

SILVERDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

MEALS WITH JESUS • #4 - WITH SEEKERS •

LUKE 19:1-10 SATURDAY 2/3, SUNDAY 2/4/18 •

MAIN POINT

Personal encounters with Jesus change people.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the biggest life change you've experienced recently? What do you remember most about that experience?

For those of us who are Christians, our conversion (when we entered into a personal relationship with Jesus through belief in Him as Savior and Lord) is the biggest change that has taken place in our lives. What are some of the ways you were changed when you met Christ?

Today's discussion centers on the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19. What types of things do you think Zacchaeus wanted to change about himself? What is one thing you wish you could change about yourself?

Personal encounters with Jesus change us, and they change the way we live. For Zacchaeus, one key aspect of that change had to do with Jesus' power to overcome his weaknesses. The story of Zacchaeus reveals Jesus' greatness over circumstances, and it gives evidence to the change that happens when a person embraces Christ as greater than anything else.

DISCUSSION

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about our topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 19:1-7.

Why would Zacchaeus have climbed the tree? What did he demonstrate in doing so?

Can you imagine yourself in this scene? Would you have been up in the tree with Zacchaeus? How would you have responded when Jesus came by?

Zacchaeus likely knew how Jesus stepped across social and religious barriers to share God's love with all people, even those who were hated by others. Zacchaeus likely knew of Jesus' ability to overcome social limitations. He wanted to see this one who befriended tax collectors and sinners. He could not see because he was short, so up he climbed into the tree, showing his desire to overcome his physical limitations.

What emotions do you think you would be experiencing when Jesus told you He must stay at your house?

Why do you think Jesus said that He must stay with Zacchaeus?

Jesus could have won a following from the prejudiced crowd by belittling Zacchaeus. Instead, Jesus exposed Himself to their anger by choosing to stay at Zacchaeus's house. Jesus explained His staying with Zacchaeus as one of the Father's "musts" for Him. Jesus befriended Zacchaeus first of all to show God's love for people others hated most. Also, He sought to open doors to reach other sinners, to make Himself known to those who desire to see Him, and to fulfill His mission of love.

What needed to change in Zacchaeus's life? Why was Jesus the only hope Zacchaeus had for bringing about that change?

How does Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus in these verses reassure you of His ability to bring about genuine change in a person's life?

Looking at this scene, how do we keep from becoming the muttering crowd in verse 7, looking down on Jesus' work in others' lives and even their spiritual limitations?

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 19:8-10.

What is the significance of Jesus' pausing and dealing with a single individual in the midst of a huge throng of people?

Is it possible to be "good" apart from Christ? Explain your thoughts.

Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus and then to the complaining crowd. Jesus gave Zacchaeus assurance of his salvation. That salvation included a covenant relationship with God in which God would never forsake him but would do all things necessary to make Zacchaeus like Christ. By sharing about Zacchaeus's faith and salvation in front of the crowd, Jesus shows us that salvation is both personal and for all people. His power to save is greater than the many limitations faced by Zacchaeus and even the crowd.

What surprises you about the decisions Zacchaeus made concerning his money?

Zacchaeus's response to Jesus in verse 8 was about more than just money. What greater truths did his actions reveal?

What do these decisions say about his view of Jesus? About the change that Jesus brought to his life?

True to His mission, Jesus sought and saved believing Zacchaeus. He received a new, changed heart. In the same way, God's love experienced in Christ changes our lives. People can change because Jesus can change them.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How did the Lord first get your attention? Was it in some dramatic event like Zacchaeus experienced, or was it more subtle?

When God unleashes His power of salvation in a person's life, what changes?

What threatens or discourages your faith in God's ability and desire to bring about change in your life? How can we encourage one another in this truth this week?

What would you say to people who believe God's grace can't provide forgiveness for their sins? Do you ever feel that way yourself?

PRAYER

Close your group time in prayer together. Ask for requests, and pray specifically for requests mentioned by the group. Allow group members to spend some time silently confessing behaviors or attitudes that may be keeping them from following Jesus fully. Take time to thank God for sending Jesus, who is greater than all these limitations. Pray that group members would trust in Jesus alone this week.

COMMENTARY

> LUKE 19:1-10

19:1-4. Reaching Jericho, Jesus continued his journey up the dangerous hills toward Jerusalem. Interruption came before he could leave the city. A short, clever tax collector was determined to see Jesus. As an administrator for the Roman government's tax office, Zacchaeus had amassed great wealth, overcharging the Jewish people and taking a cut from the taxes gathered by other tax collectors whose work he administered. His wealth could not provide the one thing he wanted more than anything else. Unable to see over or get through the massive crowd swarming around Jesus, Zacchaeus noted the direction Jesus was taking, ran ahead, found a tree, and climbed up into its branches.

19:5. The clever tax collector did get a view of Jesus, and Jesus spotted him up in the tree. Jesus even invited himself to dinner at Zacchaeus's house. Jesus said it was necessary for him to visit Zacchaeus—apparently a necessity initiated by God to show one more time Jesus' central mission on earth.

19:6-7. Overjoyed at this unexpected privilege, the short man scurried down the tree. This time he had no trouble getting through the crowd to Jesus. But as they let the tax collector through, the crowd must have complained. How can this be? They grumbled. We thought Jesus was Messiah, and he is going to eat with a sinful man, a man who represents the enemy government and takes our money to give to them. How can Jesus eat and fellowship with such a traitor? Jesus showed he was an "equal opportunity" diner with traitors. Earlier he had eaten at the home of Pharisees and showed how they were traitors to God's intentions for the Jews. Now he ate with a person whom the Jews considered a political and economic traitor.

19:8. After meeting Jesus, the tax collector/traitor was no longer the same man. He would enter the kingdom of God, but not as a wealthy man (see 18:25). He would take half of what he owned and give it to the poor. He would find the people he had overcharged on their tax bill and refund four times as much as he had cheated them. Thus, he took the Law of Moses seriously. Leviticus 5:16 and Numbers 5:7 demanded restitution plus twenty percent. Exodus 22:1 called for rustlers to repay four sheep for one (see 2 Sam. 12:6). The Dead Sea Scrolls and Roman law also contain incidents of fourfold restitution. Zacchaeus seems to have accepted the harshest penalty of the law and applied it to himself. Acceptance by Jesus made money insignificant (see 12:33). Repentance came in the form of action (see 3:12–13). He had a new lifestyle because he had a new Lord.

19:9. Jesus showed ultimate acceptance of the tax collector/traitor turned repentant sinner. Salvation had come to Zacchaeus and to his house. Jesus' mission had basically been a mission to the Jews, and this man was a Jew, participating in the covenant with Abraham, even if he acted the part of the traitor in Jewish eyes. For Jesus a repentant Jew from such a sordid background was better than a self-righteous Jew with no sense of the need for repentance (see 5:31–32).

19:10. The scene with Zacchaeus provides Luke's Gospel with its ultimate statement about Jesus. Jesus knew his purpose on earth. His purpose was not to reform the Jewish religion. His purpose was not to prove the Pharisees wrong. His purpose was not to bring in a military, political kingdom. His purpose was to bring salvation to lost people. Jesus dedicated the three years of his earthly ministry to finding people who knew they were lost and showing them God's way of salvation—the way of repentance and faith.