

Luke 19:1–10; 21:1–4

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- [0 : 00] from Luke 19 verses 1 through 10 and Luke 21 verses 1 through 4. Luke 19, 1 through 10.
- He entered Jericho and was passing through, and there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich, and he was seeking to see who Jesus was.
- But on account of the crowd, he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.
- 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.
- And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.
- [1 : 14] 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.
- For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 21 verses 1 through 4. Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box.
- And he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, for they all contributed out of their abundance.
- But she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.
- Well, good morning. Welcome to Christ Church Chicago. And welcome back, those of you who were gone over the Christmas holiday. It's good to have you back in the neighborhood.
- [2 : 24] Good. I'm going to give you three quotes from three luminaries. Let's go first with my grandma. Money may not be everything.
- But a little bit sure does help along the way. That's Central Illinois wisdom. Let's go with Billy Graham.
- Tell me what you think about money, and I can tell you what you think about God. Ooh. For the two are closely related. A man's heart is closer to his wallet than almost anything else.
- Let me give you the third. It's Jesus, not me, who said, you cannot serve both God and money. May not be everything.
- My grandma. But a little bit along the way sure does help. Tell me what you think about money. I might actually tell you what you think about God.
- [3 : 35] Well, you know, you can't serve God and money. If Billy Graham is right, if I look at what I have and equate it to the condition of my heart, and what I spend it on is an indication of my appetite, then am I investing toward God or toward myself?

I love these two little vignettes, didn't you, in the Scripture reading? These two characters, this powerful man and this impoverished woman, both instrumentally placed by Luke to teach us something about money, but about God, most significantly about our heart toward God concerning our use of money.

Both of these people, Zacchaeus and the widow, are commended to us for their decision to steward their life and resources toward God.

I love that they sit on two ends of the economic strata. I love that they function in Luke's gospel as bridges into significant moments in the ministry of Jesus.

We're not preaching through Luke's gospel, but take a look with your own eyes on that Zacchaeus narrative. It's the last personal encounter Jesus has before he enters into Jerusalem, the city, at the close of his life.

[5 : 51] I find that interesting that we're moving toward the most significant week in the life of Jesus, and the last encounter he has is to go talk to somebody who's wealthy and needs to learn the lesson.

In other words, Jesus is ready to enter in, not, whether you have the joy of giving or wondering how to give, whether you have a lot or not.

He closes these personal encounters with a widow, an impoverished one, and Zacchaeus is the bridge to I'm coming in, the woman, the widow, is a bridge in the temple to I'm laying my life down.

And so Jesus is in Luke's narrative entering, laying down all things, and we meet a man who needs to learn how to allow Jesus to enter in, and we see a woman who teaches us what it was like to lay it all down.

So let me just ask us, Jesus is coming in. Are we willing to turn around? Jesus is going to make all things new.

[7 : 38] Are you willing to trust him until he does? Not a bad thing to think about as the year opens. Let's take a look. Glance again on your phone or with the text in front of you, this powerful man.

Can I just make a charcoal sketch, as it were? You know what a charcoal sketch is, right? It's not a full-blown portrait. It's like the beluga whale at the aquarium.

The beluga whale is my favorite fish or sea creature in the aquarium. I know you like the ones that have all the color, but the charcoal sketch of the beluga whale is like God put it down in a number two pencil and then he forgot about it and never got back to it until creation came and out comes the beluga whale, just charcoal like.

Well, let me give you a charcoal sketch of these two individuals, not a full-blown portrait. The Zacchaeus one, of course, gets us into commerce, gives us a city scene.

Jesus isn't yet in Jerusalem. He's on his way to Jerusalem. He's going through Jericho, but there are three lines in chapter 19, verse 10, that kind of reveal the outline of his life.

[8 : 53] First, verse 2, he's a tax collector. No, no, the text actually says what? He's a chief tax collector.

This guy isn't just someone who received accounts receivable. This guy oversaw things in the Department of Revenue.

In fact, he was a Jewish man, which would have meant that he was now working in the city for the state, Rome, and he was collecting taxes from his own citizenry for the state.

