

With Jesus pt9

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With Jesus / Luke 19:1–10

As we bring this series to a close, I wanted to end with what we hope is the end result. When we live like Jesus and love like Jesus and respond to people like Jesus did, we get to see eternity changed for people.

What are we looking for and what should let us know? Where can we do what Henry Blackaby said to do “Look for where God is working and go and join Him there.”

Turn with me to [Luke 19:1-10](#).

Jericho is a city that is on the way to Jerusalem. Jesus is, as He was a few weeks ago, on His way to be crucified. And He enters this town, like so many others with great crowds wanting to see Him and touch Him and hear Him and be near Him. He is at the peak of His popularity. All of that will come crashing down soon.

We have that same issue in our day in some ways. We have talked about it multiple times in the past few months. **We used to be a place where Christianity was popular and celebrated and unquestioned. We are not any more.** Being a follower of Jesus- a faithful one- is now a little more challenging, a little more odd, a little more counter cultural. That’s ok, but it comes with some interesting hurdles to evangelism.

Relationships and trust are now the currencies of the day, not authority. We enter in with the Gospel humbly, like a lot of missionaries before us. And **what we are looking for, like so many of them before us, is a person of peace.** Someone God is working on who is ready for Jesus.

As Jesus enters Jericho, there is a man like that in the crowd. He has my problem- he is short. And he has another problem- one I don't have- he is rich. And his job is one which makes him hated- he is a tax collector- in fact he is the boss of the tax collectors. (quick discourse on the role of a tax collector in 1st century Rome/Israel)

Luke Comments

Luke revealed to his readers what Zacchaeus sought by describing what he received in 19:9. Zacchaeus sought the salvation Jesus spoke of in 19:9–10. “Who Jesus was” is literally who he is

What makes Zacchaeus unique though, is he wants to see Jesus. Something is going on with this guy- something he may not have even been able to explain.

Important: When God is pursuing you, He will take you where you need to go- even guide you, before you know Him. He is orchestrating events in your favor for your good! Who He pursues He will get!

So Zacchaeus is going to do everything possible to see Jesus, even if the crowd surging around Jesus doesn't care and even if he has to be undignified to do it. So he climbs a tree.

Luke Comments

Such undignified behavior, according to that culture, indicates that more than curiosity was at play here.

I get a kick out of this image every time. This rich guy climbing up a tree in his robes and his finery just to see Jesus- who is an actual King and Ruler and rich...who is humble and not attractive at all- according to Isaiah.

And Jesus finds him.

Why does Jesus find him? He is looking for him.

Luke Comments

The “must” (dei) implies a divine necessity to do so. See comments on 4:43; Introduction 8 (1). **Just as Jesus’ forthcoming passion in Jerusalem was divinely ordained, so Jesus’ individual actions all fit into the divine plan, even his bringing salvation to Zacchaeus’s home.** Because of Luke 19:10, Jesus had to stay at Zacchaeus’s home

Church, write this down. **We often miss people looking for Jesus because we are not looking for them and we are not looking in the places where they are trying to find Jesus.** (Gospel conversations in unlikely places)

Now look at verse 5- what does Jesus do when He finds Zacchaeus? He enters into his world. Going to his house is a major no no. Zacchaeus is not a nice guy. He is hated and seen as unclean and beyond redemption. Yet Jesus shows no hesitation to enter into his world. Why? Because Zacchaeus is looking for Jesus.

Luke Comments

True Christianity has always broken down economic, social, ethnic, and racial barriers; for where Christ is truly present, “people will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God”

Church we are going to have to not only look but be bold and unafraid. The time for timidity and fence building and hoop jumping is over. **We exist in a state of spiritual emergency and the only answer is for us- the followers of Jesus- to return to the missionary posture we were supposed to be in the entire time.**

Verse 7 is our warning about what is going to happen- people are going to talk bad about us. Who. Cares.

Luke Comments

To “break bread” with someone had important consequences. Even as contact with lepers (Luke 5:12–16) brought ritual uncleanness, so in the minds of the Pharisees contact with tax collectors and sinners brought moral (as well as ritual) uncleanness

Luke Comments

“Tax collectors” are grouped with “sinners” not so much because they were “traitors” who collected taxes for the Roman oppressors but because they were dishonest and practiced distortion (cf. Luke 5:32). Note the advice of John the Baptist to them in 3:12–13, which assumes their dishonesty, and Zacchaeus’s behavior in 19:8–9

I am more concerned about my obedience to Jesus than I am my reputation with Christians who are only interested in expanding their own tribes rather than the Kingdom, and you should be too.

And I hold that position for 2 reasons.

One is biblical- Jesus had a bad rep with the religious establishment of His day for the people who He ate with, loved, and ministered to- so why should I be worried

The second is experiential- I have seen how those same Christians whose opinion I was so worried about treat people when they violate the rules of the group and I am not willing to hide my struggles, my questions, or my failures to stay in a group that treats people as disposable. I just don’t have time for it. You shouldn’t either.

Jesus definitely did not.

And look at the results- **While the religious are criticizing Jesus, Zacchaeus is repenting and being saved in a radical way.** Look at verse 8.

Zacchaeus besetting sin is his greed- and his repentance is divesting himself of his means to sin- his wealth.

Luke Comments

This refers to half of his belongings (cf. 8:3; 12:33; Acts 4:32), not his earnings. As Ellis notes, “It is a thank offering expressive of a changed heart.” Zacchaeus provides an example that whereas the demand to sell all (Luke 12:33; 18:22) is not obligatory for all believers, generosity is

Luke Comments

In other less severe instances the OT requires only a 20 percent increase (Lev 6:5; Num 5:6–7). It is difficult to interpret this as a customary act of Zacchaeus in the past. It is best understood as a futuristic present, which along with his giving half of his goods to the poor reveals in Zacchaeus’s actions what “I repent” says in words

Church we could see this too! In our lives, and in the lives of people in our world. Jesus can bring about such a change! And we can see it and be a part of it- if we are willing to engage with those who Jesus is working on- we have to SEE!

And look at Jesus response- a welcome to Zacchaeus and a rebuke to those who criticize Him.

Luke Comments

This is not to be interpreted as meaning that the “Savior” had come to Zacchaeus’s house but that salvation had occurred. The lost Zacchaeus had been sought (19:5) and now saved (19:10). The promised salvation had come to Zacchaeus and his family

The welcome is calling Zacchaeus a son of Abraham- Zacchaeus is family. He has a seat at the table (Gospel presentation here)

Luke Comments

This was not due to his being racially a descendant of Abraham (cf. 3:8bc) but to his having brought forth fruit in keeping with repentance (3:8a) and having responded in faith and repentance to Abraham's Seed (Acts 3:25–26; cf. Gal 3:16). By this Zacchaeus bore witness to God's grace by which even a rich man can be saved

The rebuke is stating, once again His calling- He came to seek and save the lost.

Luke Context

Its conclusion (19:10) functions as a summary of Jesus' ministry in the travel narrative. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. And, despite the difficulty (18:24), he can save even a rich man

(hiking story about getting lost- disorienting, panic, relief)

People need a guide in the moment they realize they are lost. That is us. We are the ones who help them get home. We cannot do that if we are not paying attention to their desire for rescue.

Let's be aware!