

Luke 18:35-19:10

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 August 2016

Preacher: Greg Hendrickson

[0 : 0 0] 878. So, this is the last sermon in our series through the Gospel of Luke. We've looked at the middle section, which is focused on Jesus' journey with his disciples up to Jerusalem.

And Jerusalem is where Jesus is going because that's where he's going to die and rise again, and that's where Christianity is going to start. His followers are going to be there.

And tonight, we've come to, this is sort of the last stop on Jesus' journey. It's the city of Jericho that he's come to. Now, the main theme that we've seen through this whole section is what we might call discipleship. And that just means, what does it mean to follow Jesus? Jesus is teaching his disciples what it means to follow him. Now, they're going to be the ones who, after he leaves, after he dies and rises again and goes back to heaven, they're going to be the ones who lead the church.

But, you know, Jesus doesn't start by saying, here's how you be a good leader. He starts by saying, you need to learn how to follow me before you can learn to lead other people. And so, that's been the focus of what we've been looking at. And this last section we're looking at tonight, we see two new disciples, two people who become, who join Jesus' followers and who show us what it means to be a disciple. So, let's read this passage. We're reading Luke 18, starting at verse 35, going to chapter 19, verse 10. So, here we go.

As he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me.

[2 : 0 4] And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, what do you want me to do for you? He said, Lord, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, 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 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. 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. 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. So tonight we see these two guys. We see the blind man sitting by the side of the road. He's down and out, right? He's disabled. He's dependent. He's desperate. And he cries out to

Jesus. And then we see Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector. He was on top. He was rich. He was in charge of other people. But he was also realized that he needed Jesus too. So let's look at them one by one and see what we can learn from them. So first the blind man, right? He's sitting by the side of the road. He's sitting by the roadside begging. He's an outcast. That's the only thing he can do. He can't see. So he doesn't know how to get around. He can't work, right? What are the jobs in those days? Go out in the fields and, you know, harvest. He can't do any of the jobs that they had back then. And, but he hears that Jesus is going by. And so he cries out. He starts, he decides in his mind, I have to see this Jesus. I have to find him. And, well, at first he says, what's going on, right? And they say, well, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Now, Jesus, the name that we call Jesus is in Hebrew, the name Joshua. And that was a common name. There were a lot of guys named Joshua. And Nazareth was a no-name town. It was sort of like Derby. Okay. Now, no offense if you're from Derby, but I drove through Derby the other day and it had a sign and it said the smallest city in Connecticut. And I'm like, okay, so what? Right?

You're from Derby. Now, if you're from Derby, maybe you can enlighten me. Maybe Derby's got something going for it. But, you know, it's sort of like they say, Joe from Derby is walking by. And you say, so what? But the blind man doesn't say, so what? He says, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Now, that phrase, son of David, means a descendant of the greatest king of Israel. And it's a phrase that you would use to talk about someone who you think would be as great as David. Because God had promised David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne. And so this blind man starts crying out, saying, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And again, the crowd wants to stop him. The crowd's like, what are you talking about? I mean, it's just Joe from Derby. Be quiet. He, you know, if he's important, he doesn't want to deal with you. And the blind man just cries out louder and louder. And finally, Jesus stops. Right? Jesus is not too busy for the blind beggar who nobody else cares about, who's sitting by the side of the road on the bottom of society. Jesus is not too busy. And he says, bring this guy to me. And then he asked him a question. He says, what do you want me to do for you? And I mean, isn't that amazing? That's, that's actually a really good question to ask.

Right? Jesus doesn't assume that what the crowd says is what's true about the guy. He comes to the guy and says, what do you want from me? And the blind man says, Lord, I want to see. Now, do you notice what he calls Jesus? Right? He calls him son of David, right? The coming king. And he calls him Lord. Now that word Lord, it could just mean sir. It was sort of a polite way of addressing a high, a respectful way of addressing a man. But it's also the same word that was used in the Old Testament to speak about God, the Lord. And, you know, it's interesting in the Old Testament, there are two prophecies in the book of Isaiah that talk about someone who's going to come and give sight to the blind. And one of them is Isaiah 61 that Jesus quoted when he stood up in Nazareth at the synagogue and he read this verse and he said, which says, the spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me because he has anointed me. Notice that word anointed. That's what you would do to a king, right? He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, and to bring recovery of sight to the blind. So that's the one passage that says this anointed king is going to come and bring sight to the blind. The other passage says one day God's going to come. And when God comes, the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. That's Isaiah 35 if you want to look at that. Now, I don't know if the blind man knew those passages in Isaiah, but it's interesting. He addresses Jesus in those very ways, as the king and as the Lord. Just like the prophet said, the king's going to come and recovery of sight to the blind and God's going to come. And the blind man calls out to Jesus and says, Jesus, I think you're that. I think you're that one.

