

“WHAT DROVE LIL' Z UP A TREE?”

I. Luke 19:1-10

A. The past few weeks we have been following Jesus on His way to Jerusalem...

- 1) Jesus is on a mission, bound for the Cross, driven by love. Jn. 4:34.
- 2) While many are on their way to celebrate Passover, Jesus will become the ultimate Passover Lamb, fulfilling all that Passover was ever meant to demonstrate...

B. 2 Cor. 5:21 is what Jesus would achieve; it is the Gospel in a nutshell...

- 1) Every time you see a cross, know this: My sin for His righteousness!
- 2) There's no better news to spread around... Psalm 71:15-16...

C. We pick up today with Jesus traveling thru the prosperous city of Jericho...

- 1) His ragtag entourage includes the disciples, devout followers, curious Passover pilgrims, Scribes & Pharisees, and a just-healed blind man named Bartimaeus.
- 2) It's about to include a little man up in a sycamore tree... (*Everybody sing*)

D. Luke 19:1-10 is the story of Zacchaeus, one of the best Bible stories ever!

- 1) A chief tax collector, he probably had a territory with other collectors working under him... He was wealthy and in want of nothing money could buy...
- 2) As a tax collector, he was despised. Considered a traitor and rejected by his fellow Jews. In fact, they no longer considered him a child of Abraham...
- 3) And Zacchaeus was also short, probably the target of ridicule...
- 4) Lil' Z had a hole in his heart and it was the shape of God...
- 5) And then he hears a commotion, Jesus is passing thru. Maybe he's heard of Him, about His teachings, the parables, the miracles, His mercy and love...
- 6) He's so short, he can't see over the crowd. So Lil' Z races ahead of the crowd and sees a sycamore tree. (These could grow to be 30-40 feet tall, had sturdy low branches.) Z seizes the moment and quickly climbs into the perfect roadside seat...
- 7) Then Z sees the entourage coming, he strains to glimpse Jesus...
- 8) Jesus then stops and looks up. The world stops. Z's heart is beating out of His chest as He looks down into the eyes of the Son of God. Jesus peers into his soul and sees the emptiness, the pain, the rejection, the hopelessness, the void...
- 9) Then Jesus speaks. (Perhaps He smiles. Perhaps He lifts His hand up towards Zacchaeus.) Jesus says, "*Zacchaeus.*" How does He know his name? Did Z's infamous reputation precede him? Had they met someplace before? Or was it just a Divine moment where Jesus spoke omnisciently and prophetically? (I vote the latter.)
- 10) Jesus continues: "*Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.*" Zacchaeus thought He was seeking to meet Jesus but it was Jesus seeking to meet Him, and much more than that. (Has this happened to you yet?!)
- 11) Jesus' gesture of mercy stirred up grumbling: "*He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.*" Happened with Matthew too. (see Matt. 9:9-13)
- 12) But Zacchaeus responds with a public display of true repentance...
- 13) Jesus declares: "*Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*" Gal. 3:6-7.

E. Here's the message: Your tree for Christ's tree. Gal. 3:13...

- 1) Don't doubt for a moment that Jesus will not do for you what He did Lil' Z.
- 2) Jesus continued towards Jerusalem, to the Cross, for Z and for us all...
- 3) Have you made your own Zacchaeus-like confession? Been granted the gift of faith? Responded with your own repentance? Embraced the joy of true salvation?

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Luke 19:1-10 (ESV)

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. 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.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Psalms 71:15-16 (ESV)

15 My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. **16** With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

Matthew 9:9-13 (ESV)

9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. **10** And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. **11** And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **12** But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **13** Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Galatians 3:6-7 (NLT)

6 In the same way, “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” **7** The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

Galatians 3:13 (NLT)

13 But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

Galatians 3:13 (MSG)

13 Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.

Some Great Video Clips

Sycamore Tree in Jericho, Israel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpDdGixkhBA>

Jesus Forgave Zacchaeus and That Changed Him--Mark Driscoll

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVAwb0uU13M>

George Whitefield Sermon--The Conversion of Zacchaeus

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnRfixfthtc>

How Can I Know My Repentance is Genuine? - John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjAqm3Hjfc0>

Sermon Jam on Repentance - Matt Chandler

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1UABdwtHjI>

The Lukewarm Christian - Francis Chan

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1hPzyPW1aU>

Bonus Stuff

Quote by R. C. Ryle

"Sin forsaken is one of the best evidences of sin forgiven."

Repentance

In Vansbro, Sweden, police were startled when a thief returned a wallet he had stolen with the whole amount that was in the wallet along with the interest the money would have earned. He also enclosed a letter of apology. He had stolen the money 40 years earlier. It is never too late for restitution and repentance.

- From *Preaching Daily*, Crosswalk.com

Charles Hodge on Repentance

The sure test of the quality of any supposed change of heart will be found in its permanent effects. 'By their fruits you shall know them' is as applicable to the right method of judging ourselves as of judging others. Whatever, therefore, may have been our inward experience, whatever joy or sorrow we may have felt, unless we bring forth fruits meet for repentance, our experience will profit us nothing. Repentance is incomplete unless it leads to confession and restitution in cases of injury; unless it causes us to forsake not merely outward sins, which others notice, but those which lie concealed in the heart; unless it makes us choose the service of God and live not for ourselves but for Him. There is no duty which is either more obvious in itself, or more frequently asserted in the Word of God, than that of repentance.

Oswald Chambers on Repentance

It is not repentance that saves me; repentance is the sign that I realize what God has done in Christ Jesus. The danger is to put the emphasis on the effect instead of on the cause. Is it my obedience that puts me right with God? Never! I am put right with God because prior to all else, Christ died. When I turn to God and by belief accept what God reveals, instantly the stupendous atonement of Jesus Christ rushes me into a right relationship with God. By the miracle of God's grace I stand justified, not because of anything I have done, but because of what Jesus has done. The salvation of God does not stand on human logic; it stands on the sacrificial death of Jesus. Sinful men and women can be changed into new creatures by the marvelous work of God in Christ Jesus, which is prior to all experience.

- Oswald Chambers quoted in [So Great Salvation](#), Charles Ryrie, Victor Books, 1989, p. 91ff.

Charles H. Spurgeon on Repentance

True repentance has a distinct and constant reference to the Lord, Jesus Christ. If you repent of sin without looking to Christ, away with your repentance! If you are so lamenting your sin as to forget the Savior, you have need to begin all this work over again. Whenever we repent of sin we must have one eye upon sin and another upon the Cross. Or, better still, let us have both eyes upon Christ, seeing our sin punished in Him and by no means let us look at sin except as we look at Jesus. A man may hate sin just as a murderer hates the gallows – but this does not prove repentance. If I hate sin because of the punishment, I have not repented of sin – I merely regret that God is just. But if I can see sin as an offense against Jesus Christ and loathe myself because I have wounded Him, then I have a true brokenness of heart. If I see the Savior and believe that those thorns upon His head were plaited by my sinful words; If I believe that those wounds in His heart were pierced by my heart sins; If I believe that those wounds in His feet were made by my wandering steps and that the wounds in His hands were made by my sinful deeds – then I repent of sin after a right fashion. Only under the Cross can you repent. Repentance elsewhere is remorse which clings to the sin and only dreads the punishment. Let us then seek, under God, to have a hatred of sin caused by a sight of Christ's love.