

Sent #3 - When Jesus Passed By Luke 19:1-10

This coming week Myra and I will be traveling to Beaumont, Texas and, Lord willing, we will have the privilege of attending our 50th High School Class reunion. I know... you wonder how in the world such young kids could be celebrating 50 years! But anyway...

One of the popular songs of our High School days was “***We May Never Pass This Way Again***” by Seals and Croft. Great music. Even greater message.

- For our High School Group, that has been very true.
- In ***each*** of our lives, ***looking back*** we can ***see with the clarity of time how moments have come... and passed... never to come again.*** I’ve heard them called “***defining moments***”. You rarely know when you’re in one, but what happens has far reaching effects.

Scripture tells us the same: “***Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.***” (Pro 27:1 ESV)

We find numerous examples of the God of Eternity stepping ***into a moment of time, making contact... never to do so again.*** ***Our text today is one of those encounters.*** Let’s see what happened, and what He would have us learn...

I. The Setting... Matters. Is an important part of the intended message.

As Jesus approached Jericho, some remarkable things had already happened.

- In Luke 18:24-27 ***a rich, young ruler*** – respected, religious- a really “good” person by all accounts – ***came to Jesus seeking eternal life.***

Jesus lovingly revealed what the young man was trusting and had to let go of. It is common: ***Riches, Reasoning, Religion, Self-righteousness...***

The young man turned and walked away, ***holding on to his riches instead of Jesus.***

After the rich young ruler walked away, Jesus spoke of ***how difficult it is for those with riches to enter God's kingdom.***

- The people asked: “***Who then can be saved?***”
- And Jesus answered: “***The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.***”

Jesus continued His mission impossible...

- He explained what was soon to take place in Jerusalem. They didn't... couldn't comprehend.
- A blind man received sight.
- Then, our text. **Another** rich man meets Jesus. **This time**, there is rejoicing on earth and in heaven as God continues to do the impossible.

Note: **Zacchaeus didn't know this was his last opportunity to encounter Jesus.** Jesus would never pass this way again.

II. The Sinner. "Zacchaeus."

Many of us have grown up singing

*Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he.
He climbed up in the sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see
And as the Savior passed that way, He looked up in the tree
And He said, "Zacchaeus – you come down
For I'm going to your house today"*

Let's add a little context from Scripture.

- Vs. 2 - **His name** meant "pure", but as we can see in our text, the character didn't match the name.
- **His Identity:** vs. 2
 - **Chief among the publicans.**

A publican was someone authorized by Rome to extract taxes and was free to add whatever they wanted to enrich themselves. They stole - legally!

The crowd knew his reputation – "**a man that is a sinner!**"

Zacchaeus confirmed the assumption after his reception of Jesus –
"**...if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation**"

Cf Luke 5:27-35 – A tax collector named Levi (Matthew) and the stir it caused! Called "**scum**"!

- **He was rich.** Contrary to the popular mindset of that day (and even ours), “rich” does not translate to “righteous”.
***Nor does “rich” alone mean “wrong”.
- **He was short.** No way to fix that!

Finally, as we read the account, we instantly are drawn to an odd but suggestive clue -

Vs. 4- **He was up a tree!**

In that culture – **it was unthinkable** for a man of his status and reputation to be caught sitting in a tree.

I think it reveals a lot - With everything – power, position, backing of Rome, riches – **He still was still seeking....**

Maybe this Jesus he had heard of would provide his answers...

III. The Savior. Jesus...

A. Came to where Zacchaeus was.

From Glory to a manger...

From Bethlehem... now on His way to the cross...

Jesus came to right where Zacchaeus sat.

Later Paul would write to the Romans –

*“**The word is near you**, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-9 ESV)*

As He was there that day, He is here with us today.

B. Called him by name. “Zacchaeus!”

Jesus knew everything. Knew where he was sitting.

Zacchaeus thought he was hidden, out of sight... Nope!

Jesus looked up, saw him, and called him by name.

- He knows **our** name.
- He knows **our** needs.

C. Commanded him simply and clearly.

The instructions were simple.

Zacchaeus wasn't given a long list for personal improvements or conditions.

"Zacchaeus – make haste... come down... I MUST ABIDE AT THY HOUSE."

"Must" implies necessity. **This wasn't a casual encounter; this was a mission!**

He comes to us in exactly the same way- Right where we are, as we are, and speaks.

- Jesus knows what we need. Sees what can be. Has every answer.
- He tells **us** to make haste- *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* (2 Cor. 6:2)
- The instructions are simple and clear: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!"**
- **The question:** *Will we listen to His voice and do as He says, today?*

IV. Salvation!

A. The Response: vs. 6

"he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully"

- John wrote: *"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God... even to them that believe on His name."* Jn. 1:12
- Paul wrote: *"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!"*. (Romans 10:13)

All that is necessary is awareness of a need and acceptance of Jesus as Savior!! ***That is exactly what Zacchaeus did!***

B. The Results:

1. The Crowd – vs. 7 – (It was public! Sometimes we are more worried about what people might think than Jesus. Zacchaeus had his eyes on Jesus!

- The **Criticism** – “***they murmured***”
- The unintended **compliment** – “***gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner***”

They thought they were exposing something shameful about Jesus. Instead, they were revealing something glorious about Him.

2. The Convert – Zacchaeus!

- **We witness his choice** - Vs. 6 – That is salvation! There was joy on earth and in heaven! (Luke 15)
- **We get to see the transformation that followed:** Vs. 8 – **He became a giver like Jesus!** His NATURE was changed!
- **Finally - Jesus declared Zacchaeus's salvation!** Vs. 9

Later, Paul would write extensively about Abraham and faith. Romans 4 particularly. When Jesus called Zacchaeus a “son of Abraham” he was acknowledging Zacchaeus trusting him by faith!

3. The Closing Declaration Vs. 10 – **The Mission Restated!** ***“That which was lost”***

Zacchaeus was the latest in a long line of miracles!

Jesus had already shocked them with heaven's view of humanity: In Luke 15, He shared **God's love for the lost...**

- A lost coin – that didn't know it's value, had no consciousness of its condition
- A lost lamb – that wandered away and had no idea how to protect itself, provide for itself... get back home
- A lost boy – A prodigal who knowing made horrible choices and ended up in a pigpen of his own making

- A lost elder brother who thought he was good, deserving; at home with the father but didn't really know him.

Jesus didn't come for those who consider themselves righteous; He came for those who knew they weren't! Those "lost".

Jesus - ***"I am come to seek and to save that which was lost!"***

Zacchaeus thought he was looking for Jesus, but really, Jesus was looking for him!

Over 50 years ago, we listened as the music played – ***"We may never pass this way again..."*** I think maybe it is only when we are able to look back that we completely realize how true those words are.

When Jesus passed by...

Zacchaeus didn't know that Jesus would never pass through Jericho again.

- But Jesus knew.
- When He came to that tree, He stopped.
- He looked up.
- He called a sinner by name.
- And not only was a little rich sinner saved, but salvation and joy came to His house!

Why?

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"
"the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

And He is still doing that today.

The question isn't whether Jesus knows... Not even about what He can do...
The question isn't whether He is speaking... He is.
The question is what *you* will do when He calls.