And he had risen to a point in life where he's like, I'm in the Department of Revenue. You've seen the trucks, haven't you? And he's in the Department of Revenue.

He had a desk downtown. He oversaw things, which meant, given that Rome is very similar to Chicago, he knew the Chicago way.

[9 : 56] This man was a man of access. This man knew how deals were done, and evidently, when you see how much he ends up giving away at the end, he had made use of himself in that role.

He knew how to align his interests through the collection of funds in the neighborhood in ways where things would happen on behalf of the city, but as a citizen, he was enriched.

Sounds so like us. I don't know if you know it, but before our present alder person took office in Woodlawn, there were three aldermen in Woodlawn since the mid-80s who all got called up on corruption and bribery.

They would have done something simple. Let's say you're going to want to buy a building like this, and you need aldermanic approval, or you want an aldermanic blessing, and you arrive at a price, the price of the building is going to be \$11.

And so you pay the \$11, and the alderman then would say, well, I already told the person who owns the building that we're going to do this for \$10, and so that person gets the full payment of the \$10, but then you get that \$1 that you can now dispense in the way in which you see fit.

[11 : 22] The chief tax collector knew how to work that system. All the books worked, everything looked right. Zacchaeus did quite well. It's a very revealing line.

He was a chief tax collector, there it is, and was rich. That's the second stroke on the charcoal sketch. But take a look down at verse 7, because now you see the citizenry and their view of him.

When they saw that Jesus was running with him, they all grumbled. He's gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. That's the third line on the charcoal sketch. You got Zacchaeus in three lines, chief tax collector, rich, sinner.

I don't know if you know what sin is. It's certainly missing the mark. It's living under the expectation that you should have for yourself that you're unable to fulfill. In the Bible's terminology, it's actually falling short of God's standard, in this case, certainly righteous living that doesn't diminish or demean those around you.

You're supposed to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Zacchaeus, of course, he had forfeited both of those things. He was falling short. His ledger books were full, but his soul account was bankrupt.

[12 : 45] Sinner. One man put it this way, as a man's diversions increase from the world, so do the entanglements from Satan. Yeah, I've seen it now.

I'm still young. If the skelettas are young and they're 40, by the way, where are those envelopes in your house? I'm just curious. No, the, I've seen it.

Money changes things. Money changes relationships, and the more money the Lord sometimes can bless us with the more entanglements come with it.

You can almost see why the uber wealthy line up and go, I got to find a way to give it all away. And I applaud that, giving it all away, but I'm like, man, you can afford to give it all away.

Zacchaeus, I don't know how he slept at night. He probably just thought, you know, I'm just making my way. I'm carving it out. But he was self- interested.

[14 : 08] He was greedy. He kind of reminds me of a young woman. There's a humorous story about this young woman that a character by the name of Johnny Green had fallen in love with.

Story goes like this. Johnny Green comes up to this young woman who he likes a lot. And he says, I want you to know how much I like you. You know, I really do.

I don't have a Rolls-Royce like Johnny Green, but I'd really like to date you. I don't have a bank account like Johnny Green does, but I really have affection for you.

I don't have a downtown tent house like Johnny Green, but I really want to spend time with you. would you like to spend some time with me? And the young woman looks at Johnny Green and says, well, I don't mind spending some time with you, but tell me a little bit more about Johnny Green.

Yeah. But Luke wants you to know more than this just charcoal sketch of Zacchaeus. He wants you to know what happens when he encountered Jesus.

[15 : 27] It's that funny little story, right? He hears that Jesus is coming through town. Oh, he's coming down through the loop actually in Jericho. Yeah, he's going to be on LaSalle Street.

From what I hear, he's on his way to another city, but you've all heard about him the last three years. If you want to see him, now is the time to go. And so this guy hauls out of his office, Department of Revenue, walks out the doors onto the street, and he starts to chart out where Jesus is coming from.

Lots of other people are there. He's running on ahead to figure out when am I going to get the right place to see him. And he climbs up in a tree because he didn't want to get in the fifth row back.

Five deep, he wouldn't be able to catch a glimpse of him. So here he is, this wealthy chief tax collector in the tree because he just wants to say, one day, yeah, I saw him when he came through.

