed buddy to Jesus in hopes that he could heal their friend. But when they got to the house they saw they had no chance of hauling a stretcher with a man on it inside. So took the stretcher up on the roof where they cut an access hole, then lowered the stretcher down.

This wouldn't have been as dramatic as today where they would have to use power saws to cut through the roof, since that roof was probably made of some sort of sod and thatch. Still, it would be pretty disruptive for the crowd when stuff started falling down on them and then a hole opened up above them.

The friends of the paralyzed man went above and beyond. They went to a lot of trouble to get that guy in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw the man and the obvious faith of his friends he said, "Take heart, son, your sins are forgiven." His sins are forgiven? Talk about adventures in missing the point. Excuse me, Jesus, but the man is paralyzed! Didn't you notice this? That had to be more than a little disappointing for the man and for his buddies. They'd gone to a lot of trouble because the poor man couldn't walk. It's wonderful that his sins were forgiven, but, um, he still can't walk! Couldn't you do something about that?

Back a couple of years ago when Laurie and I were flying home from New Orleans after visiting Michael and Carissa in Mississippi our flight from New Orleans was delayed, meaning we were going to miss our connection in Dallas and be stranded there. The problem was we had commitments at home first thing the next morning and we needed to get home that night. I talked to a rather clueless airline agent about the situation, asking for help getting us home that evening. She said she could book us a flight out of New Orleans the next morning. It was frustrating. She was badly missing the point.

I think the paralyzed guys might have been frustrated and thinking Jesus was missing the point. There was a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher right in front of him. Could he not see what the problem was? How could he not figure out that the guy needed healing?

Meanwhile others in the crowd were upset about something else entirely. Verse 3 tells us that the teachers of the Law, not meaning Law School profs but the religious experts, were thinking, "this man is blaspheming." Who has the right to forgive sin? Well, it's the one who is sinned against. When we were on our honeymoon Laurie and I decided to end each evening by praying together. One night while Laurie was praying I fell asleep. You can say, "Well, Rick, you were dealing with a time zone problem. Obviously the jet lag got to you, so I forgive you." That's nice, but it doesn't count for anything. The only person that could

forgive me for that offense was the one offended, and that's Laurie. This incident came up recently when Laurie and I were doing some marital counseling. I'm hoping that some day she will finally forgive me for that one.

When we sin, who are we ultimately sinning against? We are sinning against God. By definition sin is a violation of his will and his goodness. So who can forgive our sin? Only God can. The religious leaders of Jesus' day understood that, so for Jesus to say, "Your sins are forgiven" was for him to put himself in God's place. That was a no doubt capital offense in their culture, punishable by death.

Jesus knew exactly what the religious guys were thinking. This is another situation where we see the brilliance of Jesus. He has set everybody up with that comment about sins being forgiven. He asks the question, "Which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or to say 'get up and walk'? The answer is that it is easier to say "your sins are forgiven." Who can prove whether that's true or not? But if Jesus said to the paralyzed guy, "get up and walk," everyone would know immediately whether Jesus was able to make that happen or not.

Next Jesus closed the loop for everyone. He said, "Just so you'll know that I have the authority to forgive sins, get up and walk." With that the man stood up, his paralysis completely healed. Who has the power to reconnect and bring to life damaged nerves? Who has the ability to make a paralyzed person whole and fully functional? Two millennia later with all the astounding advances in medical science, we still can't do that. Jesus did it with a word. Only God has that kind of power, so guess who that makes Jesus. It makes him the one, and the only one, who can also forgive sin.

### JESUS MADE A BIZARRE CHOICE

The next thing Matthew depicts Jesus doing is selecting a man to be one of his disciples. This was a first century version of the NFL draft. He's choosing men to be on his team, and in effect he has 12 draft picks that will make up his team of first string disciples. His early round picks were curious, to say the least. He started off with 4 random unknown guys in the fishing business, who actually turned out to be sleeper picks that became impact players. But man, does he seem to blow this pick. This sure looked to all the commentators on ESPN to be a colossal blunder, a pick of the Ryan Leaf class of screw-ups because the guy he drafted was named Matthew, also known as Levi. Oh, right, the jeans guy. Uh, no. He did not invent

jeans. He was a tax collector. You surely know that tax collectors were traitorous extortionists that got rich by essentially stealing from their neighbors and making life exceedingly difficult for them.

