

Refuge City Church — April 3, 2022
“This is why He came!” [Luke 19:1-10]

Introduction

- Ever played a game of hide & seek? [Ghost in the graveyard]
 - What’s the purpose? What’s the goal?
- Ever lost something important to you? Did you look for it? Have you found it yet? What did it feel like when you recovered it? [Neighbor “Beans” and his dog tags]
- Luke 15: Jesus tells 3 parables of lost items [sheep, coin, and a wayward son]
 - Yet today, we’re going to focus on a story of someone who was lost, but didn’t realize it until he had a special encounter with Jesus.

Luke 19:1-10

[Verses 1-2] “He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.”

- What is a tax collector in Jesus’ day?
 - Employed by the Roman government to collect various taxes from the Jewish community, or travelers coming into the territory.
 - Typically hated by other Jews [seen as sellouts], and had a reputation for ‘cooking the books’ to line their own pockets.
 - Of these, Zacchaeus was a ‘chief’ collector [high in rank; well known] and rich.

[Verses 3-4] “And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.”

- Zacchaeus, an adult [rich professional] responded to the arrival of Jesus with child-like curiosity.
 - Picture the crowd lining the streets to see Jesus.
 - Zacchaeus trying his darndest to find a spot to see Jesus, looking through gaps in the crowd, and maybe jumping up and down to get a glimpse [maybe, people keeping him on the outs because of who he was and their disdain for him].
 - Finally running up the street, climbing a tree to get a bird’s eye view, just to see Jesus.
 - **REFER** to Luke 18:15-17 [teaching on children]
 - **Luke 18:17**, “Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”
 - Humility; Dependency; Nothing to offer; Ready to receive what is offered.
- **MAYBE:** Zacchaeus knew of Matthew [also a tax collector], and desired to know more of Jesus who loved and accepted his kind of people.

- **Mark 2:15**, [after choosing Matthew] “And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.”

[Verses 5-6] “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.’ So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.”

- Jesus called him by name [divine sovereignty], and did more than just recognize him. He wanted a relationship with him.
 - Once ignored by his peers...Jesus noticed/looked at him.
 - Once hated by his neighbors, and probably called various other things...Jesus called him by name.
 - Once shunned by his neighbors and never invited to friendship...Jesus asked him to come near.
 - Once lonely...Jesus wanted to go to his house and hang out with him.
 - **Jeremiah 1:5**, “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb...”
 - We are never ignored, hated, shunned, or alone in the eyes and heart of our God!
 - **John 10:3**, “...The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.”
 - In Christ, we know us intimately. We belong.
- Zacchaeus responded with immediacy; how we all should respond to the call of Jesus!
 - He immediately felt what he had been seeking. He knew what he wanted all along.
 - He was never able to satisfy his need with status, work, or wealth until he came in contact with Jesus.
 - When we do all that we can do to ‘see’ Jesus, He will not pass us by. When we come to the realization He is all we need, He will respond.
 - **Mark 2:4-5**, “And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”
 - **Revelation 3:20**, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”
- Zacchaeus received him joyfully!
 - **Psalms 144:15 NLT**, “Yes, joyful are those who live like this! Joyful indeed are those whose God is the Lord.”

[Verse 7] “And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.”

- The crowd gets angry because they saw Zacchaeus as a ‘sinner’, but who were they??

- Were they more special/deserving than he?
- They were blind to their own “shortcomings”, and had fallen into the same category as the Pharisees.

[Verses 8-9] “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. And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.’”

- He admits his wrong-doing [sin].
- He confesses it before his LORD [submission].
- It was in this moment of response that Zacchaeus received salvation!
 - He was saved by the grace of God [Ephesians 2:8], but also showed humility to do everything he could to rectify his wrongdoing [fruit of salvation; transformation]
 - **REFER** to Luke 18:18-30 [The Rich Ruler]
 - **Luke 18:25**, “For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” [not about money, but rather the love of it]
 - **1 John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
 - **James 2:17-18**, “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith *by* my works.”
- Jesus recognized his faith, obedience, and humility to make things right.
 - **REFER** to Luke 18:9-14 [parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector]
 - **Luke 18:14**, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”
- Jesus refers to him as a ‘son of Abraham’
 - This is not a reference to his genealogy. Rather, that just as Abraham ‘believed the Lord, and it was counted to him as righteousness’ [Genesis 15:6], so Zacchaeus was counted righteous before the Lord for his faith and obedience.

[Verse 10] “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- **This is why He came!** Jesus came to seek out and bring salvation to sinners, just like you and me.
 - “...For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”
 - “...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
 - [Paul] “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...”

Conclusion

- More on salvation, rather than commission
 - **Romans 3:10-11**, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God.”

- **Genesis 3:9-10**, “But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”
 - From the moment man ushered sin into the world, God has sought us out to bring us back into his family.
 - **Ezekiel 34:11, 16**, “For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”
- **John 3:16**, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
 - **John 10:11**, “I am the good shepherd.”
 - **Luke 15:4-7**, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”
- **Romans 3:23**, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
 - We fall ‘short’, and separate ourselves from God. Because we think we can find contentment and satisfaction in the people and things of this world.
 - Only until we come to the realization of who Christ is, we realize there is nothing that can take His place in our life.
- But you need to understand that Jesus is not far from anyone! This is why He came!
 - **Acts 17:27**, “that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,”