

If This is True This Changes Everything

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- [0 : 0 0] Luke chapter number 19, as they were singing that song, I thought of a testimony I'd heard years ago. I was in New Delhi, and a man told me that he went to college in Canada. And as a college student, his roommates would invite him to go to this church with him.
- And he had never been to the church before, studied different major religions, but had never heard of the story of Christ. And they convinced him to come. They were doing a vacation Bible school.
- And he walked into a room, and he said on a screen there was a talking tomato and a talking cucumber. And I'm like, I know those guys. They do good work. And the talking cucumber talked about Jesus, a God who had come to earth, the king that had left his throne and came and died upon a cross for him.
- And he left that room, and he went and found the lady in charge, a lady in her late 70s. And he went in there, and he said, I've studied all the religions of the world, and I know about all the gods, and I've never heard about a God that came and died for me.
- And she took the Bible, opened it up, and taught him the gospel. And he was back there in New Delhi sharing that same story. How many kings? One. One.
- [1 : 0 4] And I'm so thankful we know. So as we look at the story of Zacchaeus, there's two things that I've written down. As regards to the church, that we're going to be obedient. There'd be two areas that we'd need to look at.
- Those teaching the Bible were able to accurately and effectively bring the gospel to bear into our real lives. Not just in this room, but in every room. We need to help, when you teach and I teach, we need to help see that the gospel has great implications on how we live our lives.
- Gospel truths, the doctrines we believe, are going to affect our behavior. Secondly, are we going to respond with appreciation for how the gospel alters our lives?
- We ought to be people that have done what we've done over the last 40 minutes. It's to celebrate what Jesus Christ has done. So that's what we're doing today. We're looking at how the gospel should be lived out in our lives in 2022.
- A song written by a Truett McConnell graduate called This Changes Everything. It really caught my attention because it seemed like something that it starts off like this.
- [2 : 0 6] It says, I grew up in a little town. I grew up in a town of 500. When me and my family's in town, it's 500. It's less than that when I'm not. I grew up in a little town. I used to sing in an old church house there in the pew where I used to hide.
- I learned the story about the man who died. Well, I was sure that I heard that he got back up. But as we broke the bread and drank the cup, it seemed the faces told another tale.
- They were as dry as the bread was stale. Did I miss something? Was I not supposed to cry? Did they hear, preacher, Jesus is alive? If this is true, this changes everything.
- If this is real, I've got to tell the world. If he is God, then I've got a choice to make. If I believe, then I must follow him. If this is true, it changes everything.

So it tells the story of people taking the Lord's Supper and that their faces were as stale as the bread was, meaning that the gospel was not changing who they were. They weren't rejoicing in it.

[3 : 08] Zacchaeus didn't say it in these words, but he could have said it. If this is true, it changes everything. And then we get to see that post-salvation experience being lived out in his life.

After meeting Jesus, we get to see what it looks like and we get to rejoice with him. So the gospel will change this little man in a big way. The Bible goes out of the way to tell us that he's small.

So he's heard that. He's probably heard that all eternity, right? Since he's been there. So the retelling of this story, real quick. And I know most of you know it and you've sung it, but it's such a great story.

I want to make sure that maybe our kids in here, those that are new to studying the Bible, really want to make sure that you know it. It's such a phenomenal story. So Jesus is passing through Jericho, and that's where we ended last week.

He's on his way to Jerusalem. That king, the God of heaven, who has left the throne, that has come down here, taken on the form of a man to die for us. He's headed to the cross. Now, Zacchaeus knows that Jesus is coming, and when he's coming, there's a large crowd with him.

[4 : 07] When it said the press, it wasn't the paparazzi, it wasn't a full court defensive press and basketball. It's a lot of people. Think going to Disney World and everybody be on the curb, and you don't have any place to be at, right?

Or the coming parade. And so you're there along the way, and so Zacchaeus says, Here comes Jesus. I'm going to get ahead of the crowd, and I'm going to come. And because I am a wee little man, I'm small in stature, he climbs up into a tree, which is always awkward for any grown man, especially on the day when they would wear robes, all right?

I'm sure it was awkward for him. So he gets up into this, and here he comes, and as Jesus is passing by, he just wants to get a glimpse of this man. And then Jesus gets here, and he looks up in the tree, and he says, Zacchaeus.

And Zacchaeus is up there like, Who me? And Jesus is like, No, the other Zacchaeus that's up in the tree. Of course you, all right? No, he didn't say that, but Zacchaeus. And so he's got to be thinking, How does he know my name?

