

“1 ¶ And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that *way*. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

11 ¶ And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. 27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me." (Lu 19:1-27)

Introduction: The Bible is not just a collection of wisdom literature and mystical writing, and exciting stories all stuck together. This is not true of any of the books of the Bible or of the Bible as a whole. It must be read with understanding and meditation. It makes sense and the parts fit together. Every word and every verse must be place in context, the context of the sentence itself, the paragraph and book and the entire Bible. This is where systematics come in. Grammar cannot tell you the whole story. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Nicodemus heard the words, knew that the "ye" corresponded to the "We" of his implied question, but he couldn't understand the rest of it, for he saw only the words and not the meaning in the context of the promises of God to Israel and the work of the Holy Ghost.

So it is with the parable of the pounds. I want to put it into the immediate context by talking about Zacchaeus

I. The Setting: Conversion and Feast of Zacchaeus

A. Zacchaeus was a publican. Summary of Smith's Bible Dictionary: The publicans were employed as collectors of the Roman revenue. The Roman senate farmed the direct taxes and customs to private people who pay a given sum into the treasury (in publicum), and so received the name of publicani . Con-

tracts of this kind fell naturally into the hands the richest class of Romans. They appointed managers, under whom were the actual custom-house officers, who examined each bale of goods, exported or imported, assessed its value more or less arbitrarily, wrote out the ticket, and enforced payment.

The latter were commonly natives of the province in which they were stationed as being brought daily into contact with all classes of the population. The name publicani was used popularly, and in the New Testament exclusively, of the custom house officials . The system was essentially a vicious one. The custom house officers were encouraged in the most vexatious or fraudulent exactions and a remedy was all but impossible. They overcharged whenever they had an opportunity, ([Luke 3:13](#)) they brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting hush-money ([Luke 19:8](#)) they detained and opened letters on mere suspicion.

It was the basest of all livelihoods. All this was enough to bring the class into ill favor everywhere. In Judea and Galilee there were special circumstances of aggravation. The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all made matters worse. The scribes who discussed the question, ([Matthew 22:15](#)) for the most part answered it in the negative.

In addition to their other faults, accordingly, the publicans of the New Testament were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. The class thus practically excommunicated furnished some of the earliest disciples both of the Baptist and of our Lord. The position of Zacchaeus as a "chief among the publicans," ([Luke 19:2](#)) implies a gradation of some kind among the persons thus employed.

- B. He, alone of the crowds in Jericho, had a great desire to see Jesus. We have illustrated the words of our Lord, "No man can come to me except he be drawn of the Father. Something special was working in him.

- C. Obstacles did not discourage, not the least his own shortness. He couldn't see over the crowd. If you only have half a heart to do something, even little things will discourage you. But you will find a way to do what you really want to do.
 - D. He ran ahead and climbed a tree. Wait! Wait! He was a publican. He was a chief publican. He was a rich, chief, publican. Has he no sense of class and dignity. Climbing a tree!!! Like a kid.
 - E. Jesus called to him; not the other way around. He was not a believer yet, but God was working in his heart. The Son does what the Father does, so the Son called Zacchaeus to himself.
 - F. How dramatic that scene must have been. Jesus stopped and looked at the little man in the tree. Jesus knew who he was and saw his heart. But Zacchaeus didn't know. He heard what he could not have expected to hear.
 - G. What was the conversation at that dinner? But Zacchaeus made a confession of faith and repentance and found salvation.
 - H. Jesus was condemned for eating with publicans.
- II. The Work: Mind Your Own Business
- A. This complaint led to a parable by Jesus Christ, that has to be considered in the light of the feast at the house of Zacchaeus.
 - 1. Verse 11 those that heard these things. Nigh to Jerusalem; kingdom would appear.
 - 2. They wanted the reward before the labor.
 - 3. This was His disciples who thought this: Even in Acts 1:6
 - 4. As great as the conversion of Zacchaeus, there was much work yet to do.
 - 5. This parable is a call to sobriety.
 - B. Details
 - 1. A pound. Between 15, 16 dollars. Not a great sum of money
 - 2. Difference: talent 25,000 30,000 but exact accuracy is difficult.
 - 3. Talents 5, 2, 1 talents to the servants; here each gets one.
 - 4. Similar lessons: be faithful in what God has given you in ability, opportunity
 - 5. Here: a hostile environment: do business. What is the pound? We all have the same. It doesn't matter.

6. Master in talents went away to a far country; pounds, went away to receive a kingdom; the people of the land refused to have him reign over them. Not much money; not good business environment.
7. The manifestation of the kingdom is not yet. Your job and my job is to mind our own business and take care of our little pound.
8. Pr 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.
9. Jeremiah 45:2 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch; 3 Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. 4 Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. Jer. 5 And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest. [Baruch]

III. The Rectification: Making Right of all Things.

- A. The reward of the faithful. One gained 10; one gained five. One hid his pound. We don't know of the other seven. One hid his pound.
- B. Punishment of the unfaithful servant. Rebuke of the Lord. Tried to blame the Lord. In the Talents And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In the pounds no punishment mentioned. But called a wicked servant in verse 22.

Conclusion and Application.

It is not yet the time for the manifestation of the kingdom. The times are in the Father's hands. Be faithful in the duty that lies before you. The children God has given you. The Sunday school class; the small things that make the church welcome to people and adorn the doctrine of Christ. Honest and friendly in your work and business. Let your light shine. God bless you.