

Luke 19

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THE WINNING OF ZACCHAEUS

(19:1.) Jesus entered Jericho and made His way through the town. (2) There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich.

- **Jesus'** main objective was His trip to Jerusalem, but this story showed His plans could be delayed. Jesus had just healed an outcast from blindness, now Luke tells of a social outcast, a **chief tax collector**. Jesus connects with the castoffs of society!
- **Zacchaeus** was Jewish (vs. 9), short (vs. 2), wealthy (vs.2), and an executive in the tax collection system for the Roman Government. Remember, Luke is writing to another executive in that government.

William Barclay describes the town:

Jericho was a very wealthy and a very important town. It lay in the Jordan valley and commanded both the approach to Jerusalem and the crossings of the river which gave access to the lands east of the Jordan. It had a great palm forest and world-famous balsam groves which perfumed the air for miles around. Its gardens of roses were known far and wide. Men called it "The City of Palms." *Josephus* called it "a

divine region," "the fattest in Palestine." The Romans carried its dates and balsam to world-wide trade and fame.

- Now Luke unfolds the case of a **rich** man who was saved, in comparison with a previous case where the man went away sorrowful. Luke 18:23.

(3.) He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. (4) So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

- Zacchaeus must have heard that the celebrated Teacher was friendly to tax collectors.
- Short Zacchaeus was like a short person at a parade. He could not see **over the crowd**. He **climbed** a **tree** ahead of the traveling party. We can see Zacchaeus as a determined man. He climbed the tree like a little boy, and without knowing he fulfilled **Jesus'** word that unless we become like children we will not see the kingdom of God.
- The **tree**, rather than being like our Western **sycamore tree** was a fig-mulberry tree. Its fruit was like a fig, but its leaves were like a mulberry tree.



(5.) 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." (6) Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy.

- **Jesus** knew his name and where he was in the tree. He also knew the man's heart. Jesus treated **Zacchaeus** respectfully in comparison to the townspeople who had much bad to say about all tax collectors. **Jesus** told him to hurry and he did hurry to a joyful meeting with **Jesus**. But others didn't like this new friendship as we see next.

- **Jesus** invited himself to the **home** of the taxman. It is not clear in the original language if this was a stop for rest or Jesus stayed overnight.

(7.) But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

- The *Pharisees* would not have liked the contamination, *Zealots* would be disappointed because they wanted Jesus to get to Jerusalem and become king. *Local people* despised the taxation system and here the focus was on the head tax collector. Now the Prophet from Nazareth was receiving hospitality from this hated man.

(8.) 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!"

- **Zacchaeus** was very open to the **Lord**. In fact, he calls him **Lord**, something that few were willing to do.
- He made two public commitments about his past:
 - He was willing to cut his wealth in **half** and give it to the **poor** without being told to.
 - From his remaining half, he would correct any fraud by restoring fourfold. King David was going to force the man in Nathan's story to restore the lamb fourfold. 2 Samuel 12:6. There was little if any fraud in **Zacchaeus'** memory of the past.

(9.) Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.

(10) For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

- Tax collectors were regarded as having forfeited their birthright as sons of **Abraham**, but Jesus assured Zacchaeus that he was **a true son of Abraham**, the great national hero of faith. This tax man was demonstrating faith by the decisions that he was making.
- Was this tax man saved? The answer comes straight from **Jesus: Salvation has come to this home today.** **Jesus** had targeted those who were **lost** (and knew it). Zacchaeus fit the pattern precisely.

THE STORY OF TEN POUNDS OF SILVER

(11.) The crowd was listening to everything Jesus said. And because He was nearing Jerusalem, He told them a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away.

- The events at the tax man's house must have been discussed as the pilgrims walked up to **Jerusalem**. This created the basis for the next parable that Jesus told.
- The crowd must have included Zealots because it addresses when **the Kingdom of God would begin.** Zealots hoped Jesus would take over as king when He reached **Jerusalem**.

(12.) He said, "A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. (13) Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver, saying, 'Invest this for me while I am gone.'

- **William Barclay** sets the background:

“This is unique among the parables of Jesus, because it is the only one whose story is in part based on an actual historical event. It tells about a king who went away to receive a kingdom and whose subjects did their best to stop him receiving it.

When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. he left his kingdom divided between Herod Antipas, Herod Philip and Archelaus.

That division had to be ratified by the Romans, who were the overlords of Palestine, before it became effective. Archelaus, to whom Judaea had been left, went to Rome to persuade Augustus to allow him to enter into his inheritance, whereupon the Jews sent an embassy of fifty men to Rome to inform Augustus that they did not wish to have him as king.

