

## Luke 19

### The Last Journey to Jerusalem

We are on track to finish Luke's Gospel on Easter with the Resurrection and ascension, which means we will be going through, on average, a chapter a week for the next five weeks which seems like a pretty hectic pace, but actually it means each week we will cover about one day in the final life of Jesus.

Where are we now?

Chronologically: we're in the last week of Jesus' life; Passover is also at hand – Jews, including Jesus and the disciples are thronging to Jerusalem, perhaps as many as 2M people will be in the city.

Geographically: near the ancient city of Jericho which is about 15 miles – that's about a day's walk - NE of Jerusalem.

There's electricity in the air as He heads toward the capitol - some people think *this is it!* He's about to take over or do something dramatic. Since the beginning of His ministry He has polarized people – some are for Him, and others flat out oppose Him – we'll see that trend continue on this last journey to Jerusalem. So let's start here with vs. 1:

1He entered Jericho and was passing through.2And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.3And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature.4So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.5And 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."6So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.7And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."8And 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."9And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.10For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

1. So you've got this little man, a shorter fellow, whose is actually rather powerful and quite rich. **But** he's despised by most of the other Jews. And yet, Jesus receives Him – says He wants to come to Zaccheus' house – maybe for lunch, perhaps for dinner.
  - a. So there is a **huge contrast** between the way Jesus receives him and the way everybody else does – time and again, we have seen that Jesus is the friend of outcasts and sinners, at least of those who realize they need to change.
  - b. And change, Zaccheus does: after giving himself to Jesus, he also began to give to others and his whole perspective on wealth is altered.
    - i. We talked about the issue of priorities last week when the rich young ruler approached Jesus. If you remember, I said that giving is not about specific percentages per se, it's about priorities – Jesus told that man to give up everything and follow Him, but here Zaccheus says he's going to give half and Jesus applauds him.
    - ii. There is no requirement for all people to either give half or all, **but there is a requirement** to see all that we have really belongs to Him and not to cling so

tightly to our money or other possessions that we aren't willing to release them when He prompts us to.

- iii. So, the question remains: are you willing to give things up for Jesus? There are only two ways you will be able to say yes.
  1. You don't value what you are giving up. That's not a good option. God doesn't want your junk.
  2. You value Jesus more than what you are giving up. That's the good option.
    - a. But the only way to get to that point, is to more fully understand what He has done for you – it's never about what you can do for Him - giving should always begin out of a right understanding of how much He has given to you, and what He still promises to do for you.
    - b. IOW you value Jesus more than 'stuff' and if it will bless Him or serve Him, or obey Him, you will freely surrender anything in your life that might be of use to Him. That was the attitude Zaccheus had – so he freely gave, and promised to repay anyone he had done wrong.
    - c. Look at how Jesus responds – He says salvation has come to this home as a result - because Zaccheus has a right understanding of Jesus, and like Abraham, is willing to follow God by faith.

11As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

Remember, most people had the wrong idea about Jesus and the kingdom He was proclaiming – they were looking for an earthly, political, material messiah. But Jesus has consistently been trying to tell them – that's not what this is all about. In His first coming He had to deal with the issue of the sin in our lives. Remember, God is holy and we are not, so Jesus had to make a way for us to be in the presence of God – **then** He could come and rule.

So His first coming was a rescue mission, as he told Zaccheus in verses 9-10, He came “to seek and save that which was lost.” Once that way has been made, by His death on the cross and resurrection, He will eventually return and then additional blessings will be poured out on those who have been saved.

Once again, Jesus tries to explain a bit of that to the disciples with the following parable:

12He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.13Calling ten of his servants, [\[fn1\]](#) he gave them ten minas, [\[fn2\]](#) and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’14But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’15When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business.16The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’17And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! [\[fn3\]](#) Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’18And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made

five minas.’<sup>19</sup>And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’<sup>20</sup>Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief;<sup>21</sup>for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’<sup>22</sup>He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?’<sup>23</sup>Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’<sup>24</sup>And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’<sup>25</sup>And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’<sup>26</sup>‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.’<sup>27</sup>But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.’”

