

# *Devotional—day 9*

## *"All For the Best"*

### **JESUS:**

When you feel sad,  
Or under a curse,  
Your life is bad,  
Your prospects are worse.  
Your wife is sighing, crying,  
And your olive tree is dying,  
Temples are graying,  
And teeth are decaying,  
And creditors weighing your purse;  
Your mood and your robe  
Are both a deep blue,  
You'd bet that Job  
Had nothing on you.  
Don't forget that when you  
Get to heaven you'll be blest.  
Yes, it's all for the best.

You must never be distressed.  
All your wrongs will be redressed.

### **JUDAS:**

Some men are born to live at ease,  
Doing what they please,  
Richer than the bees are in honey;  
Never growing old,  
Never feeling cold,  
Pulling pots of gold from thin air.  
The best in ev'ry town,  
Best at shaking down,  
Best at making mountains of money.  
They can't take it with them,  
But what do they care?  
The get the center of the meat,  
Cushions for their feet,  
Houses on the street where it's sunny,  
Winters warm and free,  
All of this and we get the rest.  
But who is the land for?  
The sun and the sand for?  
You guessed-  
It's all for the best.

Someone's gotta be oppressed.

## *Behind the Music...*

In 1971, Schwartz decided to pay homage to Irving Berlin when he needed a duet for *GODSPELL*. This piece was conceived during discussions with *GODSPELL*'s director and conceiver John-Michael Tebelak about infusing a theatrical score into the play before it opened Off-Broadway. Most of the songs from *GODSPELL* were based on hymns or psalms. Schwartz believed that there was something missing from Act II. "Don't forget, I didn't know any of these stories," Schwartz once explained. "I hadn't been brought up Christian. And so I was not someone coming in with reverence. I was coming in thinking, well if you're going to tell this story, how do you make this story work? How do you actually care about these people if you don't come in already caring about them? Since the central personal relationship was the Jesus/Judas thing, I said, 'John-Michael, if he's going to betray him in the second act, you have to see that they're really good friends in the first act, so they need to do a number together.' He agreed."

With the concept of the two performers and Irving Berlin's counter-melody style in mind, Schwartz invented the playful number. "All for the Best" along with "Learn Your Lessons Well" and the "Prologue" are noteworthy as being completely original in both music and lyrics (*i.e.* not from Bible text or hymns).

### **Matthew 5:10-12 (The Message)**

**10** "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom. **11** Not only that - count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. **12** You can be glad when that happens - give a cheer, even! - for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble."

### **Matthew 19:20-34 (The Message)**

**19** "Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or - worse! - stolen by burglars. **20** Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. **21** It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being. **22** Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. **23** If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have! **24** You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both."

**25** "If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don't fuss about what's on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. **26** Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds. **27** Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? **28** All this time and money wasted on fashion - do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, **29** but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them. **30** If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers - most of which are never even seen - don't you think he'll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? **31** What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving. **32** People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. **33** Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. **34** Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes."

### **James 1:10-12 (The Message)**

**10** And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer! Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't ever count on it. **11** You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the "prosperous life." At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing. **12** Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

### **James 5:7-11 (The Message)**

**7** Meanwhile, friends, wait patiently for the Master's Arrival. You see farmers do this all the time, waiting for their valuable crops to mature, patiently letting the rain do its slow but sure work. **8** Be patient like that. Stay steady and strong. The Master could arrive at any time. **9** Friends, don't complain about each other. A far greater complaint could be lodged against you, you know. The Judge is standing just around the corner. **10** Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. **11** What a gift life is to those who stay the course! You've heard, of course, of Job's staying power, and you know how God brought it all together for him at the end. That's because God cares, cares right down to the last detail.

**1 Timothy 6:8-10** (The Message)

**6** A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. **7** Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, **8** if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough. **9** But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. **10** Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever

*Time for personal reflection (Day 9):*

When do I feel like I'm living under a curse? What makes me feel persecuted?

In the above situations, am I truly being persecuted or am I allowing myself to fall into the trap of this world and viewing my plight from the worldly view rather than the Heavenly view? Am I trying to store up treasure down here?

What aspects of this tour will help me learn to live the life of "God-worship" - not fussing about what's on the table at mealtimes or about the clothes I'll be wearing? How will I learn to live in the "rich simplicity of being myself before God"?

"Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out." - What things am I leaving behind this summer that make me feel like I'm missing out on something? How do I need to look at or reexamine these things based on Matthew 19:33-34?

# *Time for personal reflection...*

I will keep my "self" out of the tour and God in the tour by...