In point of fact, Augustus confirmed him in his inheritance, though without the actual title of king. Anyone in Judaea, on hearing the parable, would immediately remember the historical circumstances on which it was based."

- The **nobleman** represents Christ and the **ten servants** answer to His disciples. While the **nobleman** was away, he gave each man **ten pounds of silver** to invest until he returned.

(14.) But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We do not want him to be our king.' (15.) "After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were.

- The citizens who **hated** the king represent the Jewish people who refused to accept Jesus.
- In the story, the nobleman returned as king and ordered an accounting for **the money** he had left for his **servants** to invest.

(16.) The first servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!' (17) "'Well done!' the king exclaimed. 'You are a good servant. You have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.'

- The first had a 900% profit and his reward was that he was to be governor **be governor of ten cities**.
- The **servant** had been **faithful** with an investment, showing that he could handle responsibility properly.

(18.) "The next servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made five times the original amount.' (19) "'Well done!' the king said. 'You will be governor over five cities.'

- This man could handle responsibility, too. He was not as productive, but he was rewarded according to his ability with his investment.

(20.) "But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, 'Master, I hid your money and kept it safe. (21) I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and harvesting crops you didn't plant.'

- We are not told about the other seven men, but fear caused this man to be ultra-conservative. He had been told to "do business" with the money (vs. 12).
- His fears:
 - The new king was a **hard man to deal with**.
 - The **master** made gains beyond normal sowing and reaping.

(22.) "'You wicked servant!' the king roared. 'Your own words condemn you. If you knew that I'm a hard man who takes what isn't mine and harvests crops I didn't plant, (23) why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.'

- **Money** has time value, something that fearful people often overlook.
- Professor **Owen Crouch** writes these disturbing words:
Though the "other" servant was strictly honest he was judged "wicked" because he failed to make good decisions in managing money.

He failed the test of reliability. Hence his harsh punishment! Failure to use opportunity led him to self destruction! He was condemned by his own words. "Evil servant, out of your own mouth I will judge you. You were knowing that I was an austere man, taking that which I didn't plant and harvesting that which I didn't sow? Then why didn't you give my money to the table bankers? And I, when I came, would have collected it with interest?"

The man, though honest, was "wicked" because he did not use the opportunity with which he was entrusted. Virtue is a positive quality, not negative. Virtue is not avoiding the bad; it's submission to positive qualities of character! To be wicked is to do nothing when doing something is possible. Virtue is not preserving security behind barred doors. It's to enter an open door when it's open.

(24.) "Then, turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.'

- The first man in the story achieved an excellent rate of return, so the silver was taken from the fearful man and was given to the most successful investor.

(25.) "'But, master,' they said, 'he already has ten pounds!' (26) "'Yes,' the king replied, 'and to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. (27) And as for these enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king—bring them in and execute them right here in front of me.'"

- The wise use of the silver brought about its increase; the refusal to use even a very small amount meant the loss of this possession, ability, or opportunity. The lesson is a powerful one for Jesus' hearers both then and now. Some would consider this

unfair, but in this story, fairness is not judged by equal outcomes for the investors, but by the outcome for the king and his silver.

- The parable closes with a dreadful warning to those leaders who were plotting His death and hints of the destruction of the nation in A.D. 70.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY TO JERUSALEM

(28.) After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of His disciples. (29) As He came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, He sent two disciples ahead. (30) "Go into that village over there," He told them. "As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

- Jesus was not tagging at the rear of the pilgrims climbing up to Jerusalem. Rather He **was walking ahead**. He was a man with a mission.
- Luke omits many events from his story, but picks up with the securing of the **young donkey**. Matthew, as an eyewitness, mentions two colts while Luke as a researcher depending on others discusses just one colt.
- An important point is that it had never been **ridden**.

(31.) If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying that colt?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" (32) So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. (33) And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?" (34) And the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it."

- The two disciples were given a key statement in case they were challenged for taking the animal. **"The Lord needs it."** Those were the expected words and they satisfied the owner.

(35.) So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for Him to ride on. (36) As He rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of Him.

- The disciples put their **garments** first on the **colt** and then on the **road**.

(37.) When He reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of His followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. (38) "Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!"

- All of His followers began to shout and sing for the miracles they had seen. They also **shouted** from Psalm 118:26.

(39.) But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke Your followers for saying things like that!" (40) He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"

- The **Pharisees** could not control Jesus now just as they had always failed to control Him in the past. He rejected their command and said that if the crowds were not allowed to praise Him, the very **stones would burst into cheers**.
- What a rebuke is this: the very inanimate **stones** have more intelligence, devotion to God, faith, love, and gratitude than the **Pharisees**!