And so Jesus heals him. And then he says, your faith, verse 42, recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. And that sentence, it's hard to translate it because you could translate it any one of three ways. You could say your faith has healed you. That would be one way to translate it.

[9 : 32] You could say your faith has saved you. That'd be another way to translate it. You could say your faith has made you well. It sort of means all those three things, right? The word could mean healed, rescued, made whole, made well. And what we see for the blind man is that it's all three, right? He's healed physically. He can see again. And he's healed spiritually. He starts following Jesus along the road. He's made whole. And so Jesus points to this blind man and says, you're an example of faith, right? Now, what is faith? How does the blind man demonstrate faith?

Faith. Well, he demonstrates faith by reaching out to Jesus and crying out to Jesus and saying, I want to see Jesus. And I want to know who this guy really is. And I want to personally encounter him no matter what anybody thinks, no matter what anybody else says, no matter what this crowd says, right? The crowd sort of dismissive. They're like, ah, he's just the guy from Nazareth. And he says, no, no, no. I want to know him. I want to see him. And then they're like, be quiet. He doesn't care about you. And he's like, I don't care. I want to see him. I want to know him. And Jesus says, that's what faith looks like. You know, you might not know a lot about Jesus, but to have faith in him means to say, I want to see him. I want to know him. And I don't want to let anything else get in the way. Not what other people think or anything else. The blind man recognizes Jesus for who he is.

The son of David and the Lord. And he looks to Jesus as the object of his deepest hopes and desires. So the end of this story, verse 43, immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. So this is, this is how what he, this is how he's, he becomes a disciple or how he expresses that he's, he's following Jesus, right?

He follows Jesus. He gives glory to God and he leads other people to praise God. And if you think about what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus, that's a great place to start, to follow Jesus and keep your eyes on him, to give all glory to God and to lead other people in praising God.

And if you read through the gospel of Luke, praising and glorifying God is the proper response when people see Jesus and experience his healing, saving, delivering power. So there's many people who do this, the shepherds, when they saw Jesus in the manger, it says they went and praised and glorified God.

[12 : 28] There was a paralyzed man who was healed by Jesus, picked up his mat and walked and glorified God. After Jesus raised the son of a widow, the crowd glorified God. A leper who was cleansed came back glorifying God. So there's all these examples of people who experience and encounter Jesus and their response is to glorify God. Now you might say like, what exactly does that mean? That sounds like sort of like a, you know, a phrase people throw around in church, glorify God. What does that, what does that actually mean? Well, you know, the word glorious, it means beautiful, weighty, bright, famous.

One definition is having a striking beauty or splendor that brings out feelings of delighted admiration.

So to glorify God means to recognize God in that way. It's to see God not just as, yeah, I believe in him, he's out there somewhere. Or yeah, God says I should do certain things. So I try to do those things sometimes at least. But to glorify God means to just be amazed by him, to be, um, to see his beauty and just be astonished by it. And it's almost like the blind man, like couldn't stop talking about how glorious God was because that's what had captivated his mind and his heart.

It's realizing that God isn't just a means to an end. He's the end for which we were made. You know, it's interesting. The blind man doesn't just be like, Hey, Jesus, you may, you let me see again. That's great. Awesome. See you later. Right. I've got what I want. Right. No, he, he, he can see again and he fixes his eyes on Jesus and glorifies God. So that's the first picture of a disciple that we see in this passage. The blind man, desperate, um, disabled and cries out to Jesus and Jesus heals him and he follows him along the way. All right. Now, second story, Zacchaeus.

Now, Zacchaeus is like the blind man in some ways and the opposite of the blind man in other ways. So like the blind man, Zacchaeus was an outcast, but he was a very different kind of outcast.

[15:10] The blind man was an outcast sort of on the bottom of society. Everybody looked down at him, right? Nobody wanted to, nobody really cared about him. He really couldn't do much. He was dependent.

He was needy, right? Zacchaeus was on the top. He was a chief tax collector. That means he was in charge of the tax collectors and the, the toll collectors in that whole region. And he was rich.

