

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
Presbyterian Church

“TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: March 10, 2024

SPEAKER: Frank/John Mark

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 19:1-10

As Jesus travels through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, he encounters two men who share something in common: they experience difficulty in seeing Jesus. One is the blind beggar of Luke 18:35-43. The other is Zacchaeus, the tax collector in today's passage, who struggles to see Jesus because of his small stature.

A seeker is sought. (vv. 1-7)

Luke's is the only Gospel that tells the story of Zacchaeus—not any old tax collector, but a “chief tax collector” (v. 2). Zacchaeus is the archetypal rich man of the New Testament, one who will have difficulty accessing the Kingdom of God. And yet his story is one of salvation.

- In Luke 19:1-10, Jesus succinctly summarizes his earthly mission as he announces “the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (v. 10). Read Deuteronomy 4:29 and John 6:37. What does God promise to those who seek him?
- In verse 2, we learn that Zacchaeus is the chief tax collector. How would Zacchaeus be treated by his fellow Jews? Would they be just in treating him like this? Why is it hard to love people like Zacchaeus?
- Read verses 6-7 and note the contrast between the two reactions to Jesus' announcement. Where have we seen the reaction of those in verse 7 before? (See Luke 5:30, 7:39, and 15:2)

A life is transformed. (v. 8)

According to theologian J.C. Ryle, no one is beyond Christ's power to save. Luke 19 illustrates for us what a transformed life looks like. Zacchaeus' actions gave evidence of his repentance: “*There was unmistakable proof that Zacchaeus was a new creature. When a wealthy Christian begins to distribute his riches, and an extortioner begins to make restitution—then we may well believe that old things have passed away, and all things have become new!*” (2 Corinthians 5:17)¹

- What does Zacchaeus teach us about true repentance? Read Ezekiel 18:21-22; 33:15-16. Discuss how Zacchaeus exemplifies what true repentance looks like and how it was outlined for the people of Israel in the Old Testament.
- Go back and read Luke 18:18-30. Compare and contrast Zacchaeus with the rich young ruler. What do these passages teach us about true repentance and what a true seeker of God looks like?
- Did Jesus ask Zacchaeus to give up his possessions and follow him? How does Jesus perform the impossible of Luke 18:27?

The Savior's mission is declared. (vv. 9-10)

Recall in Luke 15, the first parables Jesus shares with his followers speak of his mission to seek and to save that which was lost: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, we see the heart of the seeking and saving Savior who rejoices more “over one sinner who repents than over the ninety-nine righteous who need no repentance.”

- Read Luke 5:29-32 and John 3:16-17. What do you learn about God's love from Jesus' life and ministry in these verses?
- Read Ezekiel 34:11-16 and Psalm 23 and compare to Luke 15. Discuss how these themes continue to define Jesus' ministry.

Family Dinner Table

The Eye of a Needle

In Luke 19:1-10, we witness a camel “go through the eye of a needle” when a rich tax collector enters the Kingdom of God. With Zacchaeus, Jesus performs the impossible task of Luke 18:25-27. And we shouldn't be surprised. Early on, Jesus made clear his mission. God the Father had sent him “*to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*” (Luke 4:18-19).

Recall that when Jesus begins his public ministry in Luke 5, he does so by eating and drinking with tax collectors. Fast forward to the end of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem in Luke 19. He is again dining with a tax collector. Christ's journey to the cross has been one of relentlessly seeking lost sinners and bringing them into the Kingdom of God.

- Zacchaeus demonstrates some radical changes after his encounter with Christ. What changes does he experience the day Jesus visits. How has Christ changed you? What fruit of this change do you see in your life?
- Remember, no matter what your past has been, salvation through Christ can come to you. What would you be willing to do just to see Jesus? Are you seeking after Jesus? Read and meditate on Psalm 84 this week.

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¹Ryle, J.C. *The Conversion of Zacchaeus*. Luke Chapter 19. <https://gracegems.org/Ryle/l19.htm>