And Jesus, the text doesn't tell us how, but Jesus says was about to pass that way. Oh, I hope he passes your way today.

[16 : 32] He looks up and he says, hey, Zacchaeus, come on down. I don't know how he knew the name, whether somebody told him or so. He looked ahead and said, who's the dude in the tree? Oh, that's Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, come on down.

You're evidently someone who really wants to see me. And he says, I'm coming to your house today. So now here's Jesus entering into Zacchaeus' home. Can you imagine this? This place had to be a nice home, well-appointed, objects that really would catch the eye, the signs of money everywhere.

But notice what it says about him in verse six. He received him joyfully. That's more than, yeah, let's do lunch. in Luke, the word received, particularly in regard to Jesus, is loaded with not just welcome, come in, it's I now trust what you are telling me, I believe.

Can I show this to you? You just look back at Luke chapter nine because this word has a semantic range that has some theological meaning. in Luke chapter nine, you see him using this word earlier.

Well, it's in Luke chapter 10, verse 10. But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, Jesus says to his disciples, go into the streets and say, even the dust of the town that clings to our feet, we wipe against you.

[18 : 05] Nevertheless, know this that the kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Verse eight, whenever you enter into a town and they do receive you, eat what's there, heal the sick, and tell them the kingdom of God has come near to you.

So for Luke, receive is not just a meal, but an embrace of who you say you are. So when Zacchaeus received him joyfully, it means that Jesus came to his house, Jesus began to tell them about the kingdom of God.

Jesus said, you know, Zacchaeus, as I lay out the charcoal sketch for you over lunch, you're a sinner. You're going the wrong way. You got rich on the back of other people.

You've manipulated mankind. You have not loved your neighbor as yourself. In doing so, you certainly haven't loved God with all things. And I must have struck a chord with Zacchaeus.

And he said, yeah, you're right. You're right. And Jesus, we don't know the nature of the conversation, but Jesus now, we do know the outcome of the conversation.

[19:18] Verse 8, Zacchaeus says, behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. If I've defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house.

that, that Jesus says, I'm coming in. And Zacchaeus moves from greed to generosity on the basis of receiving the word about Jesus.

And look at the result, salvation. and it's kind of good to know isn't it that when you get to heaven there's going to be some people that go i was greedy and rich but i turned i repented i followed jesus i actually did righteousness as well i restored things that i had stolen you know the bible says that when the thief becomes a christian he becomes a thief not only so that he doesn't steal anymore not only so that he gets to work but so that what does anybody know so that he would have something to give the goal of of life isn't merely self sustenance it's actually moves to the point where you're actually providing for others making things right generosity i'll put it this way is the natural outcome of the gospel if you are new to christ church chicago you should know that you get you're getting ready to run into a bunch of people that are very generous you're getting ready to run run it you're running into a family that's known for their generosity in fact i would say it's in a deeply embedded trait we are a family that gives we are a family you know i sat down with my kids this this christmas and one of my kids is in finance and i said just give me some of the things that you've learned about money first thing he said well dad we all need to learn how to live on less than we make that's simple because if you live on less than you make you have something to give we are a church that's learned to live on less than we make so that we might have more to go more to give let me just give you three data points you ready for this three years ago internal giving people that go to this church not people outside that like what you do and help you out along the way people in this church three years ago right before we became christ church chicago they were giving 535 000 a year to support the ministry of this church then we became this church and then we went into home ownership and let me tell you what happened two years ago people in this church internal giving went from 535 000 a year to 1.1 million pounding the operating budget on one hand and the capital campaign on the other last year internal giving in this church in two years time then it went from 535 000 to 1.3 million i don't know how that happens i mean look around this is astounding it's a miracle how do you do that i don't know how i don't know how but i celebrate it we have a lot of people like zacchaeus maybe a lot of people are like you know i was going the wrong way but now i'm going the right way so i got rid of something that just fed my appetites and i decided to unload that so i could move something else down the road it's kind of beautiful and you know it makes me think of home ownership a lot i'd love to do a raise your hands which i won't but in your mind he's asking me to raise my hand if i own my own home and probably most of us would be like not me don't own my own home i remember the first time we bought a home it was scary i had to get a

