

The Son of Man Came to Seek and to Save the Lost: Zacchaeus; Luke 19:1-10
0448-0451

The following transcript has been electronically transcribed. Any errors in spelling, syntax, or grammar should be attributed to the electronic method of transcription and its inherent limitations.

If I could invite you to join me in your copy of God's Word, then go ahead and grab that. and be searching for Luke chapter 19. Luke chapter 19 is what you want to find tonight. You know, one of the things that is true about us as the church today in this age, and I don't mean you individually, but I just mean the church as a whole.

One of the things that's true about the church today is that we are woefully biblically ignorant when compared to previous generations of believers, previous generations of believers. had such a firmer grasp of their scriptures than we do today as a whole. And one of the consequences of our biblical ignorance is the fact that we often, on an everyday basis, will use phrases that are biblical in their origin.

And never even know that we're using phrases that are biblical in their origin phrases, such as casting your pearls before swine. Most of us probably recognize that one, a phrase that's meant to, to mean something that's a value that's given to someone. that doesn't appreciate it properly, casting pearls before swine, but there's many other biblical phrases that you use on a regular basis that you may not recognize come from your scriptures, such as escaping by the skin of your teeth from Job 19, or a drop in the bucket from Isaiah 40, when he says that the nations are but a drop in the bucket, or a scapegoat.

You might recognize that one, riding on the wall from Daniel chapter five. A leopard cannot change its spots from Jeremiah 13 or bite the dust from Psalm 72, of course, salt of the earth. We might recognize that one. And so many others, dozens of phrases that you use on a regular basis that you may or may not recognize the biblical origin of those phrases.

Another of these phrases is the phrase. Out on a limb. I know you've used that one. To go out on a limb means to risk everything for something. Well, that phrase comes from Luke chapter 19 in the story to which we turn tonight. For we turn tonight to the story of a short fella who wanted to see Jesus and he couldn't see Jesus because he was short and the crowd was too tall.

So he climbed a tree. Of course, I'm speaking of Zacchaeus. The first ten verses of Luke chapter 19. So if you are with me here in Luke 19, let's begin by reading the passage together beginning from verse 1 He meaning Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through and 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 of 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.

Pray with me now.

Gracious Father, you are so giving of yourself and we ask Lord tonight. That you would give abundantly of yourself. We confess, Lord, our need, our greatest need of all is of you. To hear, to know, to recognize, to perceive, to understand, to comprehend something of your greatness, of your mercy, of your compassion, something of your mission, to seek and to save the lost.

Guide our thoughts. Bless us with high and lofty thoughts of King Jesus. Stamp from our consciousness. Lowly thoughts mean thoughts. Thoughts that are unbefitting of the King of Kings seizes upon our attention. And grant to us the blessing of a fixed mind upon the proclamation of your word before we pray these things.

In Jesus' name, amen. So as we all listen to the story, read there before us, we are no doubt familiar with the details of the story. It's one of the favorite Sunday school stories. that we have that, is cherished by believers worldwide and always has been for two millenia now. But as we turn to this story, our thoughts about the story really begin, I think, at the end.

Or at least they should begin at the end. Sometimes a story is best understood backwards. And sometimes a story is best understood by starting at the end. So let's begin at the end of the story. From verse nine, and Jesus said to him, today, salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham for that word for Jesus lets us know that what he's about to say is the purpose explanation is the purpose statement.

For what just came before that's what the word for means you use the word in the same way you say for and then what you say after that explains what came before that and so Jesus says for and here's the purpose statement the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. That's the purpose. And in fact, Luke could have even told the story in reverse because the story, the story of Zacchaeus is the illustration of that statement.

So Luke could have said the Son of Man came to save, to seek and to save the lost. And by illustration, let me tell you a story of Zacchaeus, which would illustrate that point of that purpose. And so that's how we should see this. The point of the story of Zacchaeus is this, the Son of Man came to save to seek and to save the lost and an illustration of what it looks like to be sought and to be saved is Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus is a illustration. He is an example for us. He is a visible illustration of what it is like to be sought. And what it is like to be saved. And so with that in mind, it is to the story of Zacchaeus that we turn. Zacchaeus is far more than just a cute story of a short guy climbing a tree. He is the illustration of the seeking God and the saving God.

So let's just think briefly about the statement for the Son of Man, and that term Son of Man is one that we're Familiar with if you're, if at all, you're familiar with the gospels, you're familiar with that phrase, because that is by far, by far Jesus's favorite way to refer to himself. Some 80 times he refers to himself as the Son of Man.

