



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE • THE PATH TO RESTORATION • LUKE 19:1-10 • 3/12/2023

MAIN POINT

The love of Jesus compels those who receive it to extend it to those around them.

INTRODUCTION

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

What is the largest crowd that you have ever been in?

Do big crowds bother you or not so much?

A few years ago, we took a family vacation to Disney World. We spent the entire day at Hollywood Studios and stayed until the closing hours at the park. When the time came for attractions and restaurants to close, we found a gathering spot close to the Sorcerer's Hat centrally located in the park for our family to meet.

In the midst of thousands of parkgoers exiting the park, there was one small child around 5 years of age standing in the middle of the crowd crying. We slowly approached the young boy, only to find out that he had been shuffled in the crowd and was completely lost. Not being able to see above the crowd, he didn't know where he had come from or how he had gotten to where he was standing.

A few in our family started locating Disney staff, a few more stood beside the young boy to comfort him, and a few others decided to fight back against the flow of the crowd to see if we would locate his parents. Pushing and shoving and stares were plentiful, only to finally locate a panicked mother, grandfather, and grandmother standing at the door of a restaurant. Out of thousands of people in a crowd, only one family stood out.

The boy was found even amongst the crowd.

The passage today speaks of another that was lost in the crowd but he wasn't looking for his parents, He was looking for Jesus and most importantly, Jesus found him.

UNDERSTANDING

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

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 19:1-6.

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."
(ESV)

Why do you think it was important for Luke to mention that Zacchaeus was a tax collector?

What other stories can you recall of Jesus' interactions with the outcasts and sinners in that society? What does this show you about who Jesus is and what He values?

Zacchaeus was head of the large office of tax collectors for Jericho. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus likely purchased from Rome the right to collect the taxes due for the area. By using subordinates, he imposed heavy—probably exorbitant—taxation on the people and caravans to reimburse himself and also to make a considerable profit. The people likely resented Zacchaeus for being a traitor to their country, a tax collector for a foreign power, and for exploiting them. The people judged tax collectors to be chief sinners.

What can we gather about Zacchaeus' desire to meet Jesus based on his persistence to see Him (v. 4)? How easily might it have been for Zacchaeus to give up from the start?

Why do you think Jesus wanted to meet in Zacchaeus' house? What does this indicate about His ability and desire to meet us where we are in our relationships with Him?

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.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 19:7-10.

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.'" (ESV)

Why do you think those around them “grumbled” based on Jesus’ actions (v. 7)?

What might this have indicated about their own pride and judgment?

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 befriended Zacchaeus 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 transformation must have occurred in Zacchaeus to spur his reaction in v. 8?

How might this have been a change from the way he would have responded to the poor before his relationship with Jesus?

What might have been the reaction of those who previously grumbled at this act of generosity? How might it have spoken to or even silenced their previous complaints?

Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus and then to the 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.

APPLICATION

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

What can we learn from Zacchaeus' example in terms of seeking the Lord?

How might gratitude for Jesus' forgiveness have spurred Zacchaeus' repentance and compassion for others? What does love require of us in terms of showing compassion to others?

What can we do to love people where they are, just as Jesus did for Zacchaeus?

PRAYER

Take time to thank God for sending Jesus, who is greater than all these barriers, and who meets us where we are to form a relationship with us and draw us to Himself. Pray that group members would trust in their relationships with Jesus alone this week, overflowing His love and grace in relationships with others.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 19:1-10

19:1-2. "Zacchaeus" is the Greek form of the Hebrew Zaccai (see Ezra 2:9; Neh. 7:14). Nothing else is known about this man. Although the name in Hebrew means "Righteous One," nothing is made of the meaning of the name. Jericho was a well-known toll place in Palestine, especially for goods passing east and west between Judea and Perea.

19:3. He wanted to see who Jesus was. We are not explicitly told why. It was not for the sake of curiosity (see 9:9; 23:8) or to see him perform a sign (see 11:16,29; 23:8). Luke revealed to his readers what Zacchaeus sought by describing what he received in 19:9. Zacchaeus sought the salvation Jesus spoke of in 19:9-10. Being a short man, the crowds proved to be a hindrance for Zacchaeus both here and in 19:7.

19:4. Such undignified behavior, according to that culture, indicates that more than curiosity was at play here. Herodian Jericho, unlike Old Testament Jericho, had numerous parks and avenues

in which trees grew. The phrase “since Jesus was coming that way” is literally because He was about to pass through [that way]. The same verb is used here as in 19:1.

19:5-6. How Jesus knew Zacchaeus’s name is not stated. Was it due to supernatural knowledge (see John 1:47-48)? Was it due to Zacchaeus’s being small in stature and well-known? Whatever the explanation of this in Jesus’ setting in life, for Luke, such a question was unimportant and probably irrelevant since he made nothing of this. The “must” (dei) in “I must stay” implies a divine necessity to do so. Just as Jesus’ forthcoming passion in Jerusalem was divinely ordained, so Jesus’ individual actions all fit into the divine plan, even his bringing salvation to Zacchaeus’s home. Because of Luke 19:10, Jesus had to stay at Zacchaeus’s home. Besides the literal meaning of “today,” there may be a suggestion here of God’s kingdom having come in Jesus’ ministry with its offer of salvation to the outcasts (see 4:21). “Today” prepares the reader for the “today” in 19:9.

19:7. The symbolic significance of Jesus’ staying in Zacchaeus’ home was clear to all. The people’s negative attitude stands in contrast to Luke’s usual portrayal of their being positive toward Jesus.

19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up. We are not told if this took place after Zacchaeus came down from the tree, in Zacchaeus’ home, or after dinner. For Luke, such a question was unimportant. The verbs “give” and “pay back” in this verse are in the present tense in Greek and may be translated “I am in the habit of giving” or “I shall now give.” “Half of my possessions” refers to half of his belongings (see 8:3; 12:33; Acts 4:32), not his earnings. In other less severe instances, the Old Testament requires only a 20 percent increase (Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:6-7). It is best understood as a futuristic present, which along with his giving half of his goods to the poor reveals in Zacchaeus’s actions what “I repent” says in words.

19:9-10. The statement was made to Zacchaeus, but it was directed to the people because of their reaction in Luke 19:7. The salvation brought by God’s kingdom was now “realized” by Zacchaeus. “Salvation has come” is not to be interpreted as meaning that the “Savior” had come to Zacchaeus’s house but that salvation had occurred. The lost Zacchaeus had been sought (see 19:5) and now saved (see 19:10). The promised salvation had come to Zacchaeus and his family (see Acts 16:31).

“Because this man, too, is a son of Abraham” was not due to his being racially a descendant of Abraham (see 3:8) but to his having brought forth fruit in keeping with repentance (3:8a) and having responded in faith and repentance to Abraham’s Seed (Acts 3:25-26; see Gal. 3:16). By this, Zacchaeus bore witness to God’s grace by which even a rich man can be saved (see Luke 18:27). For the sense of being Abraham’s seed due to physical descent, see 13:16.