little help from you know we got a little help from previous generations we had to figure out are we going to be able to do this we actually bought the house i couldn't believe how many times we had to go to target and hardware stores i couldn't believe how much money went through our hands like like sand on a beach just to set up the house and then you're wondering can i actually retain our ability to pay to be in the house and over time we're able to do that and that's what's happening in this church family we we're homeowners here's a fun thing if you're not a homeowner and someone says do you own your own property you say no i don't but i go to christ church and i'm a homeowner i got myself a home you're a shareholder in an actual real estate that you are privileged to participate in and steward for the ministries of the gospel you may never own a home jesus never had one boxes have holes birds have nests but the son of man has no home and you may go the rest of your life without a home but you should never think twice about whether you are part of the ownership of something regarding the kingdom he's given us the privileged responsibility of nurturing growing sustaining preserving expanding the ability of god to do gospel work from this corner over 50 years well let's move to the other the woman the impoverished woman another charcoal sketch it's no longer a city scene we're not in the financial district some guy's not walking out of his office climbing up a tree to see jesus pass that way it's a church scene right she's there she's in the temple it's a temple scene it's a woman in church and again three lines reveal her in outline form she's there in contrast to the rich in contrast to the rich who are giving in other words simply giving evidently isn't it according to jesus and luke doesn't want you to miss it but also she's a widow she has no means of supporting herself and then this little line isn't it stunning she puts in two small copper coins notice the detail in the text copper coins so collins who used to teach at the university of chicago has commentary or thoughts on this and the copper coins actually were in this sense the word here is the smallest denomination that would have been put into circulation in contrast to say like a silver coin of the day a silver coin of the day in relationship to the copper coin would have been like 58 copper coins to make one silver coin the closest thing i can get to it even in our own currency is the penny because it's out of copper and it's not silver and it's the smallest coin we have in circulation i almost wonder if this is where we got the phrase two cents let me throw let me give you my two cents now a lot of times when you and i say let me throw my two cents in we just mean let me just say a little bit but actually let me throw my two cents in means let me give you everything i got it's not how much this this woman is astounding to me one of the greatest characters in the scriptures can you see her approaching let me just play it out for you next week sunday morning we're going to do these cards right and i'll come back to it in a minute we'll put it hopefully this week you put it in an envelope

you decide what you're going to give the point between the sacchius and the woman isn't how much you're giving am i in am i all in am i prayerfully in you put it in an envelope you come down here you're going to write it and just be like during the meet and greet time boom and all the way across the platform white envelopes giving it would almost be like jesus was sitting there during the meet and greet time and he saw her approaching in that time the temple the treasury would have been 13 golden chests in the form of horns and you would come up and give your offering and so she comes up she comes to the front quietly on her own and she sees it and jesus is out there and he sees what's happening and look what he says truly i tell you this poor widow has put in more than all of them or they all contributed out of their abundance but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on what was she saying she was saying i completely trust god to supply my needs in a world gone wrong and in light of what happens jesus next teaching is on the destruction of the temple what luke is wanting you to know is that she is trusting god to bring her through this world into an everlasting world rather than trying to create for herself all of her security in this world this is an astounding woman i don't know her name i can't wait to meet her i want to sit with her for a minute complete and total trust it's almost as though she said i know it's not much but but it's all i got she stewarded her resources for maximum spiritual impact there they are those are the two portraits for you this morning zacchaeus teaches you that generosity is a true mark of the gospel if the gospel is taking root in your life generosity is growing because jesus who has given you all things allows you to joyfully begin to give but the widow teaches us that sacrificial giving is a sign of deep spiritual trust when i was young i'm getting ready to close we just got married you know we heard a story about a couple that had just gotten married today and they began to think about their money i was in school in grad school i painted houses in order to pay my bills lisa had a job we had a car it had about 150 000 miles on it when my dad gave it to me fire was coming out of the air things we didn't have a lot she'd drive that thing like a jalopy down out of boston where i was going to school she worked she'd come home at night exhausted i went to school i painted houses by the way i'm not a artist in that sense but so i'm painting houses to pay our bills she's working to pay our bills i remember a couple of things i remember one year saying we want to go to the midwest for christmas we didn't have money i said to lisa i'll find it i'll find it i went out on 1a just outside boston i pulled over our little renal alliance there was a construction crew there