He, he did well for himself. But you know, if you're like the blind man on the bottom, if you've ever been there, if you've been in a desperate situation where people just look down on you and you don't, your life is a mess and you've got not much to offer, you can feel really isolated there. But you can also feel really isolated when you're in charge of everybody else and when you're rich and when you're on the top. And specifically, tax collectors, they were hated and despised along with murderers and thieves, right? Tax collectors made their money partly by collecting money from their own people who didn't have a lot of money, right? They were unpopular people because they had, they, they went around and collected money from everybody else. And the way they got rich is they just increased the rates because basically the Roman government said, okay, you collect in this area and then at the end of the year you bring, you bring me 10,000 denarii or whatever you want to call it, right? \$10,000.

And then whatever else you collect, that's your salary on top of it. So you just, you know, the tax collectors would just keep the taxes high because that would benefit them. And so people hated them, right? But Jesus was different. Jesus was known as a friend of tax collectors, one who welcomed tax collectors into his presence. And so Zacchaeus was drawn to Jesus. Maybe he heard about Jesus from other tax collectors. So what do we see about Zacchaeus? How does he approach Jesus?

How does Jesus respond to him? And then what do we see about being a disciple from him? So he approaches Jesus, sort of in some ways like the blind man, right? He wants to see him, but the crowd's in the way, not because he's blind, but because he's short. And apparently there's a big crowd and he can't see over them. And you know, it would have been dangerous for him to just try to push through the crowd because think about it. He's the guy that nobody likes. And if you walk in the middle of a crowd and you're the guy that nobody likes and you're really rich and everybody knows that's who you are, hey, this is their time. They can beat him up. And there's a big crowd, so maybe the police won't notice.

[18:03] Or maybe the police will be there and the police were notoriously harsh with big crowds and Zacchaeus might get on the wrong side of that. So it was sort of dangerous for Zacchaeus to even go near Jesus when there was a big crowd. So what he does is he sees a tree. Now my son loves climbing trees.

He's six years old. And a sycamore tree, we don't have sycamore fig trees here, but a sycamore tree had lots of low branches. It was a great tree to climb and they could often get really high, even up to 60 feet high. So it was a great kind of tree to climb. It has all these low branches. You can easily get up, keep climbing. And it had big leaves. So you could climb up it and hide there and nobody would see you. And that's what Zacchaeus seems to be doing. He says, I really want to see Jesus. I want to know what he's about, but I want to do it without anybody seeing.

So then, verse 5, Jesus comes walking by. And what does Jesus do? He looks up, calls him by name, tells him, come down right away. And then he says, I must stay at your house today.

That's an interesting word, I must. When Jesus uses that word, I must, it's a word that talks about this is God's divine purpose. It is necessary that I come to your house today. It's God's purpose that I come to your house today. And this is, you know, I mean, imagine this, right? Imagine somebody walks up to you after church tonight and says, hey, I'm coming over. That's the first time they met you.

You think, that's weird. And that was weird back then too. All right? It wasn't something that people did back then. It's the only time in all the gospels where somebody invites themselves over someone else's house. Even Jesus didn't do this very often. So what's, so, so what's going on?

[20 : 28] Or, right. So Jesus invites himself over. So, I mean, again, and again, imagine this. Imagine if you're Zacchaeus, right? You're, you know, basically Zacchaeus was sort of involved in a shady business, right? Sort of like, you know, somebody who might be connected with the mafia or, right, somebody who might've been a drug dealer or some, some, a business that might've earned him a lot of money, but people would sort of look down on him. And so he's coming to a religious teacher. So imagine, right, somebody's involved in a shady business and they walk into church and they think, I want to hear what this church is all about. I'm not a church person. I didn't grow up going here.

So, you know, maybe you sort of sneak in and sit somewhere on the side behind a pillar, right? You think, I don't really want anybody to see me, but I just want to see what's going on. That's sort of what Zacchaeus is doing. And then it's sort of like in the middle of his sermon, if the preacher walks over to you and says, Hey, I see you, I know your name and I want to come to your house, how would you respond? You'd be like, what? Like, I'm going to run away. Or maybe if you're polite, maybe you would say, how about next week? Then I can clean up my house and actually feel, you know, not being, feels, and then I can at least put on a good impression. But Zacchaeus, he doesn't do that.

When Jesus comes to him, he says, it says he received him rejoicing, joyfully. He's like, come, sure. Yes, I want you to come to my house.

