

The Savior Seeking Souls

Luke 19:1-10 (text v. 10)

A few weeks ago I preached on how the healing of blind Bartimaeus in Jericho is a picture of salvation. As Jesus continues through the city of Jericho we have another picture of salvation in the story of Zacchaeus. It is a SHORT story about a SHORT man meeting a BIG Savior.

- My wife recently sent me a quote about short people: “You gotta hand it to short people... because they usually can’t reach it otherwise!”

Charles Spurgeon was teaching a homiletics class to some young preacher boys. He would assign each student a text and have him to go to the pulpit and preach an extemporaneous sermon from the text. He called on a one student who happened to be the shortest member of the class and assigned Luke 19:1-10 to preach—The account of Zacchaeus.

With trembling legs the young student walked to the pulpit, opened his Bible to Luke 19, and read the text. Fastening his eyes on his audience, he began:

"My sermon has three points. First, Zacchaeus was a little man and so am I. Second, Zacchaeus was up a tree and so am I. In the third place, Zacchaeus made haste to come down, and so will I" and on that note he promptly sat down at his seat.

➡ Four things: A **Sinner**... A **Sycamore**... A **Savior**... and **Salvation**.

I. **The SPECIES of the tree** (v. 4).

- Why did God specify the species of the tree? He could have just said, “He climbed up a tree.” The Lord must want us to learn something about a Sycamore tree that pertains to this story.
- Trees represent things: Fig tree (Israel); Palm Tree (Righteousness-Ps. 92:12); Sycamore tree is a symbol of grace.
- While on a tour of Israel several years ago, our group went to Jericho. Our tour guide, Bill Tate, stopped by some Sycamore trees along the side of the road. He taught us some things about this tree I didn’t know.

- A. Sycamore leaves are “heart shaped” picturing the AFFECTION of God’s grace.
1. God loves you (John 3:16). He loved you before you loved Him (1 John 4:10, 19).
 2. God cares about you— He cares about your financial situation... your infirmity... your dysfunctional family... your emotional pain... your loved ones.
 3. God is not an unsympathetic God... HE IS TOUCHED with the feelings of your infirmities and there to help in time of need.
- B. The limbs of a sycamore tree are close to the ground. Easy to climb. Low enough that a SHORT man can climb up. This pictures the ACCESSIBILITY of God’s grace.
1. Salvation is easy... It isn’t hard to get saved.
 - I’ve done too many bad things for a good God to save me. No... **He’s a better God than you are a bad person.**
 - Whosoever will may come!
 2. Isaiah 55:1—*“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat...”*
 - How do you buy when you don’t have any money? A little boy said, “You buy like my mother does at the Mall. You say, ‘Charge it!’” That’s what happens in salvation. Jesus said, “Charge it,” when it came to the price of my salvation and I can have it without cost to myself!
 - Salvation is only by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Saved by grace, kept by grace.
- C. A Sycamore tree blossoms and bears fruit (figs) year round, picturing the ABUNDANCE of God’s grace.
1. God’s grace will make your life abundant and fruitful (John 10:10).
 2. God’s grace is abundant to meet your every need (2 Cor. 12:8).

II. **The SINNER up the tree** (vs. 2-8).

- A. His **DESCRIPTION**.

1. High ranking publican (tax collector). Chief tax collector, he had a company called I.R.S. ("I'm Rich & Short").
 2. Wealthy (v. 2). Hard for a rich man to get saved (Luke 18:24).
 - Most tax collectors were crooked and charged whatever percent they wanted and pocketed the excess. Many became wealthy this way. Zacchaeus' was likely one of them.
 3. Despised (Luke 18:10-13). An outcast.
 4. Short ("Wee little man"). Short in **stature**... short in **character**... short in **righteousness** (Rom. 3:23— "*All have sinned and come **SHORT**...*").
- B. His **DESIRE** (v. 3-4). While Zacchaeus was seeking to get to Jesus, Jesus was making His way to him (v. 10 cf. James 4:8).
- When the Lord sees a man sincerely seeking to know God, He will come to him. ILLUS: Cornelius.
- C. His **DIFFICULTY** (v. 3). Sometimes the devil will put obstacles in your way to Jesus. What's keeping you from Jesus?
- D. His **DETERMINATION** (v. 4). Ran... climbed.
- If you're from down south you'd say "he clum a tree."

III. The **SAVIOR under the tree** (vs. 5-6).

- A. Jesus **CAME** to where he was—"*...he looked up*" knowing full well who was there.
- I'm so thankful the Lord came looking for me in 1967!
 - When life has you up a tree, Jesus knows where to find you.
- B. Jesus **CALLED** to him. Jesus not only came to *where* he was, but knew *WHO* he was. Nobody told Jesus about Zacchaeus.
1. A **personal** call—Jesus called him by name... He called Saul by name. He called Nathaniel by name.
 - God knows where you are and who you are.



2. A **urgent** call. It was now or never for Zacchaeus. Jesus would not pass this way again.
3. A **gracious** call. There was no merit in Zacchaeus for Christ to save him.

IV. The SALVATION of Zacchaeus (vs. 6-10).

- A. **RECEIVED** Christ (v. 6). Accepted Christ's invitation (John 1:12).
- B. **REJOICED** in Christ (v. 6). Coming to the Lord Jesus isn't coming to a cemetery, it's coming to a celebration... It's not coming to a famine, it's coming to a feast. "Happiness is the Lord."
- C. **RESTORATION** is promised (v. 8 cf. Ex. 22:1). His life was radically changed (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - One of the surest signs of repentance is when it opens a person's pocketbook.

SUMMATION (v. 10–Key verse in Luke. All one-syllable words):

We don't think of the little four-letter word "**lost**" very much. But when the word "**lost**" is applied to a certain SITUATION, CONDITION, or ITEM in our lives, it becomes a very important word to us. For example, if you lose your health... your freedom... your wallet... your keys, the word "**lost**" becomes a very powerful motivating word.

The word "**lost**" is on the heart of God constantly. God knew the worst thing that could happen to a man was not to lose his health... freedom... or money. The worst thing would be for a man to lose his soul and be "**lost**" forever in hell.

Someone said the saddest word in the world is the word "**lost**." I cannot think on anything sadder than a person to be "**lost**" forever all eternity in hell.

The word "**lost**" describes the purpose for Christ leaving heaven and coming to this sin-sick planet (v. 10 cf. Luke 15:4-7, 9, 24).

Jesus came to seek and to save that which was "**lost**." And that is our job as well. Jesus commissioned His disciples, "*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*" (John 20:21).