

He Loves Seeking and Saving the Lost

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[0:00] If you take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke, Luke chapter 19, if you're visiting with us, go to that chair in front of you, pull out that black Bible, and go towards the back, because they start renumbering the New Testament section, so if you go towards the back and find page 63, you'll find Luke chapter 19.

I'm going to read the first ten verses of Luke chapter 19, again page 63 in that black Bible. Luke chapter 19, the first ten verses.

And Jesus entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zacchaeus, and he was a chief tax gatherer, and he was rich.

He was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see him, for he was about to pass through that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house. And he hurried and came down and received him gladly.

[1:38] And when they saw it, they all grumbled, saying, he's going to be the guest of a man who's a sinner. And Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I've defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.

And Jesus said to him, today, salvation has come to this house, because he too is the son of Abraham. For the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

I'm going to do something a little different this morning, by way of introduction. I've never done this before.

I don't think ever. This is going to be fun. So I need all the kids from 10 years old down to come up here. So all the kids, what, what, what, what?

All the kids, not you, Ward, you're not a kid. All the kids from 10 years old down to come up. I sit right here. I sit right here.

[2:46] I sit right here. Right there. Come here, Marley. Marley's back.

Nice to have you back, Marley. How is Ohio? Good. That's great. Come on. Come on. Sit down here, guys.

Now, do you guys know the song, Zacchaeus? Do you guys remember that song?

So let's sing it together, okay? Should we let the adults sing, too? Want to let the adults sing? No, we don't. Okay, you guys can't sing. Sorry. Sadie said no. Okay, let's sing it.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see.

[3:49] And as the Savior passed that way, he looked up in the tree. And he said, what?

Zacchaeus, you come down.

For I'm going to your house today. Zacchaeus was a wee little man, but a happy man was he.

For he had seen the Lord that day. And a happy man was he. And a very happy man was he.

Zacchaeus, good job, you guys. Good job. Hey, you guys can go back and sit down, okay? Thank you. So I had to do that song.

I mean, it just has to be done for a passage like this. You have to do that. Amen. And so as we come to the title for our sermon, this is for the whole Gospel of Luke.

[5:12] Come follow Jesus and find forgiveness of your sins. Today we're going to focus on how Jesus loves seeking and saving the lost. Lost ones like Zacchaeus.

And I hope that you can relish in this enjoyable time. You can relish in this enjoyable passage right now, these ten verses.

The reason why is because, friends, this is the last personal encounter that Jesus has.

Before he arrived in Jerusalem. Before he arrived in Jerusalem. And then the events leading up to his death. In other words, this is the last happy time in the Gospel of Luke until you reach the resurrection.

This is the last happy time. This is the painful time. Until you reach the resurrection, it spirals downward.

[6:15] So relish in this. Enjoy this. Enjoy the... Someone got through the needle eye.

Versus this rich ruler, the rich ruler in chapter 18, he had no desire to part with his mullah, but Zacchaeus hammered his wealth with grace and compassion, seen his sinful ways, and he was changed.

A stark contrast to the rich ruler of chapter 18. So, not all rich people walk away from Jesus sad. Zacchaeus is an example of what is truly possible with God.

God was the only one who changes the heart so that sinners run into the arms of Jesus. This passage shows God's great grace.

His great power. What does conversion look like? What does it look like? Zacchaeus represents to us what a true relationship with God looks like from the outside, having had a major change of His heart on the inside.

[7:42] He was a totally different person. And that's what happens in conversion. That's what conversion is like. Jesus met the needs of a blind man from last week, chapter 18, and now He will meet the needs of a rich man.

Interesting. Interesting. A rich man who... It was unpopular to meet this rich man's needs. Yet there was a difference. The blind man cried out to Jesus.

Here, Jesus initiated. We could even say Jesus was orchestrating this whole thing. And Zacchaeus says to one writer, he got more than what he bargained for.

He thought he was just going to see Jesus walk by. Not so. He was surprised. He was surprised. Seeking and saving lost people is what Jesus is all about.