This seems to be an appallingly bad choice. Jesus was starting a populist movement, gathering followers, and he picked a guy to be on his starting team that everyone in the nation cursed and despised. The only people that would have anything to do with Matthew were the worst members of the society, the ones that crawled out when you turned over a rock. The rest of Jesus' draft picks likely had a hard time swallowing this guy. They didn't want to associate with him, but they had to just bite their tongues, clench their teeth and deal with it, because Jesus called the shots.

Perhaps there was a conversation where one of the other draft picks, Peter would be a likely candidate, got Jesus alone and said, "Jesus, picking Matthew is a huge mistake. You need to rethink this. I, for one, can't put up with him. I'm not going to be labeled as a pal of his. I want no part of him, and I a lot of the other guys feel the same. If he stays, then I go." Jesus responds, "Well, Peter, nobody's got a gun to your head. Do what you have to do."

Unfortunately, to make things worse Matthew was something of a leader in his circle. When he began following Jesus he brought along a crowd of his low life friends. Jesus, to the horror of all respectable people, hung out with this unsavory mob. The religious leaders criticized him mercilessly for this, but he reasonably responded, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." Exactly right. "Hey, how are you feeling today?" "I feel great!" "Well then let's rush you to the emergency room right now." Sick people are the ones who need doctors. And those who are spiritually sick and dying are the ones who need a Savior. Jesus came to reach them and save them. Oh, and by the way, you oh so righteous religious leaders, what are you doing for the sick?

This strange draft pick was followed up by a discussion of the fact that Jesus and his men weren't following the established religious traditions of the day in regard to fasting. That resulted in an interesting conversation about wine and wineskins. Jesus said no one puts new wine in old wineskins. As the wine ferments it expands, causing the wineskin to stretch. If you put new wine in an old wineskin that has

already been stretched out and gotten brittle, the wineskin will burst. It can't hold the expanding wine. Jesus is the new wine. The religious leaders and their ways of thinking are the old wineskins. They had a system, a theology that included a way of seeing themselves and other people. If they tried to force Jesus into that system he was going to blow it apart.

This wasn't because God had given them an inadequate system and now he was throwing it out in order to start over. It was because they had distorted the original system he had given them into something man made. It was a system built on things that make sense to humans. The people who are best at measuring up get rewarded. In their case it was God rewards those who keep his rules the best. Those who aren't so good at the rules are deserving not only of God's rejection but people's scorn. If God is blessing us it will show up in the stuff of this world like riches and position. This is how we think.

But Jesus was a whole new, divine system that actually was according to the original design. The problem with it was it contrasted violently with the human default system. It is new wine that will inevitably blow up old wineskins. This new wine was utterly foreign. It was a truly alien system that could never be contained by the old, man made, human default system.

### JESUS DEMONSTRATED AWESOME POWER

In verses 18-34 we see more examples of Jesus power to heal. A synagogue leader comes to Jesus and tells him his daughter has died. He says, "Put your hand on her and she will live." We don't know all about this leader, but I can't help wondering if as a religious leader he was previously opposed to Jesus, as most of the religious establishment was. We don't know that for a fact, but I think it quite possible. But the loss of a child trumps pretty much everything. Maybe he had not believed in Jesus, but if there's a chance in the world that he could bring this man's daughter back, then the grieving dad would take that chance.

On his way to deal with the man's daughter Jesus has an encounter with a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. I always thought that must have been difficult, but then watched Laurie go through it. She had some very tough times and nothing seemed to help. She could totally relate to this poor woman. That woman also was desperate and hoped that maybe if she could just touch Jesus that could somehow help. Sure enough, verse 22 tells us "the woman was healed in that moment."