And then Jesus invites, he says this. He says, I'm going to your house today. And Zacchaeus didn't have a cell phone, didn't get the call ahead, all right?

[5 : 13] But it says that he came down from that tree, and I imagine that was awkward, all right? He comes down from the tree with everybody, and they're looking at him. Because what I think would happen here, because remember, this is what's happening.

There's not just Jesus and Zacchaeus in the story. There's a bunch of other people that are murmuring and complaining. And the crowd is always part of the story here, the way that they're acting.

And they're murmuring. And I can just imagine somebody elbowing and saying, Finally, that stingy little man is going to be set into place. Finally, this rabbi Jesus is going to tell this man, You have betrayed your people.

You shouldn't do this. But it says Zacchaeus received him with joy. And so then they go home, Zacchaeus' house. And as he is there, his life begins to fall in the place in such a wonderful way.

And the ending of the passage of the day, it says that Jesus came to seek and save that which is lost. He came, it says, looking for the lost sheep of Israel. Who would be more likely declared righteous on the last day?

- [6 : 19] The rich young ruler or this tax collector, this chief of tax collectors? We just have the story. The rich young ruler, he walks away. But this tax collector receives him joyfully.
- And they murmured about it, that he has gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. Zacchaeus is a poster child for the impossible. Remember Luke 18, 26, after Jesus said that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for those that have think themselves rich to go through that.
- And they said, who can be saved? It seems impossible. Zacchaeus seems to be the poster child for the impossible. It says that he is rich. And he's rich in all the wrong ways here and the things of life.
- So he gets a glimpse of Jesus by climbing a tree and getting over the crowd. Verse 3, and he sought to see Jesus who he was. He sought to see Jesus who he was and could not for the press because he was of little stature.
- So instead of walking away like the rich young ruler, he ran, he climbed a sycamore tree in order to get a glimpse of Jesus, to see Jesus for who he is.
- [7 : 32] You know, you and I have been given the same polite invitation. I speak about this passage in John 1, 39 quite often because those that were following after John the Baptist, when they saw the Messiah, they came after him and they said, are you the one we've been waiting for?
- And he says, come and see. It's a polite invitation that Jesus extends to you but with a definite promise. He invites you to come and see him as he is.
- This rich ruler here didn't see Jesus and the cost of not following Jesus was great for him but he couldn't see it over his circumstances. The rich young ruler that walked away a couple of weeks ago, he lost forgiveness of his sins and reconciliation with the Father.
- He lost the joy of having fellowship with the Father and the Son. He lost the joy of seeing others delivered from the same darkness. He lost the abundant life that Jesus would have given him.
- He walked away from it all. But Zacchaeus, he wasn't going to let that happen. He looked over the crowd. I made mention of the crowd last week but I want to continue doing that because it's my great fear or concern that we're never part of that crowd.
- [8 : 37] This is the crowd of those that are not equal. The crowd that would say that Zacchaeus is not equal. Can you imagine being the family that gets there early, that gets the good seat, that gets along the curb, they know that Jesus is coming.
- Many of you that have kids, you have some picture of you with your kids on your shoulder at a parade so they can see. The kid looks happy but you know your legs are about to break, right? It's like you've been standing there for such a long time.
- And so here are these people and when Jesus comes by and he looks up over the crowd that is here and he sees Zacchaeus and he chooses just the worst among them.
- He's not just a tax collector, he's a chief tax collector. He's got a pyramid scheme going on here, alright? So he says, Rome, I'm going to give you your money but in giving you your money I'm going to take a percentage for myself and we know that he does at the end of the story.
- And so he has other people taking off the top here, taking money from it. He'd be somebody that would be despised. And these people, when Jesus stops and he looks over the crowd and he looks at Zacchaeus, these people that are murmuring, they would be people that would look at a person like Zacchaeus and say, he's not equal.
- [9 : 51] And I get that phrase from Matthew chapter number 20 verse number 12. Jesus teaches a story to get our attention about the attitude that we can have. Matthew 20 verse 12 says, saying this, last have wrought but one hour, thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden and heat of the day, have made them equal unto us.

So I got a story inside of a story here, which I hear that's what Lewis has done in the Christmas play as well, alright? It's a story inside of a story. So I'm going to give you a story inside of a story. So now we're not with Zacchaeus, we're at another story.

This is a story where Jesus is telling about a man that owns a property and he invites some people to work. He goes out early in the day and he finds some workers and he offers them a certain price for it.

Then he goes out in the middle part of the day and he finds some more workers and they're offered the same amount. And then towards the very end of the day where the people are just signing up, they're filling out their forms, they get out there to work and the whistle blows and they say, alright, you're done for the day.