Jesus initiates and seeks and saves the lost sinners. And this seeking and saving lost sinners, this is a definite mark of those who claim to be His followers. If we have the message of how to cure cancer, if you have the cure to Ebola, you would share with the world, right?

[9:09] You would seek out and try to save these who are infected with the deadly virus. There's something that's so much more deadlier than Ebola.

It's called sin. But Jesus reached out to the unpopular. The losers. The outcasts.

My tax collectors. The outcasts. Who are hated by the Jewish society. Look, the gospel is for everyone. But specifically, it's for the outcast.

The one who says, I need you. I'm lost without you. And what a model response this tax collector, Zacchaeus, gave.

What a model response. Joy. Generosity. He wanted to right the wrongs that he did. He showed himself to be a faithful son of Abraham.

[10:11] As opposed to others in the nation who said they followed Abraham. Yet they rejected Jesus. See, it's not the exterior. It's not about your vocation.

It's about the heart. See, this is what true repentance looks like. This is what true conversion looks like. It shows itself in a changed life because there's a changed heart.

It reminds us of what happened to the other tax collector in chapter 18, verses 9-14. He says, God be merciful to me as sinner. Jesus always takes the initiative to seek out lost people.

And here, he associated himself with the despise of society. This was his mission. And this should be yours.

This was his mission. And this mission should be ours. Seek and save the lost. How will we seek and save the lost?

[11:23] What neighbor is lost? What friend is lost? Which relative is lost?

Which co-worker is lost? Which person in Jerome is lost? Were you praying Thursday?

We had that gal over on Thursday night at her house from Jerome. She came over. It was a little late, but she did come. We had a great time with her. Three points.

Very simple. Seeking and saving the lost is what Jesus' focus is. And first, we're going to look at seeking the lost. Then saving the lost. Then we'll look at his purpose. That was his purpose in the first place.

Seeking the lost. Verses 1-7. The scene has to be set up. He's on his way to Jerusalem. Remember, he's focused on that. He entered and was passing through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem.

[12:28] And then verse 2. Behold, or look, there was a man called by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax gatherer and he was rich. Jericho was a Roman regional tax center.

Lots of traffic came through Jericho as people were trying to go to Jerusalem. So it's a key place for collecting taxes before one comes into Jerusalem.

Key spot. The Romans knew exactly what they were doing. Ha-ha! We know how to get their money. We'll get in Jericho. And Zacchaeus seems to be this chief tax collector.

Maybe he was first in rank or maybe major tax collector. We don't know. But he was some type of administrator who organized the collection of taxes taking his cut from the labor of his employees. He was very wealthy from his job. One writer said this, quote, He was the kingpin of the Jericho tax cartel and had the scruples of a modern day crack dealer.

[13:33] He probably, he probably was not a likely candidate for God's kingdom. I don't think so.

But the gospel call goes out to everybody, even the despised. Whatever is meant by this term chief, he was filthy rich.

And he was totally hated. And obviously he was a Jew. The reason for his hatred because he sold out his people. He was stealing from his own people and giving some of that, a little bit of that, what the Romans required, but then he would keep the rest for himself.

So he was unpopular with his own people. And most likely he was unpopular with the Romans because the Romans couldn't trust him either. So he had no social life. He was a complete outcast in society.

Except by other tax collectors who were rich. I'll tell you, people probably would have loved to see him go through the eye of the needle. Oh yeah, let's pull him through the eye.

[14:43] Let's do that. That'd be nice. Verse 3. And he was trying to see who Jesus was. For some reason, he wanted to see Jesus.

He did not know Jesus. Probably had heard reports about him. He was interested in this well-known person.

Maybe because Zacchaeus had become dissatisfied with his lifestyle. Or maybe he was tired of being hated by people. Maybe he was just curious because he heard of Jesus being a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

sinners. We don't know. Whatever the reason, though, he wanted to see Jesus. But notice the next part of verse 3. He wanted to see Jesus.

He was unable because of the crowd. He was small in stature. There was two problems. The crowd was too large and he was too dinky. He was too tiny. He was small.

