

Jesus is...Life

First Baptist Church Peachtree City

October 11, 2015

Luke 19:1-10

INTRODUCTION

If you have a copy of the Scriptures, I invite you to turn the Gospel of Luke chapter (19) nineteen. Today, we continue our series of messages entitled, “**Jesus Is...**” We started six (6) weeks ago with the biblical Truth that Jesus is God. We followed with Jesus is Generous, Mercy, Healer, and Power. In **John 1:4**, it says that in Him (Jesus) was LIFE. Then Jesus Himself goes on to say in **John 14:6** the He is ‘The LIFE’. In Luke 19, we see the LIFE lived out through an encounter with a small, yet powerful man named Zaccheus.

It is important to view this encounter in context. In chapter 18, Jesus tells a parable about a Pharisee and a Tax Collector, both of whom had come to the temple. Jesus points out the hypocrisy of the arrogant religious leader verses the humility of a repentant tax collector.

Jesus then encounters a wealthy community leader who sought to know how he could have eternal life. When confronted with the request to sell everything...give it to the poor... and then follow Jesus, the man left grieved and uncommitted. Jesus tells him how hard it would be for the wealthy to turn loose of their riches and surrender their lives to Christ.

In **Luke 18:31**, Jesus tells His disciples that it was time to go up to Jerusalem for the purpose of His suffering. **They did not get it**. But as they journeyed, they approached the city of Jericho where Jesus encounters ‘Blind Bartimaeus’, whom He heals.

Jericho was one of three (3) strategic, regional commerce and tax collecting centers. Just as the Jews did in **Joshua 3**, many people entered the country by crossing the Jordan River near Jericho. You may remember that the Jewish spies explored the land and found it abundantly production. As a result, a lot of money was made here and a lot of taxes were paid to Rome...with a big cut going to the tax collectors. **Let’s read God’s Word together.**

TEXT

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. **3** Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. **5** When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “*Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.*” **6** And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. **7** When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, “*He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.*” **8** Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “*Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.*” **9** And Jesus said to him, “*Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.*” **10** *For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”

As His final recorded, individual encounter prior to entering Jerusalem for the Passion week, Jesus (knowing what was about to happen to Him), still takes the time to ‘hang out’ with one of the most hated man in town. And we see the impact of this One who **IS LIFE**.

UNDERSTANDING

A. Jesus is LIFE on **PURPOSE**. (v. 1)

Notice that Jesus said in **18:31** that He was **'going up'** to Jerusalem, and then in **19:1** He was **'passing through'**. Jesus' purpose was to go to Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world and rise again from the dead. His coming to earth was on purpose...His entire life was lived on purpose. (Example – Rick Warren's 'Purpose Driven Life')

Is your life being lived 'on purpose'?

B. Jesus is LIFE on **DISPLAY**. (v. 2-4)

The text tells us that Zaccheus was wealthy and a leader of tax collectors. Yet he wanted to see **'who Jesus was'**. Certainly Zaccheus would have been well traveled and connected, and would have heard about Jesus. But why would he be so interested that he would risk his dignity to run and climb a tree, (both culturally unacceptable for a man of his status), just to get a view of this carpenter from Nazareth? Could it be that he had heard about the life-change of one of his fellow tax collectors, Levi (Matthew) who was one of Jesus disciples? All we know is that Zaccheus went to extreme measures to get close to Jesus.

Jesus was LIFE on display...He was not hiding. Is He LIFE on display through you.

C. Jesus is LIFE in **PURSUIT**. (v. 5-7)

Zaccheus believed that he was pursuing Jesus. However, Jesus was actually in pursuit of Zach. Christ's pursuit ignored public perceptions and status...and past sins. Jesus' call to Zaccheus in verse 5 to **'hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house'** was both personal and urgent. And it is not much different today. You may think you are just checking out who Jesus is...but the Bible says that He is in pursuit of you. And for some of you here today, He may be asking you to **'come down and let Him into your life.'**

Is Jesus in pursuit of you today?

