

Seeking To Save
Luke 19:1-10

We're following Jesus to the cross - His final trip to Jerusalem
Following Jesus means that Jesus needs to be our number one priority'

Following Jesus means that we are to go into His harvest field
- as sheep among wolves - trusting Him because He sent us

Following Jesus means that He will give us the victory.

Following Jesus means that we will
- Do good (Good Samaritan),
- Listen (Mary and Martha) (Mary listened)
- Pray with expectation because God wants to answer ("Ask and it will be given to you")

Jesus' teaching in these chapters leading up to Jerusalem

Set the scene

Jesus had just talked to a rich young ruler - give all your money away to enter the kingdom of God
Just outside Jericho, Jesus heals a blind man (People told blind man Jesus was passing by)

(Read Luke 19:1-10) *

Lu 19:1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.

"Passing through - not intending to do anything -

* He was on His way from Galilee to Jerusalem and had to go through Samaria

* He continued South and we see him coming to Jericho.

2 * A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

Romans put heavy taxes in place to finance their empire.

Jews opposed the taxes because they supported a secular government with pagan gods

Jews were still forced to pay

Because this position could end in a lot of wealth, even some Jews became tax collectors

- traitor to the Jewish people,
- outcast,
- no longer worthy of being called a Jew
- despised

As a chief tax collector, he had charge over others - perhaps a regional supervisor.

Matthew (one of Jesus' disciples) had been a tax collector and had been well off

Zacchaeus as chief had become very wealthy. - charging more and pocketing the money

As chief tax collectors, many thought of him as "chief sinner"

3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.

"He wanted to see who Jesus was." Why?

Curiosity? Probably.

Jesus had just healed the blind man outside the city.

One of Jesus' followers was a tax collector - chief tax collector heard the news

Probably had heard about Jesus

Unexplained emptiness inside? Probably. -

Unhappy, Lonely man - tax collectors probably didn't have a lot of friends

Another characteristic pointed out - he was short - couldn't see anything because of the crowd

Probably got pushed around a lot, "looked down on"

(He was despised & short) What comes to mind - * Danny Devito
* Expecting Jesus to transform his life? - Probably not. - May was dreaming/wondering
He was despised and short. Why would Jesus care?
- He wasn't blind, crippled, hungry
- What could Jesus do for him?
- He didn't know that Jesus could do the greatest miracle of all
He just wanted to see.

4 * So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.
(The sycamore - very large trunk, breaks up onto five or six thick branches close to ground)
- great climbing tree for kids

5 * When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

A number of significant things are taking place here

- Jesus noticed Zacchaeus Jesus had to be looking for him.
Out of hundreds of people, Jesus noticed Zacchaeus
I'm sure that struck him - perhaps self-conscious at first
We all want to be noticed - the way we dress, do our hair, perfume/cologne
- * Jesus looked at Zacchaeus (not just a glance) - gave him His full attention
- * Jesus called him by name, "*Zacchaeus, come down immediately.*"
Having someone know your name is huge. Especially someone you're not expecting
- * Jesus invited himself to his home - "*I must stay at your house today.*"
Jesus took the initiative

Everything Jesus did was part of a divine plan - His days were ordered by God

He knew when He had to stop and talk with people

He knew which people He had to heal

He knew which homes He had to go to

Why? Because God knows the hearts of people, He's been preparing them

We need to be asking God to order our days - God's preparing people for us

We need to look for those people - if we're in tune with God, the H.S. will point them out to us

We need to notice them

We need to look at them

We need to take the initiative

We need to get to know them, build a relationship with them, love them

Don't pre-judge people

Try to find out something about them ahead of time if possible

Spend time with them,

Listen to them - we all want to be listened to - it shows we care

We need to care because Jesus cares.

Zacchaeus' reaction?

6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

He wasn't embarrassed, or put out

He was thrilled, excited, full of joy

Notice the crowds reaction!

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

Outrageous, doesn't He know who that it, what he is

Did Jesus care? No. - So often we are concerned with what other people may think of us
Jesus loved Zacchaeus despite himself, his lifestyle, his cheating & lying
Jesus knew that he could be a transformed man

Remember the story of the rich young ruler.

- The man took the initiative - he came to Jesus asking what he must do to inherit kingdom of God
 - came with wrong motive, wanted to justify himself
 - he knew the Scriptures, he followed all the laws since childhood
 - he was good enough
- BUT he couldn't give us his money and follow Jesus - couldn't make Jesus the priority in his life
- Jesus didn't waste His time with the rich young ruler - he wasn't ready
 - you can't argue with a person to trust Jesus

Very different with Zacchaeus - he also was a rich man

Jesus saw a difference - a heart attitude - the attitude of humbleness Jesus was looking for
Jesus was quick to respond - it was worth His time to spend it with Zacchaeus

They went to his home together with the crowd still following, grumbling and murmuring

Probably saying some horrible things behind His back

When they got to Zacchaeus' house

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

It was immediate, the first thing he did/said - verb in present tense (right now)

Zacchaeus stood up (immediately) and said.

"Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor,

Could have been trying to make a good impression on Jesus and the crowd

Half his possession - a lot but he'd still be doing pretty well

Next statement clinches it for Jesus

if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

"If I've cheated" - by bringing it up, he/everyone else knew he had cheated

All tax collectors cheat

O.T. restitution law - * give back amount plus 25% (* \$10.00 = \$12.50 to repay)

Zac went over and beyond - * he'd give back \$40.00 for every \$10 he cheated

Zachaeus had his priorities right - Jesus first

The rich young man came to Jesus confident of his religious credentials, but he went away sad because he didn't love Christ as much as he loved his money. In contrast, Zacchaeus was willing to pay any price to follow Christ, even if it meant paying back four times the amount he had extorted.

When confronted by Christ, each of these men made a choice about money

—one served it;

- the other used it to serve God.

Commentator: "Money can be either our master or our servant, but it cannot be both. When we choose to serve God with our money and resources, we gain the proper perspective and free ourselves from the

tyranny of greed."

Zacchaeus had it right. Jesus saw it and knew that his life had been transformed

9 * Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

Significant statement. The crowd considered him a traitor to the Jewish race, (no longer a Jew)
Jesus re-established him among the chosen people - telling people to accept him because God does.

10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Zachaeus had wandered away from God, wandered away from the path of God's truth,
he had gotten lost

Jesus said this is what I came for,

I missed him, I came to save him from sure destruction.

People often get lost in life

get caught up in struggles

get caught up in money and things and depend on them for happiness

They, like Zacchaeus, can't find happiness in all that.

Jesus is looking for them - because they're the ones He misses the most - the ones that have wandered
He's asking us to look for them

SO WHAT?

1. Jesus has called us to love those around us because he misses them and wants them to come home

- ask God to open our eyes to see people the way He does
- notice them
- look at them
- take the initiative
- build a relationship with them
- show them God's love

2. Maybe someone here has wandered away from God

- caught up in the world, business, money, job, fun
- you know there is an emptiness in your life
- Jesus has been looking for you - he misses you
- He has a new life for you - an abundant life that only He can give

Turn to Him today