This is different than the parable of the talents in Matt 25 – there a master also departs but he gives to his servants different amounts of money, based on their abilities – He gives 5 to one, two to another, and one to yet another, then when He returns He rewards them for what they have done. There we see that some people have a lot of talent and ability – they have been given a large measure of it by the master, while others have less, but they too have received their talent and ability from the master.

Here however, everyone gets the same amount – one mina – about 3 month’s wages for a day-laborer. The point here is more about diligence; it’s a question of faithfulness, of effort, and of response. You have received something from the Master, how will you use it?

The incredible thing is that when the Master returns, He rewards them for what they have done with what **He gave them** in the first place! This is a picture of the bema seat judgment for Christians – not a judgment of whether or not you are saved or how you should be punished, but a judgment to determine position and reward.

One of the servants really prospered – he turned one mina into ten; another did a pretty good job too, he turned one into five – the master was pleased with both of them, but then we get to the last servant. He did nothing with his mina – just buried it. Now, he didn’t lose it, didn’t spend it on himself, he took at least a little care with it, but he never used it positively – never made it grow.

Is that true with you? Have you received salvation, gifting, and blessing from God and done **nothing** with them? Why? If you read just a few pages in your Bible you can tell that God gives great rewards to those who seek to glorify Him with their lives, their time, their talent, and their resources. If your heart is in the right place when you act, He will be blessed by it, and will even show you what to do. *The master was upset with the servant because He didn’t even try, not because he tried and failed.*

Compare that with the crew outside. Those citizens who said, “we don’t want you to rule over us” were slaughtered. Which seems harsh, but makes sense right? Doesn’t a landowner have the right to say “if you don’t like me, or want to live by my rules, get off my land?” Of course. Well, the entire Creation is God’s – He made it, He makes the rules, and those who don’t like it are escorted off of the premises into hell where there is none of the good that comes from God. It’s a stern, but necessary warning.

<sup>28</sup>And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup>When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,<sup>30</sup>saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here.”<sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’”<sup>32</sup>So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.<sup>33</sup>And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”<sup>34</sup>And they said, “The Lord has need of it.”<sup>35</sup>And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.<sup>36</sup>And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.<sup>37</sup>As he was drawing near—

already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen,<sup>38</sup>saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”<sup>39</sup>And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”<sup>40</sup>He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

For the first time, Jesus is allowing people to publicly praise and worship Him. For several years now He has been saying, this is not my time. Now it is. And here He comes, riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey, just like Zechariah prophesied He would a little over 400 years earlier:

Zechariah 9: 9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation is he,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

But when He comes, He meets opposition – the Pharisees tell him to have His disciples be quiet, but He says they can’t – if they did, rocks would cry out. God had foreordained this date from before time began – knowing that His creation would fall and that He would step in and save us. This day HAD to happen and nothing would stop it.

So His disciples are crying out, worshipping God, celebrating, *but most people don’t care*. Or, like some of the Pharisees, they are actively involved in trying to stop Him.

Now think about that: God promised to save man, to come and rescue us from the pit we have found ourselves in, and this is how He is welcomed – a small group celebrates, but most people just don’t care.

Unfortunately, it’s not much different here in DC than it was back then. Mady and I and the boys were over at Pentagon City mall the other day for lunch and I had one of those moments where I was just overwhelmed. I was sitting in the food court when I realized, there were more people there eating lunch than there are in our church.

Even if you take some of the larger churches in the area and add them all together, the numbers aren’t that large compared to the total population. Consider any one of the large apartment buildings around here and ask yourself – how many people live in there – and how many of them rejoice at the name of Jesus? There are over 3M people living in the District and NOVA – and how small is this church? Sometimes the thought of how many unsaved people there are around us just seems overwhelming.