[15:46] And notice how the text portrayed him. It's portrayed him as an outsider. And there's no way that the crowd would make room for this clown.

This rich jerk. No way. Verse 4. He ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see him for he was about to pass through that way.

He had an idea. I know. I'll run ahead and get a better view. I'll climb a sycamore tree. He climbed into the branches because Jesus would pass that way.

This tree was more like an oak tree. Probably 40 feet high, maybe. He wanted to get a bird's eye view of this stunning person. He'd be up high.

Jesus would walk by and say, wow, that's him. Okay, great. Jesus came to the place where Zacchaeus was. Verse 5. He looked up and said to Zacchaeus, hurry and come down for today I must stay at your house.

[16:53] Zacchaeus was surprised. He wasn't expecting that. Come down because I'm staying at your house, fella. He looked up and addressed Zacchaeus.

Wait a minute. How do you know who he was? He was, he is God. That helps. It was all under God's sovereign, divine providence to meet Zacchaeus.

See, Jesus was in control of the whole situation. Seeking out Zacchaeus. And Jesus told him to urgently come down because it was necessary for Jesus to stay at his house.

Do you remember the Greek word? Dei. Dei. Delta, Epsilon, Iota. D-E-I. Luke uses it throughout his book. It is necessary.

It must happen. This was part of God's plan for Jesus to stay there. This was God's purpose. See, it would give Jesus another opportunity to emphasize his mission of seeking and saving lost sinners. [18:02] And Zacchaeus would give the model response to Jesus' initiation. He would host Jesus and get saved.

Zacchaeus, hurry and come down for today I must stay at your house. Verse 6. And he hurried and came down and received him gladly. Zacchaeus obeyed Jesus' command immediately with great joy.

He showed immediate obedience and excitement to the Lord. He welcomed Jesus into his home a sign of fellowship and forgiveness. Now, faith is not mentioned but it's implied because Jesus just rocked his world.

while others would have negative responses with grumbling and complaining. Zacchaeus was positive for Jesus by responding to his kindness with happiness and a happy man was he.

If I could just take a moment and just bring something out here. two aspects of evangelism when we are doing evangelism when we are giving somebody the gospel two aspects I want to just point out here notice the urgency that Jesus had and the necessity.

[19:39] It's urgent for us to give people the gospel there's a sense of urgency and necessity they need to hear the truth of the gospel. God does not work in a vacuum.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of Christ. People must hear it is of necessity for them to hear the gospel. You are the means by which God uses to seek out and save lost sinners.

You're the instrument. It's by you. It's by us speaking the gospel into these people's lives. It's planting seeds.

as one unsafe person said. So there's a sense of urgency there's a sense of necessity when we're giving someone the gospel.

So here's his response he obeyed Jesus' command immediately with joy. Then look at verse 7 look at the contrast and when they heard it or when they saw it they all began grumbling they all grumbled saying he's going to be the guess of a man as a sinner.

[20:51] The polar opposite response from the crowd they grumbled they whined they were offended they complained Jesus' intention to stay with this hated despised tax collector it offended them.

Oh we welcomed Jesus' miracles I mean yeah we weren't that but as for his personal association Jesus you're an idiot what do you know why are you doing this in the Greek text the first word is with sinners and that's done for emphasis to express the deep offense from the crowd because these tax collectors took advantage of their own people and Jesus you're going to stay with this guy are you crazy no way this grumbling grumbling crowd reminds us of the grumbling Pharisees remember that chapter 15 verse 2 the tax gathers and the sinners are coming near Jesus to hear him and both the Pharisees and the scribes they grumbled complained they whined these people they haven't learned a thing

Jesus reaches out and hangs with sinners pointing to them the way to God which is himself that's what he's doing his purpose his whole plan his goal he's seeking out these sinners sinners once again Jesus was charged with associating with sinners they didn't understand it was these people need to be saved they need salvation they need the truth they need to hear the gospel they need to be reached they need to be sought and I'll tell you if you begin to hang out with sinners you may face some repercussions for it people may be offended they may mock you they may disassociate from you but don't the drunks need Christ don't drug addicts need Christ don't

