

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. 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. 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." 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." 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.""

'Jesus as the Greater Joshua'

Luke begins chapter nineteen of his Gospel account with an encouraging story of salvation coming to the House of Zacchaeus, and I have chosen Zacchaeus as the focus of my next topical sermon here in ordinary time. [what week are we in?] Last month I focused on a single verse to help us learn about meditating on God's Word and today I chose a favorite character from the Bible to consider how such Biblical examples can benefit our Christian lives.

First a little Old Testament history is in order as we 'meditate' on the significance of this account, as we learned last month. Commentators on this portion of Luke spend a lot of time trying to work out the sequence of events here in Jericho as Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem.

You will find lengthy discussions about whether there were one or two blind men, whether Jesus was coming into or going out of Jericho when he healed them and finally whether Zacchaeus was in a tree inside or outside the city...

BUT you find very little to relate this account back to what I believe to be an obvious parallel in the Old Testament! *Question for the kids: Can we think of another household being saved in a City called Jericho in the Old Testament?* That is right: Rahab!

The prostitute, who came to faith!

She is highlighted in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, she is used as an example of faith by James AND she went on to become the wife of Salmon, earning her a mention in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus!

- **The account of Rahab came as Joshua entered the Promised Land to conquer the nations & his journey took him through Jericho.**
- **Jesus is now coming as the new Joshua who is going to establish a Kingdom that will fill the earth.**
- **It should not surprise us to find Jesus making His final journey to Jerusalem by way of Jericho & bringing salvation to another disreputable household in that city!**

The story of Rahab is the story of God's gracious gift of salvation by faith coming to a woman and her household: A salvation we now see again with Zacchaeus!

Joshua's spies tell Rahab they will spare her and her household if, when they come into the land, she binds a line of scarlet cord in her window...

- A scarlet thread to protect her household... Reminding us of the blood on the doorposts during the Passover in Egypt!
- A beautiful story of salvation and God' grace and it should not surprise us that it is repeated with the house of Zacchaeus!

With Zacchaeus we actually have someone who could be seen in that day as even more despicable than Rahab the prostitute!

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

Remember being a publican or tax collector was the bottom of the social food chain... They not only collected the taxes for Rome but often used their powerful position to gather even more riches for themselves.

- Zacchaeus was obviously very good at his trade because he had become the CHIEF tax collector and Luke tells us that he was RICH!

Zacchaeus was the third rich man mentioned by Luke in his orderly account of the ministry of Jesus:

- There was an unnamed rich man cast into hell.
- Next came an unnamed rich man who went away in sorrow.
- And now a named rich man who will be saved!
- Not saved because of anything in HIM but saved because of the grace of God...

In fact, Jesus had just taught the Disciples it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

- But now God is about to do the impossible and as He does so, we should note that He uses very ordinary means!

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

- Zacchaeus was short and his shortness causes him to take some extraordinary steps to see Jesus!

We should remember this when we are unsatisfied with how God has made us:

-- Short people don't like being short

-- Tall people don't like being tall.

Many women seem troubled by the color of the hair God has given them and many men worry about the amount of hair God has given them!

As we mature in the faith we should learn to be content with the things God has given us, and to realize they will often be used by God in ways we do not anticipate!

- God often uses what we might perceive as faults to His ends...
In this case: Zacchaeus' shortness!

“So [Zacchaeus] ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see [Jesus]”

Now this certainly places him where he needed to be for Jesus to stop and invite Himself over for dinner.

BUT it also should remind us a little about “childlike faith”...

- Here is a rich powerful man scurrying ahead and scampering up a big tree like an excited child who does not want to miss seeing the star of the parade!

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."

- Jesus knew where Zacchaeus was, Jesus knew his name, and Jesus KNEW his heart!

Luke gives us many examples of His gracious salvation in men like Zacchaeus in his orderly account here and again in the Book of Acts, but as we consider them, we must always remember the big picture:

We know from a systematic study of the Scriptures that there is a general order of salvation that has been revealed to us by God in His Word... The fancy name is the 'ordo salutis' giving us the order of our salvation:

- We are chosen and called from eternity past: What we call our election.
- We are regenerated or born again... given a new heart of flesh to replace our heart of stone.
- We are justified when we trust in the finished work of Christ by faith.
- We are sanctified as the Spirit leads us into greater and greater obedience.
- And in the end we are resurrected, fully glorified and adopted at the Second coming of Jesus.
- This is how God has revealed His plan to save His people and there is NO other path to God!
- This is the Gospel that Paul says we are to proclaim and if anyone proclaims any other they are to be accursed.

Where we have to be careful is in thinking that we, from our human perspective, can see clearly how God works this out in each individual that is saved or brought to faith in Jesus:

- Obviously, the thief on the cross did not have much time to be sanctified!
- We know that a child born to believers who dies in infancy goes to heaven, as David said about his son!

- But when was that boy justified?
- Again, no time to be sanctified.