Then Jesus did the astounding. He went to the synagogue leader's house and brought the man's daughter back to life. Then he healed two blind men and another man who was unable to speak. Nothing, not even death, was too difficult for Jesus to deal with.

### JESUS HAD AMAZING COMPASSION

The final verses of the chapter show Jesus traveling around the area preaching and healing people. There is a profound statement in verse 36. When Jesus looked at the crowds of people he had compassion on them, because they were "harassed and helpless." The New American Standard translation has "distressed and dispirited."

The first word literally meant "flayed," as in one's skin was flayed by a flogging. It had a more metaphorical sense by the time Matthew used it. It had the sense of being beaten down. That image is reinforced by the second word. The Greek word is *hripto*, and it means to throw down. It pictures someone thrown down, lying on the ground defeated.

There is a big contrast with the leaders, the respectable people who felt they earned something before God, the ones who had the best part of life on earth and were respected and influential. The masses that Jesus ministered to were by and large beaten down, struggling to get along in a harsh world, defeated by their own shortcomings and failure as well as the demands of laws they knew they could never keep. They dealt with insignificance, sickness, struggle and death.

They were people much like us. We have it much better in physical terms than they did. But we understand the weariness of not measuring up, of knowing we aren't what we ought to be and never will be, the hopelessness of trying repeatedly and failing every time to be better. We know the sorrow and hopelessness of life in a world full of the tragedy and loss that comes to all of us.

Jesus had compassion on those people. He has compassion on us. The Greek word translated "compassion" referred to one's inner organs. What that says to me is that he looks up on us and cares about us in a way that he could feel in the pit of his stomach. Laurie and I have a hard time visiting people at Children's Hospital. It is very different now than it was 34 years ago, and that helps quite a bit. But it still to

this day brings back memories of visiting our son there. We recall going to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to see him. We had to wash our hands with disinfectant soap, then put gowns on over our clothes just to visit him. Then we would see this helpless, struggling infant lying in an incubator hooked up with wires and tubes, fighting to survive. At first all we could do was put our hands in the incubator and touch him. We couldn't even take him out and hold him. I assure you, we felt compassion like I had never felt it before. It was so powerful I could literally feel it physically, and at times it was overwhelming. It was all I could do to maintain some semblance of composure.

When Jesus looks at us he sees us as being as wounded, weak and helpless as our little boy, Joel was. And he feels. Do you get that? He has compassion for us so powerful he feels it at the very center of his being. Sometimes we fear that what he feels while looking at us is annoyance, impatience or disgust. None of that is true. What he feels is compassion. It is overwhelming compassion that brings him near to tears, for he loves us infinitely more than Laurie and I loved our son.

Jesus came to bring hope and life to those dispirited, downcast people, those people like us. There are a lot of them in this world. He said in verse 38, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." At this point typically preachers like to rant about how we need to get out there in the field and start harvesting. There are harassed, helpless people out there and many are dying. You need to get out there and do something. Go help harvest those people and bring them life.

I think Jesus does want us to be beacons of his grace and life to people. But did you notice that he didn't turn around and rail at people that they needed to get out there and start harvesting? He said what we should do is pray! Ask God to send people to help all those helpless people. The most important thing we can do is not get to work out there, it is to pray. I suspect the reason for this is that in the end you and I cannot change people. They are blind, and we can't make them see, no matter what we do. Only God can do that, so the most important things we can do is pray.

## IMPLICATIONS

### JESUS BLOWS UP THE WORLD SYSTEM

Repeatedly in this passage Jesus says and does things that are contrary to the way we think things are or should be. The most obvious is the fact that he chose one of the most despised people in his nation to be one of his key leaders in his new movement. Just having Matthew as one of his inner circle turned a lot of people against him. They hated Matthew and everyone of his kind, and if Jesus liked people such as him then they would have nothing to do with him.