So it's his favorite term to refer to himself. And when we think about what that term Son of Man means. I think the common understanding of that term is that Jesus is saying that I'm fully human. I, I am the Son of Man and my humanity, I'm just a man. And to understand the term Son of Man in that way would be to understand a biblical term by using human reasoning to understand that biblical term, which is not the right way that we understand biblical terms to understand biblical terms.

We use the Bible to tell us what biblical terms means. And so this term Son of Man is a term that Jesus took directly. From Daniel chapter 7, the vision that's found in Daniel chapter 7. Last night we were in Daniel 3. But if we'd skipped over to Daniel chapter 7, we would have found that vision and part of that vision is where Daniel sees one like the Son of Man who comes on the clouds.

Now, the Jews, after the time of Daniel, where they would read Daniel's writings, and they began to universally understand this Son of Man figure as the coming Messiah. And that's precisely how Jesus took up the term. Son of Man is referring not to him as... I'm just merely a man. Instead, Son of Man is a highly messianic title.

It's a highly divine title. Jesus is by no means saying I'm just a man when he calls himself Son of Man. We think of the term son of God. Jesus is son of God, Son of Man. The term son of God emphasizes his co equality with the father, his co eternality. If you want to use one of those big fancy words, and it's, it's good every once in a while to use a big word.

It helps us appreciate the smaller words, but a big word. would be consubstantiation, his consubstantiation with the Father, his co equality with the Father. That's what Son of God speaks to us. That's the primary emphasis of Son of God. Son of Man, on the other hand, emphasizes the Deity, the Divine One who took up humanity.

Philippians 2, he took up humanity becoming no less divine. He took up humanity and added humanity to himself. So Son of Man speaks of the God enfleshed. And so we wouldn't come across that title Son of Man. Our thoughts are directed to the eternal God who took on humanity, who became enfleshed, who became incarnate.

So the Son of Man, this one, this God, this Eternal, never beginning, never ending God, who has become man, came, the Son of Man, came. Of course, that is how Jesus became the Son of Man. He came to us. He came from heaven to us. He came, and his purpose for coming is to, as he says, to seek God. And to save the lost.

So let's begin there with the lost. The lost speaks of the one who has been more than misplaced, but has found himself separated from the place of safety, the place of security, the place of belonging. The lost speaks of the subjective experience of being separated from God. Lostness speaks of being... In that place of, of extreme spiritual danger without protection, without the shepherd, without direction, without purpose, without meaning, without belonging.

We think of the, the prodigal father, as he speaks of his son, he says, my son, who was once. Lost is now found or perhaps the saddest image in all scripture of that reality that we would speak of as the lost condition. The saddest of all would come in Genesis chapter three when the first son of God, Adam was there in the garden and his father came to him and he ran, he hid.

That's the saddest picture of all of lostness. When the father is coming to meet.

So this, this is the condition that Jesus came to seek and to save. And so we now just think of this condition or this, activity of Jesus to seek. He came to seek. Now that word that Luke uses to seek, it's not a word that's a gentle sort of an open ended word that might mean that you look, look for something and you look over here and you don't see it.

Look over there. Well, I guess I just. Lost, that sort of thing. And you give up looking instead. The word is packed with this meaning of not just seeking and searching, but searching diligently and exhaustively and refusing to stop until the lost thing is found. It's the idea of Luke 15 of the three lost things of Luke 15, the searching and the searching continues until the lost item is found.

It always carries with it that sense, that, that the. That the exertion in the looking will not stop until the thing that's being searched for is found. It's used in places like Matthew chapter 2 to describe Herod's activity of seeking the Christ child. And we know the extent that Herod went to to find the Christ child.

The extent of killing all the baby boys under two years of age. It's also used by Luke. to describe Mary and Joseph and their activity in Luke chapter 2 when they discover that the boy Jesus is missing. He describes their activity as seeking him with the same word. And if you've ever lost a child, anybody ever lost a child in a crowd?

I have. And that was the most terrifying 45 seconds of my life. And we were at a Durham Bulls game. This was, this was, Josiah, the banjo player. We were, this was probably four... We were at a Durham Bulls game, and we were standing in line there to get some food, and I was holding his hand, looking up, looking at the menu, just trying to figure out what we were going to get to eat, and I took my hand away from his for a moment to get my wallet out as we were about to approach the, the cashier for just a moment, and then I reached back down and his hand was gone, and immediately then, I'm just at the top of my voice, anybody seen a boy?

He was right here, anybody seen a boy? You know, and he was, he was for, you know, 45 seconds was gone. What, what happened was somebody walked by just at that moment. I took away my hand just at that moment. Somebody walked by dressed. Like me. And he thought it was me and went after him. But in that moment, I had visions of child molesters and screaming baby boys being thrown into vans and carried away to who knows where, of course we found him, but terror.

