

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (December 11, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

“Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.” Last Sunday our focus was on two sons and the warmth and love of their father. This morning we are introduced to two others. The first is outside the city, blind, poor, overlooked, begging. The second is inside the city, short of stature, rich, despised, seeking. And then He appeared ... and their souls felt their worth. The “He” who appeared was Jesus.

It was clear as Jesus approached Jericho that He was a popular man. The large crowd following had high hopes and great expectations. They envisioned victory, a revolution against their Roman oppressors, a reprieve from their suffering. The reality would be quite different and the victory more profound. No one but Jesus understood that each step He took towards Jerusalem was a step closer to rejection, suffering, humiliation, and death. As the crowd celebrated around Him, He carried a heavy heart. And yet, all the way to the cross He taught, He demonstrated God’s heart, He saw, He called, He healed, He invited. His journey began in Bethlehem.

This advent Sunday we celebrate the Joy of Christmas. Our passage this morning is not a typical “Christmas” season “joy” passage. And yet, every passage in the Bible is, at its depth, a Christmas and Easter “joy” passage. Each verse and story depend on Christmas, and each verse and story points to the cross and empty tomb.

What did the blind beggar and a rich tax collector in our story have in common? They were told in a dozen ways that they were worth-less. And then He appeared. When He called them, for the first time, their soul felt its true worth. Where did, or will, Jesus appear to you and me? On the road, in a tree, at a desk, in a pew, sitting alone at home, by the bedside of a loved one? And when He appeared ... Joy!

Ruining Our Reputation: The Story of Two Men (Luke 18:35-19:11)

^{18:35} As He (Jesus) drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶ And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. ³⁷ They told him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.’ ³⁸ And he cried out, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ³⁹ And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ⁴⁰ And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹ ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ He said, ‘Lord, let me recover my sight.’ ⁴² And Jesus said to him, ‘Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.’ ⁴³ And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Chapter 19:1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was about to pass that way. ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.’ ⁶ So he hurried and came down and received Him joyfully. ⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, ‘He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.’ ⁸ And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.’ ⁹ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’”

What DOES IT SAY?

1. What does this passage tell us about the crowd?
2. What does this passage tell us about Jesus’ priorities as He made His way to Jerusalem?
3. What do we know about the blind man from this passage?
4. What do we know about Zacchaeus from this passage?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

5. Why do you think the blind man would not keep silent once he heard it was Jesus passing by?
6. Why do you think Zacchaeus was so eager to see Jesus?
7. What does it mean that Jesus stopped for the blind man, and that Jesus went in and ate with Zacchaeus?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

8. Have you sensed Jesus (God) calling you? If yes, how did you respond? If no, how might God get your attention?
9. What do the majority of voices around us tell us about how much we are worth? About how we can increase our worth?
10. How much are you worth, others worth? Why do you believe that about yourself, about others?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, easy, and empowering, part of your day. Prayer is talking to God, and God talking to you. Ask God to help you understand your true worth. Ask God to help you be a person of peace. Ask God for a better sense of the value and worth of all you meet. God will help you because He loves you.