Hour, two hours of work, I'm not sure. And then now they are lining up. And not just lining up, those that came last are the first ones in the line to receive their pay. Well, the people that had been there that had borne the heat of the day the whole time, they looked at these other groups of people and they said, they are not equal to us.

[11 : 12] And Jesus is always addressing that attitude with the crowd that would say, you are not equal to us. I would put you in the three groups of categories in here. There's those of you in life that grew up maybe with Christian families and you knew better, so you did better.

You are the good boys and good little girls, alright? You've been reading the Bible, you knew better and you did better. That's some of you in here. You may have your one of us still this day, you may have whatever story.

There's another group in here that you didn't know better and so you didn't do better. You weren't taught the scriptures, you weren't taught what was right and wrong and you grew up with no moral compass.

You grew up not knowing what is right and what was wrong and so you didn't know better and you didn't do better and then some of you in here, you knew better but you didn't do better, alright? You knew what you were supposed to do but you didn't, alright?

I won't ask you to raise your hand in here but I know who you are and you know who I am, alright? You knew better but you didn't do better. All three groups of people, we needed the grace of God. If he wouldn't have left the throne of heaven, none of us would have any chance there.

[12 : 18] And so I don't look at you and you shouldn't look at me and say they're not equal to us. They shouldn't look at Zacchaeus, they should have said yes, the least among us here is getting grace which means maybe there's some grace for me but they didn't, they murmured because we saw the story of the prodigal son is that we're okay with other people getting grace as long as it isn't taking anything from us.

And the story where they said those that, they're not equal to us, they felt like they were losing something. But then Jesus in that story and it's the owner of the house that's speaking but these are the words in which Christ would be given here is this.

So when Jesus says in Matthew 20 verse 13, he said, friend, I do thee no wrong. So the man that worked all day, he didn't do them any wrong, he gave them a job, he gave them a pay, he had taken nothing from them, he had shown him grace.

He said, I've done you no wrong but here is the challenge for that they are not equal to us crowd. It comes in Matthew 20 verse 15 where it says this, this is what the household owner says about the workers but it's what the God of heaven can say about all mankind.

He says, is it not lawful for me to do that I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? I can extend grace however I want.

[13 : 41] This story was not about you. This story is about me and my glory and giving grace. So not everybody was happy for Zacchaeus that day. Apparently nobody was happy for Zacchaeus that day and that crowd.

They were murmuring but this is a new crowd and we're part of that crowd that says, we are so happy for you Zacchaeus because we know there's grace for you, we know there's grace for us and we know there's grace for anybody that you will ever meet.

Those that knew better but did better and now they think they've earned salvation. Those who didn't know any better and they did wrong and now they don't care. There's grace for every one of us. By God's grace we will not be this crowd.

He thought he was looking for Jesus but he was only getting into the place to where Jesus would find him. He lost his pride to climb that tree that day. He was looking.

He said, every place in this world that I try to find any type of happiness I can't find it. Maybe if I climb to the top of that tree and I get a glimpse of Jesus I'll give it a shot. He had to look over the crowd of people that were fans but they were not followers of Jesus.

[14 : 43] Good book called, about being fans of followers. Kyle Alderman wrote it many years ago but we live in a time where there's many fans of Jesus that aren't followers of Jesus.

And so these were fans that day that were there for the parade but they were not followers of Jesus. Next year, at the beginning of next year we have two banners here that will say helping people find and follow Jesus.

I can make a banner in Photoshop in about 30 minutes but making a banner in Photoshop that says helping find and follow Jesus will not mean that that's true about us as a church. The individual decisions that each of us make that will say we're not part of that crowd that says they are not equal to us.

We're part of that crowd that says we receive grace and we're going to rejoice when anybody else receives grace. We'll take those statements that are on the wall and make them true about us. Helping people find and follow Jesus.

So now we get to the place where Jesus goes home and he came to the place in verse 5. He looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for the day I must abide at thy house.

[15 : 45] We thought Jesus was passing through, the disciples thought he was passing through but there's been a change of plans. And so look at the order here in verse 5. For the day I must abide at thy house. I'm coming to your house.

Then in verse number 8, Zacchaeus stood and said, the Lord, behold Lord, the half of my goods I will give to the poor. He says, I'm coming to your house. And then Zacchaeus says, behold Lord.

This is so precious. This is like a little child saying, look dad, look at my expression of love for you. This was not a man trying to merit favor with Jesus, trying to wave him down from a tree.

