

Scripture Reading:

Luke 19: “1 Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." 8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."”

"Salvation Comes to the House of Zacchaeus"

Jesus is nearing the end of His final journey to Jerusalem and Luke begins chapter nineteen with an encouraging account of salvation coming to the House of Zacchaeus

- **This morning, we will consider the fact that this is not the first time that we have seen salvation coming to a house in Jericho!**
- **Then we will look at the details of what happened with Zacchaeus**
- **And finally we will consider what all of this means for us today as we celebrate God's great salvation!**

So first I want to remind us of a little Old Testament history: It is very interesting how much time the commentators spend trying to work out the sequence of events here in Jericho with blind Bartimeus and the interaction with Zacchaeus: You will find lengthy discussions about whether there were one or two blind men, whether Jesus was coming into or going out of Jericho when he healed them and finally whether Zacchaeus was in a tree inside or outside the city... BUT you find very little to relate this account back to an obvious parallel in the Old Testament!

Question for the kids: Can you remember another household being saved in the City of Jericho in the Old Testament?

That is right: Rahab!

This prostitute, who came to faith, is highlighted in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, she is used as an example of faith in James AND she went on to become the wife of Salmon, making her a part of the genealogy of our Lord Jesus!

- **The story of Rahab comes as Joshua has entered the land to conquer the nations and his journey begins in Jericho**
- **Jesus is now coming as the new Joshua who is going to establish a Kingdom that will fill the earth**
- **It should not surprise us that Jesus travels by way of Jericho & brings salvation to a disreputable household of that city**

The story of Rahab is the story of God's gracious gift of salvation by faith coming to a woman and her household which we will see again with Zacchaeus! We are told that Joshua sent out two men to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho"... They came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. ... The writer to the Hebrews says that "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." We see her faith also demonstrated when she approaches the spies before they leave: "She came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: "I know that Jehovah has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how Jehovah dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath."

We should note that fear is not the same as faith, only Rahab had faith!

12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13 and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." ...

The men tell Rahab they will spare her and her household if, when they come into the land, she binds a line of scarlet cord in her window...

- **A scarlet thread to protect her household...
Just like the blood on the doorposts during the
Passover in Egypt!**
- **A beautiful story of salvation and God' grace and it should not surprise us that it is repeated with the house of Zacchaeus!**

With Zacchaeus we find someone even more despicable than Rahab the prostitute!

- **2: Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.**

Remember being a publican or tax collector was the bottom of the social food chain... They not only collected the taxes for Rome but often used their powerful position to gather even more riches for themselves.

- **Zacchaeus was obviously very good at his trade because he had become the CHIEF tax collector and he was RICH!**

Remember, he is the third rich man that Luke has shown us from the teachings of Jesus in short order:

- **The unnamed rich man cast into hell**
- **The unnamed rich man who went away in sorrow**
- **And now a named rich man who will be saved!**

Not saved because of anything in HIM but saved because of the grace of God...

We know, after all, that Jesus has just taught the Disciples that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God

- **God is about to do the impossible and as He does so, we should note that He uses very ordinary means!**

3 “And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature.”

- **Zacchaeus was short and his shortness causes him to take some extraordinary steps to see Jesus!**

We are often unsatisfied with what God has given us:

- **Short people don't like being short**
- **Tall people don't like being tall.**

Many women seem troubled by the color of the hair God has given them and many men worry about the amount of hair God has given them! As we mature in the faith we should learn to be content with the things God has given us, and to realize they will often be used by God in ways we do not anticipate!

- **God often uses what we might perceive as faults to His ends...
In this case: Zacchaeus' shortness!**

“So [Zacchaeus] ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see [Jesus]”

Now this certainly places him where he needed to be for Jesus to stop and invite Himself over for dinner.

BUT it also should remind us a little about “childlike faith” Here is a rich powerful man scurrying ahead and scampering up a big tree like an excited child who does not want to miss seeing all the parade!

5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."

- **Jesus knew where Zacchaeus was, Jesus knew his name, and Jesus KNEW his heart!**

I need to pause here for just another short rabbit trail: Jesus is giving us many pictures of His gracious salvation in the final days of this final journey to Jerusalem:

We know from a systematic study of the Scriptures that there is a general order of salvation that has been revealed to us in the Scriptures... The fancy name is the ‘ordo salutis’ giving us the order of our salvation: Basically it is like this:

-- We are chosen and called from eternity past: Our election

-- We are regenerated... given a new heart of flesh

-- We are justified when we trust in the finished work of Christ by faith

-- We are sanctified as our saving faith leads us into greater and greater obedience

-- We are fully glorified at the Second coming of Jesus

- **This is how God has revealed His plan to save His people and there is NO other path to God!**
- **This is the Gospel that Paul says we are to proclaim and if anyone proclaims any other they are to be accursed.**

Where we have to be careful is in thinking that we, from our human perspective, can see clearly how God works this out in each individual that is saved:

- **Obviously the thief on the cross did not have much time to be sanctified**
- **We know that a child born to believers who dies in infancy goes to heaven, as David proclaimed about his son!**

-- But when was he justified?

-- Again, no time to be sanctified

Tough for us to explain, but we know that when we stand next to that infant child of David and the thief on the cross, that we will ALL stand in the full righteousness of Jesus, having been called, regenerated, justified, sanctified and glorified by the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit!