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

(41.) But as He came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, He began to weep. (42) "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.

- Only Luke records Jesus **weeping** over **the city**.

- Jesus alludes to the meaning of the name **Jerusalem, city of peace**. But they didn't understand **peace**. It was **hidden from their eyes**.

(43.) Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. (44) They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not accept your opportunity for salvation."

- Jesus predicts the **ramparts** that would lock them into Jerusalem while the Romans leveled the city in a slaughter that still ranks as number one in city destructions.
- The reason is they did not recognize that God was among them asking them to repent and believe. This was their **opportunity for salvation**.

THE SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

(45.) Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people selling animals for sacrifices. (46) He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be a house of prayer,' [Isaiah 56:7] but you have turned it into a den of thieves." [Jeremiah 7:11]

- **Jesus** opened His earthly ministry by cleansing the **temple** (John 2:13 and following) and now, at the close of His life's work, He cleansed it again. He did not have a high regard for the selling of animals for the **sacrifice**, calling the sellers **thieves**.
- **Jesus** drew attention to the leader's business running where there should be a worship area for Gentiles. This was a direct attack on the pocketbooks of those in charge and they wanted Jesus destroyed.
- **Paul Butler** gives the background for the temple at this time in the story:

The Court of the Gentiles was called the “Bazaar of Annas” because the family of the High Priest made their fortune from the “markets” there. The Court of the Gentiles was always crowded like a modern “Farmer’s market” with people gossiping, buying, shopping, strolling around and selling. It was “big business.” Over \$1,000,000 a year was cleared by the family of the High Priest. The family of the High Priest had a “corner” on the market of “kosher” animals and “kosher” money for sale to Passover pilgrims, Jewish worshipers came from all over the Roman empire. Many of them could not bring a Passover lamb or Jewish shekels for their offerings. Nothing else was acceptable. Furthermore, all the priests had to do was pronounce any lamb that had been brought, unsuitable, and another one had to be obtained before the worshiper could observe the Passover. Often prices at the great feasts went up as much as fifteen times over the usual price of a lamb or a shekel. People were being exploited and defrauded in the name of religion.

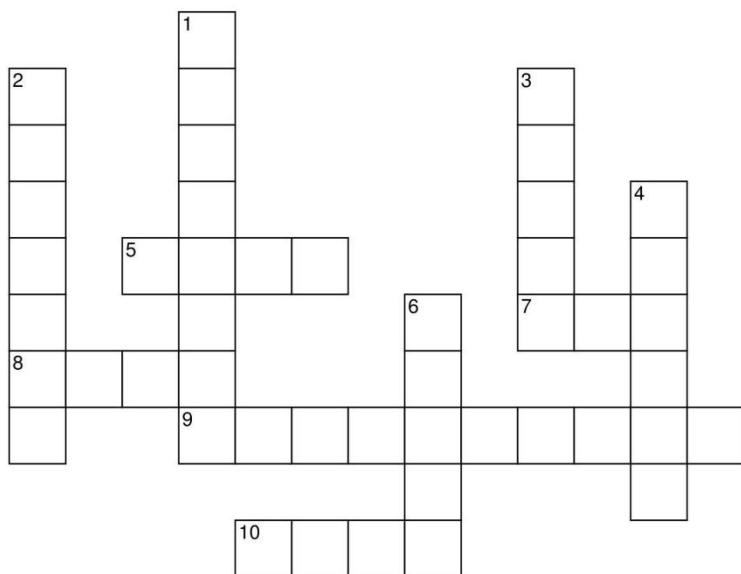
Jesus was angry about this. He entered the Temple courts and began to drive out those who sold. There is a righteous magnificence to His roughness. As long as there was corruption in the Temple and its priesthood, there would be corruption in the whole nation.

(47.) After that, He taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people began planning how to kill Him. (48) But they could think of nothing, because all the people hung on every word He said.

- While Jesus was able to **teach** the **people** each day in the **Temple**, the leaders wanted to **kill Him**, but **the people hung on every word He said**. Killing Jesus just now would be very dangerous for the leaders.

Luke 19

New Living Translation



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ACROSS

- 5 When Jesus saw Jerusalem He began to ____.
- 7 In the story of Jesus, each servant was given __ pounds of silver to invest.
- 8 Jesus had come to seek and save the ____.
- 9 Animals were being sold for ____.
- 10 Zacchaeus offered ____ of his wealth to the poor.

DOWN

- 1 The crowd spread their ____ on the road.
- 2 Jesus invited ____ to the home of Zacchaeus.
- 3 Zacchaeus' problem was that he was ____.
- 4 Jesus told the two disciples to untie it.
- 6 Zacchaeus was a ____ tax collector.