But there were other ways we can see Jesus doing the contrary thing. When some men brought a paralyzed man to him the first thing he did was to pronounce his sins were forgiven. He was saying the guy's biggest problem was not that he was physically paralyzed. It was his sin! The implications for how Jesus sees life in this world are profound. He sees things through a totally different grid than we do, and what we need to grasp is he is currently working through that grid, not our usual human frame of mind. He doesn't do things the way we expect him to. Jesus sees the world differently than we do, and if we are to become like him we are going to have to think in ways that are contrary to how humans typically think. Here are some examples.

### ***The heart of life is spiritual***

Jesus first offers the paralyzed man forgiveness because that is the most important issue. It is very human to think that life is totally about what we experience right now in this world, about physical things, about health, riches, prestige, approval from other people, about success, pleasure, comfort and power.

In Matthew 16:26 Jesus said, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" He meant we could have everything good this world has to offer, but if we lose our soul, if we suffer loss spiritually, we've lost everything. The people who gain the world are those who are envied. They are on top. They are the rich, the powerful, the beautiful, the successful. Jesus said if you gain that position or status, but lose your soul, you've lost everything. That's because what matters most is the spiritual. In Matthew 10:28 he said, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul." In other words, there is something worse than death. Dying is not the worst thing that can happen to us. Losing our soul is.

When Jesus spoke of eternal life, he meant more than merely existing eternally. He meant living eternally in fullness of life. He meant life in God's kingdom where



there is joy, peace, love and hope. In John 17:3 he said in a prayer to his heavenly Father, “Now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” According to that, how do people gain eternal life, thus experience life as every human being longs to experience it? They know God. In other words, the answer is spiritual.

People believe the answer to how we get the life we want is through success, acclaim, riches, education, power. So life is about money, political power, competition, winning. The amazing claim Jesus implicitly makes is that the core problem of the human condition is spiritual, and the answer for that problem is also spiritual. The human condition can never be healed through politics, economics, success, power or any other human palliative.

Jesus said that what we need more than anything else is to know God, and nothing else can substitute for knowing him. If we do not know him then everything else will be off. It will end up being empty and frustrating in some way at best, and possibly deadly at worst.

I recently read a book titled *Washington's Spies*, by Alexander Rose. It is about the Culper spy ring that supplied intelligence to George Washington. The book has a chapter that deals with codes, for the Culpers had to write in code. One type of code was based on both sender and receiver having a particular book. The code would give page, line and word numbers to look up in the book. If you had the key, the chosen book, you could decode the message. But if you didn't have the key, the code would never make sense. Jesus says the key to breaking the code of life is knowing God. Without that we will never figure life out. There is no amount of good stuff in life that can ever break that code.

The way Jesus sees the world, it is mostly about what God is doing. Think about Jesus' life. There were powerful people in his world who seemed to be the ones that mattered, the ones doing important things, the ones influencing and controlling events. Jesus either didn't show up on their radar at all, or at most he was an annoying blip of no consequence, a pawn to be disposed of to gain their ends. And yet Jesus was what God was doing in the world, and what he was doing had enormous impact on billions of lives and changed the course of history.

This perspective brings enormous peace and wisdom into our lives. When I went through the unpleasant experience of essentially being fired from my previous ministry one truth helped me tremendously. It was that the core of life is spiritual, and it is about what God is doing. When we look at what people are doing and

think it's all about that, we can get upset, start grasping for power and fight for all we are worth. But when we see it as being about what God is doing, we can be calm and at peace. Jesus did exactly that when he was on trial before Pilate. And in my case, I found that God was at work, moving me into a new phase of life that has been an exceedingly joyful one.

We had a conversation with a neighbor recently in which she expressed considerable angst over what she described as “what’s going on in our country.” She seemed quite upset. I found myself comforted. I know what’s going on. God is at work. The solutions to all that ails us is not in politics. It isn’t in the ideas of the Democrats and it isn’t in the ideas of the Republicans. It is spiritual and it has to do with what God is doing in human history and in the world today. By the way, don’t be surprised if people you talk to don’t grasp this truth and even think it foolish. It is an alien system. It makes no sense to those operating with a typical human default grid.

