

week 21: *Jesus pursues lost things*

Scripture to Read: Luke 19:1-10

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 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." 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 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." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Summary of the Text

Jesus brings salvation and new life to an unlikely convert—a despised and hardened tax collector named Zacchaeus.

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. —Luke 19:10

Questions for Personal Study and/or Group Discussion

- What is most appealing to you about Jesus in his encounter with Zacchaeus?
- Think of/discuss other examples from the four Gospels of Jesus seeking and saving lost men and women.
- What does it mean to be "lost"? Who are "the lost"? Where are "the lost"?
- What might it cost us as a church to live out this "seek and save" mission? How can we become a church of compassion comprised of

praying people willing to give ourselves away for the cause of the least and the lost?

- Children love the story of the "wee little man." As adults, in what ways it is easy to identify with Zacchaeus? In what ways can it be embarrassing and costly to get closer to Jesus?
- Luke tends to emphasize three themes: (1) the problem of riches; (2) Jesus' identification with "sinners" and (3) faith which leads to new life. How are these themes exhibited in this passage?
- How is that Jesus is able to "connect" with the least and the lost?
- What does Zacchaeus' response to the gospel teach us about the nature of repentance?
- V.10 is a simple statement of Jesus' mission. Read the following texts and write down/discuss what they add to your understanding of Jesus' mission: Luke 5:32; 15:4, 6–7, 10, 24, 32.
- What "shadows" of the cross fall across this passage? How is this story connected to Jesus' impending arrest, suffering, crucifixion, death and resurrection?

Thoughts worth thinking

Love your local tax collector? In Palestine, tax collectors were representatives of the Roman governing authorities. Their tendency to resort to extortion made them despised and hated by their own people (v.8). They collected tolls, tariffs, and customs, and were notoriously dishonest and greedy.

For you History Channel types: Jericho in this period was quite different from the OT city. Herod the Great had obtained Jericho from Caesar Augustus and proceeded to build aqueducts, a fortress, a monumental winter palace, and a hippodrome in the vicinity of the more ancient town. Excavations have revealed much of the Herodian palace structures; they were built in stages, by expanding on a previous Hasmonean palace. One striking feature of the palace site is its huge pools, in one of which Herod probably had his own son drowned. Jericho boasted a tropical climate and excellent access to water for agriculture. [from the *ESV Study Bible*]

This study guide will self-destruct in five seconds: “Imagine a ‘sycamore squad.’ High risk evangelism. Unorthodox tactics. Missions impossible. Midnight readiness. Courageous camaraderie.

JESUS: “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today.”

THE CROWD: “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.”

ZACCHAEUS: “The half of my goods I give to the poor.”

*** *Mission Accomplished!* ***

“What might God accomplish through a “sycamore squad?” A thick-skinned band of raiders bent on storming Satan's bunkers. A small corps of free spirits dedicated to the idea that one man can put a thousand to flight - if he uses a slingshot.

“A creative crew who dream that the way to Nineveh's heart might be through the belly of a fish. The way through the walls of Jericho might be with the blast of a trumpet. The way to convert an empire might be to walk through a fiery furnace. The way to save the world might be to die on a cross...Every army needs a small, swift squadron full of surprises for the enemy. Any volunteers?”

[John Piper, “Code Name Sycamore,”

http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/TasteAndSee/ByDate/1985/3392_Code_Name_Sycamore/ accessed 3/1/10]

Tips for Parents with Young Children

Monday: This story is a favorite of children. If you know the song about Zacchaeus, why not sing it every night this week? Draw or act out the scene Luke describes in 19:1-10. Explain that people did not like tax men because tax men took a lot of their money.

Tuesday: In v.10 Jesus says, *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.* This would be a good verse to memorize. Talk about what it means to be lost. Your children probably have a memory of being lost sometime. Remember that experience and what it was like to be found again. Thank God for sending Jesus on this seeking and saving mission. Talk about how we are on a similar mission in

obeying the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). **Remember that Wednesday Night Connection is starting at 6:00 pm and ending at 7:00, beginning tomorrow.**

Wednesday: Review what your children learned in Wednesday Night Connection. Spend some time together praying for FPC, its leaders, and your friends at church.

Thursday: Talk about what things Zacchaeus changed in his life because he came to know Jesus. What kinds of things need to change in your life if you know and love Jesus? This would be a good time to talk about treating others with fairness (especially siblings!) and about money and possessions.

Friday: Ask your children what they would like to do (e.g. read a story, pray, sing worship songs, etc.) and then do that with them.

Saturday: Read a Bible story to your children, or have them read a story to you if they are old enough. Pray that Phillip will have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated in Evening Worship. Looking over the *Shorter Catechism* or *Children's Catechism* questions about the Lord's Supper might be helpful.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and and what you learned.

NOTE: *There will be no study guide next week. Phillip is taking some vacation time. But keep studying the Scriptures and praying together as a family!*