And that must've been what was going through Mary and Joseph's mind. And that's the word that Luke uses. They sought him and they weren't going back home to Nazareth without him. And that's the Son of Man's activity to seek. He has sheep that he came to seek, and he will not stop until those sheep are found.

And this is the story of the seeking of one of those sheep. But it's not just the seeking, it's the saving of the sheep. The rescue of the sheep. The deliverance. The salvation of the sheep. The sheep that was lost and then in the hopelessly dangerous condition is then found. brought back to the fold. So this is the story of Zacchaeus, and this is what Zacchaeus is illustrating.

So now, with that being in mind, our mind is thinking about the question, we're geared to this question, what is it like, what does it look like to be sought and saved? What does it look like for

the Son of Man to seek and to save? With that in mind, let's look back now back at verse 1. He entered Jericho and was passing through.

So he's passing through on his way to Jerusalem for the final time that he will go to Jerusalem because he has an appointment with the cross. And so we are now just mere weeks away from the cross and he's on his way to Jerusalem and he is passing through this place, Jericho, verse two. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus.

He was a chief tax collector. So if we were tracking through the book of Luke from the beginning, we would have. And if we were counting, we would have noticed that this is now the sixth tax collector in Luke's gospel. Luke's gospel contains a lot of tax collectors. This is the final tax collector, and this is, as he's described, the chief tax collector.

So not only is his position the chief tax collector, but he's also the chief tax collector story. Because he's the last tax collector in the story of Luke. But these six tax collectors that have all now led up and sort of culminated in this man, Zacchaeus, All six of them have been stories of those whom Jesus was seeking.

Those who were compelled to come to Him. Those who were drawn to Him. Those who were either believing with a saving faith or in the process of believing with a saving faith. This all begins back in chapter 3. As the John, the baptizer is, is preaching there and the tax collectors come to him. And that continues to chapter five.

We see the conversion of Levi, the tax collector, his friends, the tax collector party, other tax collectors along the way. Chapter 15, of course, chapter 18, the tax collector and the Pharisee. Who go out to pray in the temple and the tax collector is the one whose prayer is heard. And then all of this culminates with the final tax collector, the Apex, the the Crux Tax Collector, Zacchaeus.

So all these tax collectors are portrayed in Luke's Gospel as those. who are sheep that Jesus is seeking. So this man, Zacchaeus, by the name of Zacchaeus, his position, we're told, is not only tax collector, but he's chief tax collector. So just a little bit about tax collection in Jesus day in the Roman Empire.

Jesus lived in a day and an age in which the government that ruled over him sought to collect as many taxes as often as they could. Nothing new about that, right? I mean, we live in the same time today. But all governments at all times have always sought to collect as much tax as they possibly could in as many ways as they possibly could.

So the Roman government, which ruled over ancient Israel, was the same. They sought to collect as much tax as they possibly could. So they found that the taxes, they levy taxes on all kinds of things, just like our government today, but they found that the most profitable tax to levy tax on travelers.

Travelers who are traveling along roads, because you remember those, maybe from history class, you remember those Roman roads, the Roman roads that were built that made travel safe for the first time, the Pax Romana. So people were traveling to a much greater deal, to a much greater degree in Jesus lifetime than just one or two or three generations before.

So the Romans see all this, and they weren't stupid, so they realized, wow, that's a great source of income right there. Let's tax travelers. to pay for our roads. And so they would tax travelers on any number of ways. If you were traveling with a cart, Maybe they would tax the number of axles, or the number of wheels, or the number of animals pulling the cart, the number of passengers on the cart.

If you were traveling with a, with a flock of sheep that you were bringing to be sold at market, then maybe they would tax on the number of animals, or the number of people in your party, or the distance that you were going, all sorts of things they would come up with. And in taxing these travelers, the way that the Romans collected the tax was they, they let the position out for bidding.

And so the highest bidder on the position of tax collector would be the one that would be awarded the position of tax collector for that period of time. or that year. And so if you were bidding for a government job in which the government was going to pay you, then the low bidder would win. But if you're bidding for a government job in which you pay the government, then the high bidder wins.

So the high bidder would get the position of tax collector. And so they would place their bids on such and such a province, such and such a road, stretch of road, such and such a crossroads. And they would bid as high as they think they could, they would make estimates to say well I think in this period of time I can collect this much tax, and so I'll bid this amount.