This was not a man trying to earn his salvation. This was a man that when Jesus looked at him, he said, I'm going to your house. Zacchaeus receives him joyfully. And then he looks around and he says, I have Jesus in my house.

What can I do to express my love? And he says, behold Lord, this is what I want to do to express my love to you. And it flows out of his life into the lives of other people.

[16 : 49] Behold Lord. Look dad, this is what I want to do. This is good news for us. First of all, the changed life is a result of salvation, not the means in which we merit it.

This is not a story like the Wizard of Oz where it says, if you bring me the broom, you'll have an audience with the Wizard of Oz. That's not what he's saying here. He's not saying, Zacchaeus, once you get your life in order and you do all these things, then I'm going to come to your house and we're going to have a talk.

He says, Zacchaeus, I'm coming to your house today. So that's good news for us. Secondly, grace will always really bring a change. It has brought a change in his life.

Jesus is coming to dinner, really meant something. Inviting someone into your home for dinner is to invite them into your real life, especially when you're given no notice. I've always thought that one of the best things that we could do to help have hospitality in our church is if everybody just showed up in your house unannounced.

You know what you would find if we all showed up in each other's houses unannounced? That we live in those places, alright? That the way we live is not the way we set it up for you to come and visit. Sean Chappell said last week about those towels, those decorative towels.

[17 : 57] We don't use those decorative towels during the time, but just coming in there. Jesus didn't give him any warnings. He says, I'm coming into your life as it is right now. You don't have any time to clean up.

I'm coming there. And the gospel begins to reshape his life. Zacchaeus demonstrates the creativity. There's nothing more creative than a new creation. The Old Testament says give 10%.

Zacchaeus says, I'm going to give 50%. The Old Testament says, if you take from somebody, give them 20% more than you took. Zacchaeus says, I'm going to give 400%.

He is on a great adventure. The gospel is changing things. Jesus had knocked upon the door and asked to come over for dinner. Revelation 3.20 speaks about, I'll knock on the door, I'll come in, I'll sup with him, and he with me.

He wants to come into our daily lives. He wants to be involved in every aspect of our lives. Your workplace, your time at home and work, and he wants to be with you between your work and your home. He wants to be involved in your parenting decisions, your retirement decisions.

[18 : 59] The gospel speaks to every area of our lives. And so if you've climbed the tree and you've got over the crowd and you've got a glimpse of Jesus, now you must deal with the implications of having met him.

And so what is now happening is that the gospel has come to him. We read a great story that kind of gives you a great imagination of what this would look like, that Zacchaeus is taking this. He knocks upon the door, a man named Judah is in the house, and his daughter says, there's a man at the front of the house.

He's looking out the window, and he seems to be a little bit short, all right? And so Zacchaeus is at the front door, and Judah says, see what he wants. The young daughter comes over and speaks to him. He says, my name's Zacchaeus.

I'm a tax collector. I need to speak to your father. She runs back and says, it's Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector. And here's Judah, mumbling under his breath, he is not getting another dollar from us. We've paid everything.

I don't want to see this man. He's walking to Zacchaeus, and he probably wants to say things, but he can't. Zacchaeus is a place of position, and he looks at him, and there's Zacchaeus with his bag in his hand, and he says, what are you doing here?

[20 : 02] And Zacchaeus says, I am deconstructing the idols of my life. He says, I've given you everything. He says, I know. I've come to you to repay you what I've taken from you.

I've kept all the records on it. I know exactly. Judah would look at him and say, that seems to be more money than I could have ever overpaid you. He says, I know. I'm going to give you four times what I took.

He says, what is going on here, Zacchaeus? He says, that rabbi Jesus was coming through, and I met him. And as my life began to seem like it was falling apart, it began to fall into place.

And so now I'm here today, and what I realize is that I thought I was rich, but I was really poor. And now I want to give this back to you as an expression of my love for that Savior, for Jesus that I met.

And there's Judah looking around, just can't believe what has happened in this testimony of this man. And maybe he would walk back to his wife, and he would say, you know what, dear? What is this? This is the money Zacchaeus gave.

[21 : 02] I think we need to go find that rabbi Jesus. Why? And Judah said, because I think we're poor also. The power of a changed life that would have spread throughout the land.

He wasn't just delivering money. He was delivering hope to people. He was saying that my life has been changed by something, by the supernatural, that the God of heaven left, came to earth, and now he has met me.

So quickly, with their time remaining, let me talk to you about the gospel. The gospel, Christ died for our sins. 1 Corinthians 15.3 For I delivered first of all, which I have also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

Paul said, the first and central and highest message that I'm ever going to give you is the message of Jesus Christ. His death, his burial, and his resurrection. The substitution of his life for your life.