[31 : 59] i went up i said who's running this crew guy told me the name i went over to him and i said i gotta get home for christmas is there anything i can do to make money over the next two days he said come with me hopped in his truck he dropped me off in a parking lot gave me a 90 pound sledgehammer said i'll be back in four hours start breaking this up i thought this is no problem i'm going have you ever held a 90 pound jackhammer you wonder why there are four guys beside a hole in the road because you can't be one guy digging that thing all day long body can't take it after a while i was moving it like by my leg then i had to lift the leg then my leg got so sore i had to lift the jackhammer with the other leg i was beat two days hardest work i've ever done in my life got enough money to get home i'm saying that to say we didn't have a lot let me give you a second story we liked dessert but we didn't have money for dessert but there was a college town gordon college was nearby and these students all had disposable income and by disposable i mean they would drink a soda pop in the game and just throw their can under the bleachers in massachusetts every can brought back to the supermarket is five cents so i'm 23 lisa's 21 we're going off to the game we go in after halftime because you don't have to pay we're going under underneath the bleachers you're like lord help you helm how did she ever marry you we go in with bags we're collecting every can we can through these kids we go to the store we turn in the cans we have enough money to go to the nearby restaurant spit up split a piece of pie and have two cups of coffee man we were living we were living at that time in my life we were giving we just decided we're going to learn this thing when we had nothing we gave something when we had something we learned the generosity of giving even more can i just tell you you can unleash freedom in your life by learning the joyful habit of giving so i'm going to ask you to do something this week i'm going to ask you to go home if you didn't get one of these coming in this isn't the fullness of our church ministry by the way the building preservation fund is just the building it's not our operating costs but i'm going to ask you just to pray i'm going to ask you to have fun have fun think about what could i do over the next three years and bring it back next week and we'll celebrate your ability to turn around and let jesus enter into this in your life your ability to trust that he can supply your need let me give you a couple of examples if you've never given to this church before you're like i don't give let's say you decided to give a thousand dollars a year to christ church chicago just round number thousand dollars a year to christ church chicago is eighty three dollars a month eighty three dollars a month is about two dollars and fifty cents a day two dollars and fifty cents a day is my cup of robust coffee maybe you don't have that that's fine how would i divide that up let's say i was going to give a thousand dollars this year i'm going to see what giving is like well you need to know that this church is

basically a one point one million dollar operation but think of it in terms of percentages seventy percent generally goes to the operation of the church thirty percent needs to go to the preservation of this fund just generally terms so you would be thinking if i'm going to give a thousand dollars next year maybe i should give seven hundred dollars to the normal operating fund and i'm going to set aside three hundred dollars next year and give to the building preservation fund they've given me a card on the back of the card then that they want three years three hundred times three i that's about nine hundred i'm going to put i'm going to try to ask the lord to enable me to give nine hundred to this meanwhile i'm going to give the other seven hundred a year twenty one hundred a year over three years to the church and see what happens i could give you all kinds of ways to think about it i'm just going to ask you to pray about it and whatever you do just do it joyfully but wouldn't it be fun to have like a hundred percent participation you might say i can't think about three years man can't do it y'all y'all run this thing for three years i'm not doing three years i'm going to give one-time gift x bucks next week done that's fine pray commit take the time to fill it out seal it bring it back next week let's see what happens if zacchaeus taught us that generosity is the mark of the gospel and the widow teaches us that sacrificial ties are a sign of deep spiritual trust that i'm inviting you to spiritual health our heavenly father as we look at the opening of a year and this this strange difficult thought that you want us to trust you and that what we do with our money does matter to you i pray that you would just give us a whole family that thrills at the opportunity to steward resources for the kingdom of god we give ourselves to you and to one another in it in jesus name amen all right we're going to get on