

JESUS CHRIST AND ZACCHAEUS

Luke 19:1-10

Intro: I am not preaching about Zacchaeus tonight because this is the week end your income tax for 1966 is due. But I hope you have it in!

THIS ACCOUNT IS  
GIVEN ONLY BY LUKE.

No, in speaking about Zacchaeus I am interested in one aspect of the Gospel which is so prominent in Luke's Gospel. In this Gospel we see Jesus Christ as "the Friend of outcasts" (Maclaren, Vol. 6, p. 152). We will be looking at some of these passages.

But, not only is He their Friend, Luke informs us that the outcast must be sought.

This is very clear from our Lord's own words in the 10th verse where the reason is given for our Lord's interest in and contact with Zacchaeus:

"FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST."

Although this term, the Son of man, is found in all four Gospels some 80 times, our Lord is the only One who uses it! No one else ever called Him "the Son of man."

It is expressive of human origin and human weakness. Thus, with Him it points to the fact of His incarnation.

But, it is also a Messianic title--and here in one sentence (brought out in the Greek by the verb, "is come," or came) the Lord gives expression to the entire purpose of His coming into the world.

He came looking for and intending to find those who were "lost," those whose condition had reached a climax and who were presently under the judgment of God awaiting only the execution of the sentence.

Cf. John 3:18, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The word, lost, actually is a participle of the Greek word, destroy. And the idea of the participle is to use it to speak of "the mass of lost sinners" (JFB, IV, 311).

And so v. 10 tells us that it was because of the condition of all men that the Lord Jesus came into the world "to seek and to save."

How did He seek Zacchaeus? Note first:

I. The OCCASION on which He was seeking (v. 1).

What was Jesus doing in Jericho?

Luke 18:31 and 19:11 make it clear that His destination was Jerusalem. Why? The time of His death was approaching. Terrible suffering awaited the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem, and He was aware of this. **HE WAS PROBABLY ONLY A WEEK AWAY FROM THE CROSS.**

But while He never forgot the purpose of His coming (as 19:10 proves), neither did He overlook opportunities to "find" men along the way.

And what more appropriate place to "find" someone than in Jericho--the city which had been rebuilt under a curse (Josh. 6:26).

II. The OBJECT of His seeking (vv. 2-4).

The man's name was Zacchaeus. His name indicates that he was a Jew. Of all things, his name means one who is pure.

**But he was a disillusioned Jew**. All Jews who had become publicans had actually renounced Judaism, both as a nation and as a religion. This is one reason they were called, sinners--no different from the despised Gentiles.

He was also a tax collector--another reason why he was hated by the Jews. However, to add to the problem, Luke tells us that he was "the chief among the publicans" (v. 2). This has led Flummer (Luke, p. 433) to call him the "Commissioner of Taxes." He was the head of the regional tax office. He could not have been in this position if he had not completely given himself to Rome.

He was rich. Evidently he had turned from his own people, and from their religion, thinking that money would satisfy him. **BUT WE IMMEDIATELY REALIZE THAT LUKE IS TELLING US ABOUT A RICH MAN WHO WAS ACTUALLY VERY POOR.** He is at least entertaining the thought that Jesus Christ might satisfy that deep yearning for peace within his own heart!

So, he was an upper class outcast--and, he was lost!

But, you say, it seems from these verses that Zacchaeus was seeking the Lord. WHY DO YOU SAY THAT THE LORD WAS SEEKING HIM?

This is why you have to let v. 10 be the explanation of the story. To be sure Zacchaeus was seeking. But he was seeking because Jesus was seeking.

Do you remember what the Lord said about this in the upper room? "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

One of our hymn writers has couched this truth in the following words:

"I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Savior true;  
No, I was found of thee."

This basic principle is one which every true winner of souls must recognize. Jesus Christ is primarily the One who is doing the seeking!

### III. The OPENNESS of His seeking (vv. 5, 6).

If the Lord had been primarily interested in popularity, he would have had nothing to do with Zacchaeus, you can be sure of that!

He did not come, however, to be popular. He came to seek and to save the lost. And Jesus Christ knew just where to find Zacchaeus, He knew all that was going on in His heart, He knew His name, and He had come to Jericho with the crowds at His feet to find one man!  
**NOTE THE URGENCY: "TODAY I MUST..."**

What a surprise we see in Zacchaeus' response to our Lord's statement. (Read v. 6.)

And the point we are making is that all of this was out in the open. There is no subtlety here. No fear of men restrained the Lord Jesus. He was never secretive about reaching men.

Cf. John 4:27 - "And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?"

Cf. Matt. 26:55 - "In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you

in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me."

Cf. John 18:19, 20 - "The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing."

The early Christians ministered in the same way. Cf. Acts 4:18-20 - "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

### Openness!

What a tragedy when men start asking us what our pitch is because we try to win them before they know what is going on rather than being open with them. Subtlety offends and drives men from the Lord; openness wins their confidence, and often wins their hearts.

But there are two other points I want to call your attention to. Note:

#### IV. The OPPOSITION to His seeking (v. 7).

What a sudden change from 18:43. Suddenly the air is tense. The people cannot believe their eyes nor their ears.

Listen to the Amplified rendering of this verse:

"And when the people saw it, they all muttered among themselves and indignantly complained, He has gone in to be the guest of and lodge with a man who is devoted to sin and pre-eminently a sinner."

It was incredible that Jesus Christ would want to go home with Zacchaeus. He was a sinner. He was no better than a Gentile. Anyone who identified himself with Zacchaeus would do nothing but defile himself. In their minds he was hopeless!

IT IS A  
GOSPEL OF  
GRACE.

Have you and I written anyone off? Do you know someone you consider to be hopeless? You don't know what may be in his heart. Zacchaeus evidently had more real heart-hunger than anyone else in Jericho--and that is why Jesus Christ was there!

On this point cf. what they said to Bartimaeus in Luke 18:39.

See also Luke 15:1, 2; 7:34, 36-50; 5:27-32.

If you and I are governed by popularity, by the voice of the crowd, we will never find the men Jesus Christ is seeking. The message is not popular, and neither are His methods.

V. The OUTCOME of the seeking (vv. 8, 9).

The first thing that greets us is the evidence of a great transformation. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

Zacchaeus had something to tell the Lord, but he "stood" to say it, indicating that he was taking a public stand and saying what he said so that everyone there could hear him. "Behold" indicates a settled conclusion he had reached.

From this time on half of his earnings would go to the poor.

All he had taken unjustly would be returned 400%. (The Law required only 20% - cf. Lev. 6:5.)

What is this but instantaneous salvation!

This is the evidence. BUT BY WHAT MEANS DID SALVATION COME TO ZACCHAEUS?

Note what the Lord says in v. 9: "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

Is he saying that he was saved because he was a Jew? No!

What constitutes one a son of Abraham? Listen! Gal. 3:7 says, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children (lit., the sons) of Abraham."

How was Zacchaeus saved from divine judgment? Not by giving his money. That was the evidence. Not because he was a Jew. He had been born a Jew. BUT BECAUSE HE HAD TURNED IN SIMPLE FAITH TO JESUS CHRIST, TRUSTING HIM HIM AS HIS SAVIOUR!

The Saviour who sought him saved him!

Concl: What became of Zacchaeus? We do not know. But one

thing is certain. When you and I get to heaven,  
Zacchaeus will be there too.

Our Lord's mission in Jericho was accomplished. A  
wealthy, disillusioned Jew found his answer in Christ.

He is still the only answer today.

#345 - vv. 1+3