

Hunger and Thirst Day 4 Denise

Hello, thank you for being with us today, as we hunger and thirst for more in 2024. I want to share with you a story of a man in the Bible whose hunger and thirst not only compelled him to meet Jesus, but in his encounter, it brought about great transformation in his life. Let's look at **Luke 19:5-9**

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.

This story communicates many truths, but for today, we will look at the response of Zacchaeus, when he encountered Jesus. Zacchaeus had a reputation, and it was not good. He was the tax collector, and it seems he collected not only what the government required, but extra for himself.

Zacchaeus was a Hebrew man and not a foreigner, but he obviously steered far from his religion in pursuit of something that he thought would satisfy. But, in all of his reputation and riches, Zacchaeus knew something was missing in his life.

Then one day, he heard that Jesus was coming to town. He had heard of the impact of this man who spoke with sinners and healed the sick. He heard of the compassion of a man who touched the untouched and yet did not compromise His integrity with God. Something in him knew there was more to life than what he was experiencing, but could it be for him?

Zacchaeus' curiosity and hunger compelled him to get a glimpse of this man for himself. And because of his stature, he could not see over the crowd, so Zacchaeus climbed up the tree, just so he could see Jesus. And much to his surprise, Jesus took note of Zacchaeus!

Jesus sensing his inner hunger and thirst looked up and called out to him. He urged him to quickly come down as He announced that He was going to Zacchaeus' house that day!

The impact of this encounter upon Zacchaeus was great. His momentary encounter with truth and love brought about a transforming change. This change could be seen in his response to forsake his old unrighteous ways to embrace the ways of the righteous Christ. He was willing to make amends and restore to those he had cheated and submit his wealth to the Lord, by living generously and not selfishly. In response to Zacchaeus' decision, Jesus declared that salvation has truly come to his house!

Those who hunger and thirst after God, will not only encounter Jesus, but they will discover who they really are. In the original Hebrew language, the name Zacchaeus means PURE, INNOCENT. In life Zacchaeus strayed far from his true destiny, but when Zacchaeus met Jesus and encountered His unconditional love, its power and grace enabled Zacchaeus to forsake his worldly ways and live up to his true self...to be a man of a pure and innocent heart. .

As we purposefully journey together in our hunger and thirst for more of God and His righteousness, expect to receive a visitation that will not only bring about a relational encounter with Jesus but a restoration of the true you! The gift of righteousness is a transforming gift. As you receive His gift, surrender your worldly ways and step into the righteous destiny that was secured for you through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

Heavenly Father, help us to be like Zacchaeus who when he encountered Jesus, not only received Jesus' love and acceptance, but received His restorative power to change his very nature. As we journey with you in this season, uproot our unrighteous character and restore us to our God-given destiny to be a people who walk innocent and blameless in Your sight as we reveal your love wherever we go, in Jesus name, Amen