D. Jesus is LIFE **REGENERATING**. (v. 8-9)

Zaccheus found out that meeting Jesus was not simply an encounter, but it was rather a collision...a confrontation of his personal sin and death with Christ's forgiveness and life that does not simply relieve his guilt. No...it radically changed Zaccheus' life. **2 Cor. 5:17** says, ***"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*** This is not reformation...it is regeneration...bringing to life someone who was dead. **Eph. 2:4-5** describes it like this: ***"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even then we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ..."***

When someone is dead...and then they are made alive...people tend to notice. And that was the case with Zaccheus. Unlike the 'Rich Young Ruler' in chapter 18, the text tells us that after collision with the Son of God, he 'stood up' and acknowledged Jesus as 'LORD' and (w/out prompting) declared publicly that he would divest ½ of his wealth to the poor (2½ times the normal expectation of religious leaders), as well as paying more than double the expected restitution to anyone he had wronged. ***Jesus declares Zach a part of His family.***

Placing your faith in Christ may not mean that you have to sell everything or give half of your stuff away. He is not after your stuff...He is pursuing is your heart. But when He has it, it will be obvious to those who know you...***and you cannot help but hold more loosely whatever has been gripping your life.*** Then Jesus clarifies His over-arching mission.

E. Jesus is LIFE on **MISSION**. (v. 10)

He came to **'seek'**...and not passively. He was intentional in the life of Zaccheus; and He is intentionally and actively seeking you. Why? To **'save'** Zaccheus (and us) from the perilous destruction and death that results from our sin. So who is **'lost'**? The Bible says that all of us are lost...by nature and by choice. We are all like lost sheep who have strayed from God, following our own direction. Yet, while we were yet in our sin...Christ died for us.

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

APPLICATION

- (1) If you are looking to make a few changes in your life, Jesus is not the answer. Jesus did not come to reform our lives...but to replace it with His own. His life is so far better than any we could dream of for ourselves. Jesus said, ***"I have come that they may have life and have it more abundant."*** (**John 10:10**) The Apostle Paul wrote these familiar words in (**Gal. 2:20**), ***"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."***
- (2) If you are trying to figure out how to respond to the mercy and grace offered by our Savior, Jesus, our only reasonable response to Jesus giving us His life is total surrender. We are to put our old, broken life to death...so He can give us His new life. (**Romans 12:1**) states, ***"I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable (or well pleasing) to God, which is your (rational) spiritual service of worship."***
- (3) The story of Zaccheus (and the Gospel) is not about money. But Jesus said that one of the greatest indicators of life-change, that the object of our affection has changed, is our bank account. He says in (**Matthew 6:21; 24**), ***"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You cannot serve God and money."***

God is not after your money...He does not need it...He owns it all anyway. But what He does passionately desire is your heart. The big question is: Does He have yours?

RESPONSE

God can change the life of the poor and rich...the heathen and religious...a blind beggar and a wealthy tax collector. But no matter what our status or circumstance, we are all DEAD in our sin...so we all need Him. JESUS IS LIFE! If today, you are looking to see ***who Jesus is***...then I am pretty confident that He is working in your life to draw you into a personal encounter with the Savior. The big question from the Lord is: ***Will you come down and let Him give you new LIFE in Christ?***

If you are already a follower of Christ today, the I believe that the question that He would ask you is this: ***Do I have all of your heart...so that My LIFE can be lived through you?*** For some, that may be a call to surrender to the Lord through ***believer's baptism***. For others, it may mean you need to make FBC-PTC your church home and sign-up for the November 8th ***Partnership*** class. And for others, He may be asking you to ***turn loose*** of your career...your wallet...or some other area of your life so that He can live through you.

We are going to join together in worshipping and declaring through song our need for Jesus Christ. This altar is a safe place where you can pray...or someone will pray with you. ***He loves you and is pursuing your heart.*** You respond to however God is calling to you.