### ***The way to be great is to serve***

Our world is certain that greatness is doing something that will impress other people, gain notice and approval, being able to control or influence big things in this world. The more power and control you have the greater you are. We will see this again later in our study of Matthew, but Jesus says the path to greatness is down the highway of humility. The way up is down. It is choosing to serve, not be noticed or be served. In Mark 10:42-44 when his buddies were arguing over which of them was the most important, Jesus said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. No so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”

This is so contrary to human thinking that we can hardly wrap our heads around it. Paul wrote some things in Ephesians 5 that are absolutely incendiary in our feminist dominated society. He wrote in verse 23 “the husband is the head of the wife.” Gasp! What kind of Neanderthal, chauvinistic thinking is that? That is misogynistic paternalism at its worst, and it has no place in our modern society, right? That really can bring out the fangs and claws. That’s because our world sees being the head as being able to have power over, control and dominate. It means you’re more important, because you are large and in charge. But wait. What does it mean in Jesus’ alien worldview? He says the leader is the servant of all. That

means the husband is the servant of everyone in the home. He is the slave of the wife, in Jesus' words.

We're going to go see a movie. We have a choice. There's an action flick that is a possibility and there is a musical. I think, "Okay, the last few movies we've seen have included The Greatest Showman, Beauty and the Beast and La La Land. Musical, musical, musical. We did see the latest Star Wars movie in there, but I don't count that because it's a sort of cultural requirement." I believe it is time for me to play the man card and insist that we see a movie in which something blows up. Or there are fighter jets. Or possibly a sports movie. That would be okay. Hey, it's my turn! But Jesus says I'm supposed to be the head of the home. That means I'm supposed to serve. I'm my wife's slave. So, what movie would you like to see, O Mistress? What a radical way of living. It is so different than the world's way.

In Jesus' seemingly upside down, alien system it is not the people at the top of the pyramid who are the greatest, it is those at the bottom. It is the people who get no acclaim and might appear insignificant but who quietly go about serving other people who are the greats. In his world the multimillion dollar salaries wouldn't go to the execs at the top of the company, but people who care for the elderly and the sick, who nurture little children, who clean other people's toilets. I suspect we'd have a lot fewer millionaires running for President if it meant no big fancy house, no big limousines and cool jet to fly around in. Just everybody's slave.

### ***The way to receive is to give***

Another one we will see again later in Matthew that is totally contrary to the world is the idea that where we find life is in giving. In Matthew 16:25 Jesus said, "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." If you try to save your life, in other words, take care of yourself, get whatever you think you need for yourself, all you will do is lose your life. You won't get the life you long for. Instead you will end up with the opposite. You will lack peace, you will have no joy, there will be only frustration, confusion, restlessness, resentment, emptiness, damaged relationships and hopelessness.

The way you find life is by giving yourself up for Jesus. It comes in giving yourself to serve him by serving and loving other people. This is not the world's way. The world's way is "what about me?" The world's way is "What's in it for me?" The world's way is "When is it my turn?" The world's way is "That's not fair" when we feel like we have not gotten our share.

Jesus' way is diametrically opposed to the system of the world. His way is "God loves me and takes care of me, so what can I do for you?" Jesus himself is the most vivid and best example of that in history. If on the way to that hill of crucifixion he had asked, "what's in it for me?" He would never have gotten there. What was in it for him was unimaginable pain and loss. But he did it because he loves us, and love is always the way to life.

Saying the way to life is to sacrifice yourself feels totally counterintuitive, like saying the way to go faster is to slow down. But we should note that there is a parallel physically. What feels best to me is to relax, take it easy, eat doughnuts for breakfast and pizza for dinner, or a burger and fries. It feels good. It serves my desires. But it is not the way to get the most out of life. The way to be the most alive is to say no to the desire to just make life easy and pleasing for me. It requires disciplining myself to eat nutritious food, saying no to unhealthy food, and making myself get up off the couch and work, doing exercise. And now they say it is best if it's vigorous exercise, meaning hard. Should it surprise us if it is kind of the same spiritually?