Muslims need Christ doesn't the Mormon just down the street from you doesn't he need Christ we have a Muslim right across the street from us Mormons one two three four five houses down from us and other Mormons just across the street from them don't they need Christ too they all need Christ seeking out the lost not only must we be urgent have a sense of urgency and necessity when we're giving people the gospel but we must also be bold and courageous with the gospel toward others is it your neighbor you need to be bold and courageous with your relative your co-worker your friend now mind you it doesn't mean you don't do that

I'll act like I don't know you if you do I've never seen this person before in my life I don't know they don't go to this church but people you know and hang out with I'll tell you it's needed in Jerome would you keep praying for Jerome Daniel and I we've been going up there Dan's been coming up with me I appreciate that on Fridays and we want to see a church birthed in Jerome talking with Randy Heffner pastor at Village Park Baptist Church last week and we were talking about Jerome

and he said he said to me I was talking doing phrases and he said in other words you want to see a church birthed in Jerome yes that's the term that's exactly what I want to see it's birth it just happens God brings it about that's what I want to see what I want to see that we are we are all called to reach out to others with the gospel we're called to break out of our comfort zones and proclaim

[25 : 56] Christ Jesus God loves to love on the most unexpected people to show his mercy like a despised tax collector seeking the lost and then saving the lost that's the next point verse 8 and 9 and Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord Lord behold half of my possessions I will give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I will give back four times as much saving the lost we have to answer a couple questions because we see this in verse 8 the first question we want to ask ourselves is when did Zacchaeus say this when did he say this statement when did he make this statement was it during or after dinner with Jesus before others in his house at an unknown time with visitors around during a conversation just between him and

Jesus was it the next day with a bunch of people around was it immediately after he came down from the tree did Jesus already enter Zacchaeus house before Zacchaeus said these words we don't know the timing we don't know the timing of the statement but it does seem like he said it in a public format and it seems like Zacchaeus said this after his conversion because Jesus is going to say today salvation comes he's saying this as a result of his conversion after him being converted to Christ after him deciding to follow Jesus so it seems like he took a formal stand before all in Jericho declaring what had happened to him and how he changed so it seems like it's happened so that's the first question what did he make this statement seems like it was some formal setting with other people around in public a second question though what's the importance of

Zacchaeus words notice the verbs he uses here two verbs I will give to the poor if I defrauded anyone of anything I will give back give and give back these are present results as far as Zacchaeus was concerned Zacchaeus would display both repentance and great happiness in what he was going to do these two actions are a reflection of his repentant faith because of meeting with Jesus the faith is not mentioned explicitly it's not you don't see it mentioned explicitly these two actions imply that faith had truly come into his life and Jesus later remarks about salvation and guarantees that these are present even future actions in other words

Zacchaeus had a true change of heart God transformed him from a love of money to a lover of Jesus to the point where he actually put himself in financial jeopardy since Zacchaeus encountered Jesus it led him to a true saving faith in Jesus which led him to change the way he handled his money instead of taking advantage of people he now was going to serve people so what did you decide to do here's his money take half cut it in half I'm going to give that away so that's gone so now you have the other half and then of this other half the remaining 50% he's going to make restitution four fold four times if he cheated somebody 20 bucks 20 times he's going to repay them 80 bucks if he cheated somebody 500 bucks he's going to give them back 2,000 2,000

I did my math stop what are you laughing for rude the total opposite response of the rich young ruler am I going to give up all my stuff I don't want to do that this was huge short tax collector who was an unclean criminal who took advantage of his own people and just half gone and then fourth okay I owe you \$2,000 I owe you \$5,000 I owe you \$20,000 there you go he's going to put himself in financial jeopardy and financial ruin but he didn't care you know what makes this even more important the chunk half gone to give away and the other half to make restitution in Judaism you were considered generous if you gave away 20% to give more you'd be an idiot he would say oh that's foolish in

