

THE GOSPEL and Growing Up Jewish.

August 9, 2015 - Dr. Barry Leventhal

- **Introduction**

- Dr. Leventhal shared that he grew up with a vision problem...a Janus vision problem. Janus was an ancient Roman deity who was the god of gates, doors, and entry ways. He had two faces facing opposite directions. Dr. Leventhal had double vision—his religious and non-religious life. The sacred and the secular.
- Here at TC we say, “All of life is worship—from going to work to going to school and everything else in life. We want to have an awareness that God’s presence and power is with us in everything that we do, and all that we do, we do to honor Him”.
 - o Have you ever struggled with living life with double vision?
 - o How does the statement above help us to live without double vision?

- **1. Dr. Leventhal’s Story as a Janus Jew**

- Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.
- Dr. Leventhal had his sacred life and his secular life—two different visions, two different worlds – a split personality. He was living with a veil of blindness, but when he turned upward the veil was taken away.
 - o What “veil of blindness” keeps you living two different lives?
 - o Why is it important to focus upward (loving God completely) first? (HINT: Our first value: A High and Lofty View of God)
- Discuss the highlights of Dr. Leventhal’s life and how they shaped his secular life.
- Review of Highlights:
 - o Grandparents fleeing anti-Semitic persecution.
 - o Given two names—one in Hebrew and one in English—taken from deceased relatives.
 - o Growing up in California with an awareness of God—from attending synagogue to watching and catching the waves.
 - o Attending Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) with his grandmother.
 - o Experiencing his Bar Mitzvah—meaning son of the commandment—on his 13th birthday.
 - o His awareness of us (Jews) and them (Gentiles) when he was growing up.
- Discuss the highlights of Dr. Leventhal’s life and how they shaped his secular life.
 - o His football experiences: Scholarships for football and went to UCLA. Offensive captain for his senior year in 1965. Only twelve seniors and new coaches his senior year and the predictions of their coming football season. Winning the Rose Bowl in 1966 against all odds.
 - o Discuss the following quotes he used regarding the emptiness of accolades and applause.
 - Dr. James Heard said Americans suffer with “destination sickness”. Once we get there, what’s next?
 - “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” –St. Augustine
 - “There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus”. – Blaise Pasqual

- **2. Dr. Leventhal becomes a Jesus Jew**

- Discuss the first time Dr. Leventhal really heard the Gospel through Abe Schneider.
- Discuss the relationship with the two Jesus-followers Kent Tucker and Carol Davis in college.
- How did Hal Lindsey challenge him with his “trick Bible”? (Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6)
- What did his Rabbi say when he asked him to explain Isaiah 53?
 - o Discuss what Dr. Leventhal meant when he said, “No one is so blind as the person who doesn’t want to see.”
 - o How did John 10 help him in his decision? (C.S. Lewis said anyone who claims this is either a lunatic, a liar, or the Lord of life.)
- God transformed him from being a Janus Jew to becoming a Jesus Jew.

3. Application to your life

- Maybe you've lived a Janus life...living a sacred and a secular life...the only way to bring them together is looking upward to God. It's a free gift and it lasts forever.
- Take a few minutes to discuss ways you've divided your life into sacred and secular. Then discuss how looking upward brings them together.
- "Evangelism is simply helping a person take another step closer to the Lord." Discuss this statement.
- Dr. Leventhal said that there are three moves of grace that provoke the Jews—and anyone—to jealousy.
 - o **Prayer**
 - o Read and discuss Psalm 122:6-9.
 - o When was the last time you prayed for someone to come to know Christ?
 - o Do you have any Jewish friends? If not – pray that God will bring some people to mind that you can pray for this week.
 - o **Share**
 - o "Jesus was a Jew" by Arnold Fruchtenbaum is a great book to share with your Jewish friends.
 - o Do you feel equipped to share your personal testimony? Acts 9, 22, 26 are chapters that speak of the Apostle Paul sharing his faith. They are great examples for us.
 - o **Dare**
 - o Read and discuss Philippians 1.
 - o What does it mean to live in the shadow of the cross?
- **Closing**

Dr. Leventhal's wife received this poem and he read it as a prayer. You could sense in his voice, the deep meaning this has to him. Read this, then read TC's value of "The Transformative Gospel of Grace."

I'm Nothing, I'm Nobody, No One!
A Poem from the Play, "For Heaven's Sake!"
A Musical Review in Two Acts.
Book and Lyrics by Helen Kromer.
Music by Frederick Silver.
Boston: Bakers, Plays, 1961, 1963

I'm nothing, I'm nobody, no one.
But Someone made something of me;
He put on my flesh
And He walked in my bones
And He saw all the grief that I see.

He knew what I know of tormentors,
This haunting and howling within,
The blood that can spill
And the bone that can break
And the flesh with the nails driven in.

He hung on the cross as a creature,
Wearing my sin-spattered clothes,
And the pride in my flesh
Died with Him when He died
And my raiment was new when He rose.

This clothing I wear with a difference—
It's flesh that the King entered in!
He put there His love
And His almighty law
And it can never be what it's been.

I'm nothing, I'm nobody, no one;
I'm something in Christ who's in me;
And I'll put on His flesh
And I'll walk in His bones
And a part of His Body I'll be!

- **TC value: The Transformative Gospel of Grace**

We are committed, through the Spirit's enabling power, to be a community that invites and seeks out the wounded, the broken-hearted, and the marginalized so that they can be transformed by the Gospel of grace into the image of Jesus, joining Him in His mission to transform the world. We are committed, through the Spirit's enabling power, to the belief that Grace is Jesus Himself coming to live in and through His people. Life in the Kingdom is empowered by the King of Kings, not human effort.

- **Close in prayer**