### *The way to peace is grace*

Jesus' way of life is "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He came to bring good news, the best news, to underserving people who know they are undeserving and are hopeless. He has good news for people like Matthew, who absolutely deserved all of the rejection he got from almost everyone in his society. He had nothing, absolutely nothing, to recommend him to good people, much less to God. And he knew it. There was not a moment of his life when he did not know that.

Yet Jesus brought good news to him. He chose him to be one of his followers and to be a part of his kingdom. Jesus looked at the masses of the poor people, downtrodden, insignificant, failing, struggling, unable to meet the high standards they knew God had for them, totally defeated on that front, and he didn't feel annoyance or disgust. He felt compassion. On our worst days, Jesus has compassion for us. And he gives us grace.

The world does not operate by grace. We receive so very little of it, if any. We know from our earliest days that we have to perform to get attention and approval and acceptance. We have to earn it if we're going to get anywhere in this world. And we have to perform every single day of our lives. Sadly, we can't. At least we can't perform to the level we know is needed, so we fake it. We put on a show, we

keep up the front to make it look like everything's okay. We do everything we can to convince others that we have it under control and we're doing great. And it's exhausting. We live in terror of being discovered, of people seeing how much of a fraud we actually are.

And Jesus comes along and has compassion on us. He sees past the circus act that is our lives, past the facade we build. He knows all about how far short we are. And he floods us with grace any way. Grace is a mystery to us and an even bigger mystery to the world. It is as common in our world as unicorns. But Jesus has a world of it to pour into our hearts and lives.

We baby sat our granddaughters recently. Ella is in the process of building a vocabulary. She talks constantly and very expressively, but she doesn't use English words mostly. She is learning to approximate some. One of her absolute favorite TV shows is called PJ Masks. Her favorite character on it is Gecko, but she also likes Cat Boy and Owlette. Laurie had been looking with her at something on her phone about the show. Shortly thereafter Ella started saying something that sounded like "Mo ha bo." She kept repeating it and began getting a little frustrated because Laurie and I were at a total loss. What does she want? More something I think, but what's ha bo? Laurie had a brilliant breakthrough. She said, "I think she's saying, 'more Cat Boy.'" She got her phone and went to the site on it that had Cat Boy, and Ella was happy. That was it.

I didn't look at Ella in disgust and say, "Well why didn't you just say that?" Little Ella is doing what she can, and it may fall far short, but all I experience when I'm with that little kid is overwhelming love. I have compassion for her, and all her efforts. I feel terrible when she gets frustrated or she cries. Toby and Anna told us recently that before our last visit she was expressing the desire to see Yapaw (that's me). They told her "We'll see Yapaw tomorrow." The next day she got up and said "Yapaw tomorrow?" Do you know how that makes Yapaw feel? We are undeserving, the harassed, helpless, beaten down people. And Jesus sees us with compassion. Any desire we have to be with him thrills him. That's how Jesus sees us. That is like the grace that he continually has for us.

Jesus is truly an alien Being and his system is an alien system. The world is convinced that not just the heart of life but all of life is physical. It is about right here, right now. It is about having the best of this world. Jesus insists that the heart of life is spiritual, not physical. The world insists that the way to be great is to be on top, to be the best, better than everyone else, and to be the one that is served. Jesus insists that the way to be great is just the opposite. He says the way to be great is to serve. Jesus says the way up is down, where the world says the way up

is up. Jesus says the way to receive is to give. We find life by giving it away. We experience life by serving, not getting for self. The world says you have to take care of yourself, and giving up yourself is crazy. The world says if you want anything in this life, if you want to be accepted or loved, you have to earn it. Jesus says the way to be accepted and love is to receive grace, for you will never deserve it.

It is crucial for us to grasp it is impossible to try to make Jesus fit in the world system. You cannot follow Jesus, but try to mix that with the world's thinking and ways. If you try that Jesus will blow up the system the way new wine will ruin old wineskins.