[31 : 45] Judaism it's like that's foolish you don't want to do that Zacchaeus decided to give away 50% he put his entire fortune in jeopardy by doing this but even more to make legal restitution for extortion and actually Michael Matthews mentioned this in the adult class it was 20% that was required but Zacchaeus submitted himself to the harsher double penalty in the mosaic law that was imposed on criminals they would have to give four times that this showed a true change of heart he took seriously what he had done the evidence of true genuine saving faith heart change was seen in his action toward others he became an example of how to handle money generously as

Jesus exhorted in chapter 12 verse 33 when Jesus said sell your possessions and give to charity make yourselves purses which do not wear out an unfailing treasure in heaven where no thief comes near nor moth destroys verse 34 for where your treasure is there will your heart be also one writer said instead of a passion to get Zacchaeus now had a passion to give see this was a huge

point for Jesus because what we treasure is seen how we spend our money oh no not this again yes yes it comes up again if we are givers we're giving to others that shows our true heart if we hoard our money that shows a selfish pride for the only focus is upon self and the stuff of this life where your treasure is that's where your heart is how you spend your money is a reflection of your heart upon what or upon who do you spend your money too much chocolate

I was going to say that right before you went out the door got you what or who is most important to you well Jesus made it abundantly clear time after time after time after time it's pointless to talk about loving him trusting him believing him following him enjoying forgiveness oh I have forgiveness in Jesus man awesome it makes no difference unless it makes a difference in your wallet in your stuff one might have even said this generosity and giving he said those are pillars of discipleship is stuff more important alcohol more important food more important having said that we need to be careful that we don't go to the extreme that if we give

God will financially prosper us you know what I'm talking about the deceitful promise given from those in the prosperity gospel send me money and God will bless you right that's what those false teachers say so we're not talking about that along that same line that we will gain God's approval if we give give give to others that's not going to give God's approval look friends there's plenty of people in the world who give loads of money to charity and they're going to hell it's not about you giving money away that's not what it's about it's about the heart the change of the heart it's first humbling yourself it's giving yourself to Jesus it's responding in repentant faith to Jesus who transforms you I just want to give to others

I want to serve them how can I serve others it doesn't matter if this is offending to you or that's offending to you it doesn't matter to you you have a heart to give it's pouring out of you it's pouring out from you and it is true that God will provide for your needs as you have the mindset of making persons which do not wear out of making God first and foremost instead of being a slave to your wallet or a slave to your stuff verse nine and Jesus said to him today salvation has come to this house because he too is a son of Abraham Jesus responded to

[37 : 24] Zacchaeus which was really intended to be heard or understood by all true salvation has come to this house in words to Zacchaeus relationship with God has been restored deliverance has come the camel has gone through the eye had Jesus visit deliverance came to Zacchaeus displayed by his actions of repayment and restitution here was true repentant faith why because he too is the son of Abraham what does that mean huh there's two parts to this first his response to faith made him a true son of Abraham why because is Abraham responding in faith Zacchaeus was responding in faith so he was a true son of

Abraham the second part to this his vocation does not exclude him from access to God his ethnicity a Jew made his response to God most appropriate in other words this is the way that all Jews should respond to Jesus see the problem was not that he was a tax collector the problem was he was a sinner the problem is not your vocation the problem is who you are but being a sinner does not keep one from appealing to God for mercy as a matter of fact those are the requirements you are required to see yourself for who you really are a sinner who needs mercy you have to see that and acknowledge that and confess that see the crowd didn't get it and people today still don't get it they think they need to clean up their lives don't they

I have to clean up my life then I can come to God no that's exactly what God hates God hates that come as you are and let him change you come to God with humility admitting you are nothing you need mercy and compassion and should be rightfully judged by God if he doesn't give you grace you cry out to him give me grace give me mercy grace and peace how can this be for a vile sinner remember God loves to love on losers who admit they need him the call is to all outcasts become outcasts come follow Jesus and find forgiveness of your sins he's your

