

Morning Sermon September 28, 2014

Luke 19:1-10

“He NEEDED a Tree”

“I love the word impossible... It’s like joy after sorrow, people being friends after being enemies. Rainbows after drenching rain. A wound healed. Sunsets on quiet evenings after hot noisy days. Paralyzed, injured limbs learning to grow strong again. Forgiveness after wrong. Truth after fog. New love-made babies. Birds learning to fly and own the sky. Bitterness turned to mellowness. Fresh genuine hope... once abandoned. People finding each other at right moments, in unexpected, obscure places... for God-ordained reasons.”

Ann Kiemel

²⁵ **"For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."** ²⁶ **And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"** ²⁷ **But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:25-27 NKJ)**

1. Zacchaeus was an IMPOSSIBLE convert –

^{NKJ} **Luke 19:1 Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.**

² **Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.**

(Luke 19:1-2 NKJ)

1. Remember what Jesus said –

²⁴ **And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"** ²⁵ **"For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:24-25 NKJ)**

2. Of course, HE also said –

²⁷ **But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." (Luke 18:27 NKJ)**

3. Yet Zacchaeus seemed extremely impossible –

A. He was short -

Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he.

He climbed way up in a sycamore tree, For the Lord he wanted to see...

Short people got no reason Short people got no reason Short people got no reason To live / They got little hands And little eyes And they walk around

Telling great big lies They got little noses And tiny little teeth

They wear platform shoes On their nasty little feet

Well, I don't want no short people Don't want no short people

Don't want no short people Round here ...

Short people got nobody Short people got nobody Short people got nobody

To love /They got little baby legs And they stand so low You got to pick 'em

up Just to say hello They got little cars That got beep, beep, beep

They got little voices Goin' peep, peep, peep They got grubby little fingers

And dirty little minds They're gonna get you every time

Well, I don't want no short people Don't want no short people

Don't want no short people 'round here : NEWMAN, RANDY

B. He was a “filthy rich” BAD GUY -

“If I had been casting for *Zacchaeus, the Movie* in the 1940s, I would have chosen diminutive Edward G. Robinson. Today I would choose Danny DeVito as the “Z-Man.” Those shifty eyes, his swagger—the perfect little big man.” R. Kent Hughes

“He was the kingpin of the Jericho tax cartel and had the scruples of a modern-day crack dealer. He was filthy rich in the fullest sense of the term. Not a likely candidate for the kingdom!” R. Kent Hughes

C. He was HATED –

All tax collectors were hated in Israel! They bid for their jobs from the occupying Roman Government. He who could milk the most money out of the people got the job! Plus, the tax-collector was not limited by the Romans regarding how much he could take for himself, and Zacchaeus was NOT just a tax-collector he was “a chief tax collector, and he was rich.”

Paul was chief of sinners – 1 Timothy 1:15; Zacchaeus was a chiefly hated sinner!

I imagine many would have loved to put him through the eye of a needle—“squeezed out,” as C. S. Lewis put it, “in one long bloody thread from tail to snout.”

II. Zacchaeus was tree-climbing-curious about Christ –

³ And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature.

⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. (Luke 19:3-4 NKJ)

Why? We don't know for sure? Had he heard of Jesus' miracles, probably? Maybe he knew Matthew, the ex-tax collecting apostle?

Maybe he was not happy being the short, rich, hated, sinful tax collector he was!

Maybe it was curiosity about Jesus as a celebrity, maybe there was not a lot of spiritual depth in his first moves toward Jesus!

We do not KNOW Zacchaeus' first motives, yet eventually God's Spirit moved on his short, sin-filled heart!

III. Zacchaeus was COMMANDED to "come down" –

⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."

1. Zacchaeus obeyed that command with speedy, happy ZEAL -

⁶ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. (Luke 19:5-6 NKJ)

2. Jesus joined Zacchaeus for a salvation inducing MEAL –

⁷ But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." (Luke 19:7 NKJ)

¹⁹ "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

²⁰ "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:19-20 NKJ)

3. Zacchaeus' repentance showed his salvation was REAL –

⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." ⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:8-10 NKJ)

IV. The TREE that saved Zacchaeus –

1. It was not the tree he climbed to see Jesus (though that tree did play a part, I am not saying a saving part)

2. Nor was Zacchaeus saved by his thorough repentance, though his repentance showed he was SAVED

3. Zacchaeus was SAVED as we are saved, by Christ's Tree the cross -

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14 NKJ)

4. Zacchaeus was the last individual Jesus confronted this way before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on His way to the cross -

5. Jesus sought him, and taught him and by blood He bought him

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1Peter 1:18-19 NKJ)

6. Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham by faith in Christ –

⁵ Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?--

⁶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." ⁷ Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Galatians 3:5-7 NKJ)

7. By faith we become children too –

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13 NKJ)

Arnold A. Brevick