And so Jesus comes. If you look at verse 7, what happens when Jesus goes to his house?

What happens is the crowd's hostility and hatred towards Zacchaeus gets transferred to hostility toward Jesus. They start grumbling about Jesus, right? Because the crowd, they would have, they would not have liked Zacchaeus, but then Jesus has publicly identified with Zacchaeus. Jesus says, I'm going to his house. And the crowd is like, oh, I don't like you either. He's gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. Why is he doing that? But isn't this a picture of why Jesus came to earth?

[22 : 59] Jesus came to identify with us in our sin and in our shame. And he did that publicly. He didn't just do that. He didn't just find Zacchaeus privately. He did that publicly.

And he took, he identified with us taking on our sin and shame so that we could have salvation. So that we could be forgiven. So that we could be accepted by God.

So that we could be freed from our sin and shame. Forgiven and welcomed home. And that's what we see Jesus doing with Zacchaeus.

So we've seen how Zacchaeus approaches Jesus, Jesus' response, and finally the result. Right? What does Zacchaeus do? He receives him with joy. Right? Zacchaeus doesn't. And that's a picture of what it means to trust Jesus, just to receive him with joy.

You know, without, nope, there's no pretense. Zacchaeus doesn't try to prove anything. He doesn't say, oh, Jesus, let me go home and clean up my house for an hour and make you a nice meal.

[24 : 05] He just says, come. And I'm so happy to have you. And this is a picture of what the Apostle Paul calls salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ without works.

Now what that means, that's a longer way of putting it, but basically it just means coming to Jesus as you are. And not trying to clean yourself up first. And not trying to put on a good appearance.

It just means coming to Jesus and saying, here I am, just as I am. I'm coming to you. I receive you. And that's part of what it means to believe in Jesus.

It's to come as you are. But the second half of what it means to, but there's a result of that, which we see in verse 8. Right? Jesus says, come as you are.

But when you come to Jesus as you are, you know what? You're never going to be the same. Because if Jesus comes into your house, if Jesus comes into your life and you receive him with joy, your life is never going to be the same.

[25 : 17] You don't need to try to clean it up or fix it up before you come to Jesus. But if you come to Jesus and you truly receive him, you're never going to be the same again. And that's what we see in verse 8. Zacchaeus says, behold, half of my goods I give to the poor.

If I've cheated anyone of anything, I'll restore it four times. Right? Zacchaeus realizes, I have all that I need in Jesus.

So I don't need to hold on to my riches anymore. I can be generous. I can give them away freely and joyfully. And he says, I want to make things right with anybody that I've wronged.

And you know, those are two expressions of what the Bible calls repentance. Basically, when Jesus comes into our lives, that our attitude changes.

And we say, I want to make amends. If I've wronged anybody, I want to fix that. I want to do what I can to make it right. And we become generous and joyful.

[26 : 24] End of this passage, Jesus says, today salvation has come to this house. Since he, Zacchaeus, also is a son of Abraham. That means who's included in the promise of God's blessing. For the son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

The lost. So here's what we see tonight. Right? This last sentence of Jesus, this is sort of the main point. The son of man, Jesus Christ, came to seek and rescue people who are lost.

That word lost can also mean ruined, destroyed, perishing, dying, passing away. That's what we see in the blind man.

Right? The blind man was on the bottom. He was desperate. He was dependent. He was disabled. And we see Jesus has come for people like him.

If that's you, if you're desperate, come to Jesus. Cry out to him. He's not too busy. He'll come to you. And he'll help you to see him.

[27 : 30] So that you can follow him. And so you can bring glory to God. And lead others in giving praise to God. God will give you an amazing purpose for your life. And Jesus has also come for people like Zacchaeus who are on top.

And who, maybe other people look at Zacchaeus and think he's got all that he wanted. He's got more than he needs and all that he wants. But his life is empty.

And he realized he needed something more than power and money. So the invitation is seek after Jesus like Zacchaeus did.

And you'll find that he has come to seek you. Receive him into your house with joy. And your life will never be the same again. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for this good news.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for this good news.

[28 : 56] And we thank you for this good news. And we thank you for this good news. And we thank you for this good news. So that we could be healed and restored. And called sons and daughters of Abraham.

People who are blessed by you. Lord, we pray that we would receive you with joy.

And that our lives would never be the same again. As we learn what it means to follow you. Pray in Jesus' name. Amen.