Messiah he's your Lord he's the son of man he's God's servant seek the lost save the lost last it's his purpose this is the whole purpose this is the purpose statements one of the key verses in the whole gospel one of the key verses in all four of the gospels one the key verses in all the new testament one of the key verses in all the Bible for son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost this whole situation with Zacchaeus and help to sum up Jesus mission the purpose for which he came he came to seek and to save that which was lost that is to seek and save sinners Zacchaeus transformed life displayed the fulfillment of

Jesus mission of seeking and saving the lost reminds us of the old testament passage in Ezekiel 34 where God says I'll be a shepherd to my people I will seek them out I will save them Jesus was

Jesus is the instrument through which God works to shepherd his people one writer says Jesus mission is to initiate relationships with those who do not know God and call them to come to know him end quote the only way people can come to know God is through Jesus Christ I said that to somebody I said oh that's your interpretation how convenient isn't it to throw that out very convenient oh well that's your interpretation you know they meddle with the [42 : 52] Bible you know that right oh yeah with that part not the part that you just quoted me just a moment ago right that's normally how it works they want to pick and choose you can't do that when Jesus says I am the way of the truth and the life no one comes to the father but through me what are you going to do with that you embrace that you reject that you can't say well you know there's probably like a variant there or something no there's not this is vital Jesus initiates seeking the lost proclaiming salvation to them and we also know God initiates salvation in hearts of people too remember chapter 18 verse 27 the disciples say who can be saved this is impossible the things impossible with men are possible with God to respond to

Jesus one must see they truly need him specifically their need of forgiveness that comes only through Jesus and the only way someone is going to see that is when God works in the sinner's heart what a great picture to end this section of Luke what a great breather for us because we see that Zacchaeus he's the prodigal son he's the lost coin he's the lost sheep he was the camel that went through the needles eye some rich people do trust Jesus and as a shepherd goes and looks for his sheep so Jesus goes and seeks them out rich or poor famous or unknown healthy or sick all are called to respond to the savior by following him and she or he will receive forgiveness of sins but you must be humble you must be broken and be as it says in Isaiah 66 contrite of spirit trembling at his word recognizing they truly need God to save them see the response to the gospel is rooted in a right view of God and a right view of yourself I was saying this to a guy in Jerome on Friday this is what it comes down to the fact that I said to him you and I we have a small view of God and we have a big view of us a big view of humans that needs to flip you need to have a small view of humans and you have to have a big view of God God is absolutely just righteous perfect pure far above us the creator ruler of all and said to him he is infinite and since he is infinitely

God sin becomes infinite thus he deserves infinite punishment who are we rebellious willfully ignorant selfish prideful greedy self seeking stuff loving people who want to do our own thing we need God to be gracious to us because he should judge us shouldn't he and yet he doesn't in Jesus alone he doesn't condemn us for there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus what a fitting climax to Jesus mission and ministry right here in this short passage we see Jesus concern and initiation toward lost sinners the faith response of a rich man the display of true repentance and his interaction toward others the salvific way to use our resources and our inability to see God's ways unless he moves in our hearts amazing in these ten verses is what we see how Jesus reached out and cared for sinners and the sinner came in with humility and welcomed Jesus with great joy he was transformed his life the values in his life just flipped God God was so generous to the sinner that became the basis for which he would show great generosity toward others that's why we we give right what's the basis what's the motivation by which we want to give and serve others because God has served us God has been gracious to us God has given himself to us so we just want to spew that on someone else on others we just want to do that because that was spewed out upon us in

[48 : 16] Jesus true faith brings joy forgiveness humility and transformation what a nice thing for us to see here that the lost sheep has finally been found by Jesus isn't that good relish in this time to come follow Jesus take a few moments and ponder what we've seen in God's word think about let your mind dwell upon the gospel let your mind dwell upon the truth of the good news of Jesus and how he went out to seek and to save you give him praise give him thanks in your time of pondering and thinking and then we'll after a few moments we'll do a time of giving we'll sing songs of response to him okay this

I was to