Tough for us to explain, but we know that when we stand next to that infant child of David or the thief on the cross; we will ALL stand in the full righteousness of Jesus, having been called, regenerated, justified, sanctified, resurrected and glorified by the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit!

Coming back to our text we read in verse 6 "So Zacchaeus made haste & came down, and received [Jesus] joyfully."

With what I just shared about the order of salvation in mind, this invites some interesting questions...

- Did Zacchaeus get 'saved' in the tree?
- Was Zacchaeus saved when he first had the desire to see Jesus?
- Will Zacchaeus be converted as Jesus shares the Gospel over dinner?
- Will Zacchaeus be saved by the good works he promises to do?

Well, we know the answer to the last point is a resounding NO...
but what about the others?

While we may not be able to explain all the details we do know that God is working in the heart of Zacchaeus and the repentance and willingness to change his ways are sure evidence of what has happened!

- We should join Zacchaeus in being joyful rather than just pondering how it happened!

Next, we see the crowd's reaction: These crowds had praised God when the blind man was healed...

But when Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house, we see that they are a fickle bunch...

- 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."
- We must be so careful that we are never the ones who become jealous of how God graciously deals with someone else as He advances His Kingdom!

Although we are not given details:

- I think we can safely assume that Zacchaeus properly welcomed Jesus into his home, unlike the Pharisee that did not wash his feet, anoint Him with oil or give Him a kiss.
- We can safely assume that Zacchaeus would have instructed the servants of his household to prepare a sumptuous feast for Jesus and the Disciples...
A real celebration!
- AND we can safely assume that Jesus participated in some dinner discussion and taught as He always did... Perhaps explaining again how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom!

However God worked out the regeneration and justification of this man who had been called from eternity past, and whatever the discussion was about over dinner...

- We now clearly see the fruit of salvation & the beginning of a sanctified life of a new believer!

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."

- We immediately see fruit in this man's life as he promised to make restitution and to be merciful.
- Note that Zacchaeus, like the tax collectors and even the soldiers who came to John the Baptist, was NOT told that he would have to leave his profession.

We also know that Zacchaeus did not give away half his money to impress Jesus, trying to earn salvation or even to earn the Lord's favor!

- He is now a generous man because Jesus has given him a new heart & the Spirit is sanctifying him.

He kept the other half so he realizes, and we should learn, that money is not a problem in and of itself as we have often seen: God loves to bless His people.

- **However Zacchaeus does KNOW that HOW he got some of his money was a big and sinful problem!**

He may have broken no laws, but he knew that he had taken advantage of his position to take more than he should have, perhaps dropping a few threats like, ‘if you don’t give me an extra hundred dollars you may have a visit from the Roman Centurion.’

We find God giving us an important financial principle in Numbers 6:6 where the Lord says, ““Speak to the children of Israel:

‘When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 7 then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give it to the one he has wronged.’”

[Our financial markets could use this!]

- **So if Zacchaeus unjustly got a \$100 from Joe, he should restore the \$100 to him plus \$20.**
- **But this is NOT what Zacchaeus says he will do:
He says he will restore fourfold!**

Zacchaeus is using the full restitution required for outright theft in Exodus 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.”

Some might accuse us of being legalistic here at Church of the king because we covenant together to be faithful in the paying of our tithes on the increase that God gives us...

- **We are not under law but under grace they cry!**

I usually respond with something like this: I certainly say AMEN to now being under grace rather than the law: So ‘under grace’ how much more are you giving than was required by tithe in the Old Testament?

- **The example of Zacchaeus being generous and doing a four-fold return would be one for them to consider!**

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."

Jesus confirms that Zacchaeus has received the saving gift of faith by referring to him as a true son of Abraham, not via the flesh which even the wicked religious leaders could claim, but rather by faith.

Paul says in Romans 9, ‘the children of the promise are counted as the seed:’ As true children of Abraham, like Zacchaeus & Rahab!

- **God’s grace being poured out in the life of Rahab as Joshua comes to conquer the Promised Land is a glorious account that foreshadows the coming of Jesus as the greater Joshua Who now saves Zacchaeus and all of us!**

So what does this mean for us today?

- **Whether we were born children of the covenant or have been converted from a life of sin, we stand before God under the same gracious salvation.**

- **Whether we have walked faithfully all the days of our lives or have fallen away into grievous sins, Jesus has come to seek and to save those who are lost, and we stand under the same gracious salvation that came to the house of Zacchaeus.**

When we come to understand this, then we will have the same reaction as Zacchaeus – who remained a chief tax collector: BUT with new priorities!

- **We are here to serve Jesus!**
- **We must be generous & merciful with what God has given us.**
- **We will strive to have right relationships with those God brings into our lives.**
- **Where we have wronged people we will do more than is required to make things right!**

These are simple but profound steps which should be taken by all of God's people...

- **Our individual actions in obedience to Jesus may seem like a drop in the ocean when we consider all the problems we have in this world.**
- **But if ALL of God's people are faithful, these same simple actions become a tsunami of grace that can pour over any troubled land!**

Communion Meditation:

Joshua 5:10 “10 Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.”