- **Now I took that little rabbit trail so that we would not allow some confusion over the details of how God works out His gracious salvation get in the way of seeing the ‘story’ of salvation.**

6 “So Zacchaeus made haste & came down, and received Him joyfully.”

This invites some questions...

- **Did Zacchaeus get ‘saved’ in the tree?**
- **Was Zacchaeus saved when he had the desire to see Jesus?**
- **Will Zacchaeus be converted as Jesus shares the Gospel over dinner?**
- **Will Zacchaeus be saved by the good works he promises to do?**

Well, we know the answer to the last point is a resounding NO...

but what about the others? While we may not be able to explain all the details we do know that God is working in the heart of Zacchaeus and the repentance and willingness to change his ways are sure evidence of what has happened! We should join Zacchaeus in being joyful rather than just pondering how it happened!

Then we see the crowd’s reaction: These crowds had praised God when the blind man was healed... But when Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus’ house, we see their fickleness once again...

- **7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."**
- **We must be so careful that we too are never the ones being jealous of how God graciously deals with someone else as He advances His Kingdom!**

With verse eight, we have the exciting proclamations that were made by Zacchaeus: Proclamations that would not likely have come at the beginning of the dinner.

Although we are not given details:

- **I think we can safely assume that Zacchaeus properly welcomed Jesus into his home, unlike the Pharisee that did not wash his feet, anoint Him with oil or give Him a kiss.**
- **We can safely assume that Zacchaeus would have instructed the servants of his household to prepare a sumptuous feast for Jesus and the Disciples... A real celebration!**
- **AND we can safely assume that Jesus participated in some dinner discussion and taught as He always did... Perhaps explaining again how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom!**

So however God worked out the regeneration and justification of this man He had called from eternity past, and whatever the discussion was about over dinner, we now clearly see the fruit of salvation and the beginning of sanctification in the life of this new believer!

8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

- **We immediately see fruit in this man's life as he promised to make restitution and to be merciful.**
- **Note that Zacchaeus, like the soldiers who came to John the Baptist, is NOT told to leave his profession**

Zacchaeus did not give away half his money to impress Jesus, trying to earn salvation or even to earn the Lord's favor

- **He is now a generous man because Jesus has given him a new heart and is sanctifying him.**

He kept the other half so he realizes that money is not a problem in and of itself as we have often seen: God loves to bless His people. However Zacchaeus does KNOW that HOW he got some of his money was a problem: He had broken no laws, but he knew that he had taken advantage of his position to take more than he should have, making "false accusations" like, 'if you don't give me an extra hundred dollars you may have a visit from the Roman Centurion.'

His sins would clearly been covered by the case Law found in Leviticus 6:1 " And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "If a person sins and commits a trespass against the Lord by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, 3 or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely--in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: 4 then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, 5 or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering."

We see the same principle given in Numbers 6:6 " "Speak to the children of Israel: 'When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the Lord, and that person is guilty, 7 then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give it to the one he has wronged.'"

- **So if Zacchaeus got a \$100 by extortion from Joe, he should restore it to him plus \$20**
- **But this is NOT what Zacchaeus says he will do: He says he will restore fourfold!**

Zacchaeus is using the full restitution required for outright theft in Exodus 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep." Or Zacchaeus may even be thinking of how King David demanded not only the death of the man who took the poor man's lamb in Nathan's parable, but also a four-fold restoration:

- **I Samuel 12: 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."**

Some might accuse us of being legalistic here at Church of the king because we covenant together to be faithful in the paying of our tithes on the increase that God gives us

- **We are not under law but under grace they cry!**

I usually respond with something like this: 'I certainly say AMEN to now being under grace rather than the law: So 'under grace' how much more are you giving than was required by tithe in the Old Testament?' The example of Zacchaeus would be one for them to consider!

9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.""

Jesus confirms that Zacchaeus has received the saving gift of faith by referring to him as a true son of Abraham, not via the flesh which even the wicked religious leaders could claim, but rather by faith as Paul explains in Galations 3:5 "Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?-- 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Paul says in Romans 9, 'the children of the promise are counted as the seed:' As true children of Abraham, like Zacchaeus & Bartimeus.

We have been reminded of how God's grace was poured out in the life of Rahab as we saw in Joshua and Rahab a foreshadowing of Jesus and Zacchaeus!

We have seen how God has poured out His salvation on the house of Zacchaeus seeing the impact on his life and reminding us that Jesus has come to seek and save those who are lost

So what does this mean for us today?

- **Whether we were born children of the covenant or have been converted from a life of sin, we stand before God under the same gracious salvation.**
- **Whether we have walked faithfully all the days of our lives or have fallen away into grievous sins, Jesus has come to seek and to save those who are lost, and we stand under the same gracious salvation.**

When we come to understand this, then we will have the same reaction as Zacchaeus – who remained a chief tax collector:

- **We are here to serve Jesus**
- **We will be generous & merciful with what God has given us**
- **We will strive to have right relationships with those God brings into our lives**
- **Where we have wronged people we will do more than is required to make things right!**

These are simple but profound steps that must be taken by all of God's people...

- **Our individual actions in obedience to Jesus may seem like a drop in the ocean when we consider all the problems we have in this world**
- **But if ALL of God's people are faithful, these same simple actions become a tsunami of grace that can pour over any troubled land!**

Communion Meditation:

Joshua 5:10 “10 Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.”