But as sad as it is, as frustrating as it is, it’s not new – it’s been that way since the beginning:

<sup>41</sup>And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it,<sup>42</sup>saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.<sup>43</sup>For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side<sup>44</sup>and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

“Because” - they did not recognize Him or would not accept Him, now difficult days are ahead – about 40 years into the future the Romans will lay siege to the city for 143 days. The Roman army, commanded by Titus (who would later become emperor), will finally break the city and by the end of the conflict 600k to 1M Jews will be dead. Afterwards, they tore the city apart and left only a few towers standing as a

monument to what a great city Jerusalem once was, but that even it had not been able to withstand Rome.

[45](#)And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold,[46](#)saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of robbers.”

So Jesus completes His journey – He started up north in the region known as the Galilee, then traveled down through Samaria, enter Judea and finally arrives at Jerusalem. All along the way there has been opposition or rejection and the same is true when He reaches His final destination – the Temple – the place where the Jews were supposed to worship God. When He arrives no one there celebrates, no one breaks out in tears of joy or relief – they just go about their business of trying to make money from religious travelers.

So Jesus drives them out – He’s throwing chairs and tables and grabbing guys by the collar and kicking ‘em out – it’s like Roadhouse Bouncer Jesus, clearing the place. You have to remember that for as gentle and kind and righteous as He was, He was also a carpenter, He spent most of His time outdoors and He walked everywhere He went and this point He’s probably around 32-33 years old – He was probably in pretty good shape.

And He’s ticked that the main place people were supposed to be able to come and worship God had been turned into a flea market. It was hard to find anybody who really loved the Lord, but you could exchange money and buy anything you needed.

Well, all of this upset the rulers of the city – you can’t have Jesus messing up your lifestyle right? So they were looking for a way to get rid of Him:

[47](#)And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him,[48](#)but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

And soon, He would be hanging on the cross. Jesus was rarely accepted by the leaders of the Jewish religion and nation, but the everyday people were gathering around to hear what He said – many of them had heard of Him, some had probably seen Him already when He passed through their villages, and they were gathering around to hear more of what He had to say. They weren’t necessarily committed to Him; after all, in just a few days another crowd would gather in front of Pilate and shout for Jesus to be crucified. But for now at least, they were listening.

And so are you – and just like they did, you have to decide – how will you respond to this Jesus? You have to take note of something here – **Jesus came to the people we see this morning** – He came to each of them, and how they responded to Him made all the difference in the world. If they received Him like Zaccheus and put their lives to work for Him like the good servants, they were blessed – in fact, they received more than they started with. But those who rejected Him, or refused to use their lives for Him, eventually, maybe not immediately, but eventually, all that they thought they had was taken away.

Which side are you on? How are you responding to Jesus? It’s not a question that you can wait on. If someone knocks on your door you either decide to answer it or not. If you decide to wait – you just decided not to open it. Open or shut – which is it? Does Jesus have a place in your life or not?

And for you Christian, how will you use the mina He has given you? Are you living your life for His glory, trying to produce something for Him, or are you taking what He has given you and hiding it away? Important questions for everyone of us to answer – but remember, we are facing them because Jesus, in His mercy, has come to us.

Dr. Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince*, has laid forth a very interesting thesis in which he seeks to correlate this day with the day that the commandment went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, March 14, 445 B.C. If you are interested, he has done a lot of research, he has made some interesting computations and it is his thesis that this was exactly 483 years from the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem that Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem as King. As the prophet Daniel was told by Gabriel, that there are seventy sevens that are determined upon the nation of Israel. And from the time that the commandment goes forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah the Prince will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens or 483 years

The day is coming when your enemies are going to set a siege against the city of Jerusalem. Josephus describes this siege that took place under Titus, the Roman general. He describes the horror of the people within the city of Jerusalem who began to kill each other for food. The horrible starvation. According to Josephus in his book, *The Wars of the Jews*, more Jews were killed by their fellow Jews than by the Roman soldiers. Marauding bands began to go through the city raiding houses and killing people and taking the goods and the food. Anarchy broke out within the city. And the horrors of it are described by Josephus.

Jesus could see this. He could see the siege and the effects of the siege. He could see the starving people, the starving children, and as He could see this, He wept because this He knew was to be the price that they would have to pay for rejecting the Messiah.