That great exchange. It's a simple phrase that was spoken. It speaks of the reality of sin, the necessity of divine punishment, and then the wonderful provision of salvation from the divine wrath by God in Christ.

[22 : 06] How that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures. The Bible tells us that this ought to be central to our lives. 1 Corinthians 2.1 And brethren, when I came to you, came not with the excellent speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. So when we say that the gospel is central to our lives, we mean that every part of our lives has a direct connection to it.

That there's no way in which we live our lives that we can't directly say, what is the gospel truth that is shaping the decisions that I'm making? So what are the doctrinal implications of the gospel?

In 1 Timothy, it speaks about people being whoremongers, that were defiling themselves, that were man-stealers, and that there were people that were living contrary to sound doctrine that was not according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

What we know about the gospel has created teaching, that is doctrine, and that teaching ought to influence every decision that we make.

[23 : 10] The gospel reorders your life. It doesn't just reorder Zacchaeus' life, but it is reordering your life. The gospel provides teaching that will bring a renewal of your mind, putting off one way of thinking, putting on a new way of thinking.

I had this one way of thinking because I didn't have this information before. Now that I have this information now, I see everything. If this is true, the gospel, then it changes everything.

I don't know why everybody would not want the gospel to be true. I understand that some people don't believe the gospel because they have yet to come to a saving knowledge, but I don't know why everybody in the world would not want that story to be true because if it's true, and it is, it changes everything.

Just quickly here, in Romans, you can go through many places in Romans, but here's the implications of the gospel. Romans 5.1, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of God is an implication of the gospel. Because of the gospel, I now have peace with God. Because in Romans 8.1, there's no longer any condemnation that are in Christ who don't walk after the flesh.

[24 : 16] This is now because of the gospel. This is the truth because of the gospel. Romans 8.32, He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us. How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

In a daily life where you're not sure that you can trust God, Tristan, Noah, others who are going through things in life where all circumstances make it difficult to trust.

When we see the connection between the gospel that He spared not His Son and the gospel truth, He freely gives us all things, the gospel will strengthen our daily trust in Him as our provider.

The question should always be taking us back to what does the gospel say about the decisions and the behavior and the attitudes that I have. Peter and Paul story that I often tell which is where Peter and Paul get in a heated argument.

It says that they were face-to-face. I picture a poster of two boxers face-to-face, right? As they've been weighed in. Peter and Paul are meeting face-to-face and Paul tells Peter you're not living according to the gospel in Galatians 2.14 meaning the truth of this gospel ought to be lived out in this circumstance.

[25 : 23] He was acting in a racist manner. He was acting in a way that he was distancing himself from people and Paul was saying because of the gospel you ought to be living differently. Philippians 1.27 says only let your conversation your lifestyle be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

I call on you to flee fornication. Why? Because you've been bought with a price. Gospel truth. I call on you to forgive one another. Why? Because Christ has forgiven you and given you an example.

That's a gospel truth. Husbands, love your wives. Why? Because you're a picture of Christ loving the church. That's a gospel truth. Be generous. Why? Because he has made you content and you've been a witness of his graciousness towards you on the cross.

That is a gospel truth. So Christian behavior should flow out of the gospel the connections of our everyday life. The Bible, Zacchaeus did not have time for this Bible study that I just gave you.

But where Zacchaeus is at, he's like, if this is true, it changes everything. Before when I balanced my books, Zacchaeus would have said, I made decisions that reflected my self-worship.

[26 : 31] How can I make these numbers make sure I get the most out of life? How do I get the most out of every transaction? But he says, if this is true, it changes everything.

And it does. And this is the question we should ask every morning and every turn in our lives. If this is true, the gospel, then it changes everything. He had those books laid out and he said, how am I going to take the most of those around me?

He met Jesus. He understood the gospel. He came back into the same house. He came back into the same books. He came back into the same job. And he says, because this is true, it changes everything.

Now how do I reorder my life so it's a reflection that I serve a good and gracious king? And Zacchaeus is not the only person that climbed up in a tree, that overcame their pride, that got a glimpse of Jesus, and that was received joyfully.

That's your story and that's my story. Or that can be your story today. And if it is your story, we ought to say, Jesus, you have the right to reorder everything about this place.

[27 : 36] You've been in my house, you've seen everything, every closet, every place about it, every book that's here on the table. All of this gets to be reordered by you and the gospel. Because if this is true, it changes everything.