And everything over that they kept, that's how they made the money. But if they were the winning bidder then they owed that amount to Rome, whatever they collected. So that's how this works. And so you can immediately see just how the system is built. It's, it's founded upon corruption and thievery and arm twisting and dishonesty because the more you can collect, the more you make and any sort of business, any sort of occupation like that, that's built on the principle, that the more you can collect from people, the more you make.

That's inevitably going to come become corrupt. And so the system of collection, collecting taxes was extremely corrupt. And those who were successful tax collectors were the type of people that were good at squeezing money from people, the heartless kind of people, the people that weren't quick to take sympathy upon people, the people that that would just.

Lean upon you and collect as much tax as could possibly be collected because that's how you made money. If you were a soft-hearted person, then you shouldn't bid for the job of tax collector because you weren't going to do very well. So Zacchaeus is the tax collector, and we're told not only is he the tax collector, he's the chief tax collector, which means that he is a tax collector that has bid on multiple provinces or multiple crossroads or stretches of roads, and he has other people working for him.

And he collects not only what he's collecting, He's also collecting from others. So this tells us that Zacchaeus is very good at what he does. He's very successful at what he does. He's doing it in a successful place. This place known as Jericho was a very A city that was very much a city of commerce. It was the crossroads of two Highly traveled very busy Roman roads one going east west one going north south So being the crossroads for a lot of travelers, it meant there's a whole lot of people Moving along these roads and a lot of opportunity for collecting taxes from

them kind of like Statesville, you know, Statesville, there's a I 40 and I 77, two big main roads crossing.

And so this is where Zaccheaus sets up a very profitable tax collection business. So you can imagine just how the people felt about these tax collectors. Not only that, but... So you probably without even needing to know much about the Hebrew language, you can tell that the name Zacchaeus is a Hebrew name, can't you?

So Zacchaeus, not only was he this type of person that was good at squeezing money from people, he was also good at squeezing money from his own people, which meant he was doubly harsh. He was doubly hard hearted. Also it meant he was doubly hated. This is the type of man that Zacchaeus was, so I don't know about you, but I grew up hearing those Sunday school stories about Zacchaeus and reading the children's illustrated Bibles with the pictures, the biblical pictures in there, the paintings and everything, and without fail, The picture of Zacchaeus was always presented as this adorable little short guy.

Wasn't it just this cute little short guy that just had this lovable smile on his face and, and he was, he wanted to see Jesus, but just doggone it, he was just too short to see him. And there's this whole cute little climb in the tree episode and bless his heart. I mean, just this, all he wants to do is see Jesus.

He just wants to see Jesus. He's this adorable little short guy. If that, too, is your image of Zacchaeus, then let me encourage you to put that image to death tonight because that was not Zacchaeus in any way, shape, or form. Zacchaeus was a nasty person. Zacchaeus was a harsh person. Man, Zacchaeus was the type of man that would squeeze everything from you that he could.

Zacchaeus was the type of man who would have no compassion, no empathy. He was the type of man that was out for himself and didn't care about others. He was willing to sacrifice his place among the Jewish community. for wealth and position and power and not only did he do this, but he did it successfully and he did it well.

He was a nasty man. He was the type of man that you would not want to tangle with. Because you would most likely come out on the losing end. He was a fighter, he was a winner, he was a taker, he was a stealer. This was his character. Now, in my mind, I like to associate things with modern day pictures of people.

In my mind, I've just got a picture of the Godfather. Marlon Brando and the Godfather, right? That he's going to make you, if you travel along his road, Zacchaeus is going to make you an offer that you can't refuse. And this is the type of man that Jesus. seeking and seeking to say the moral ugliness of the man would have been hideous to us had we known him had we been familiar with who he was with his character we probably would have been shocked to learn that Jesus sought for him but not only is he the chief tax collector were also told that he was rich so once again there is another supporting statement to tell us Not only is this what he did for a living, he did it well.

He was successful at taking from you everything he could possibly take from you. He was successful in dealing in very, sharp and cunning ways with the Romans, with who, with whom he

dealt with, as well as his own people whom he dealt with on a daily basis. This is the man that Jesus came to seek and to save.

So Zacchaeus has a barrier between he and Jesus. Jesus is coming here to Jericho, and Zacchaeus, there's a barrier between he and Jesus. And the whole premise of the story is that Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus, but he can't. There's a couple of barriers, and one of the barriers between Zacchaeus and Jesus This is the moral barrier of his love of money, of his wealth and his love of money.

Ironically, Jesus just said in chapter 18 verse 24, he just made that statement at the end of the section of the rich young ruler. He just made the statement how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And if we were reading straight through the gospel of Luke, we would have noticed that just a couple of paragraphs later.

Here's a rich man seeking to enter the kingdom of heaven. So there's this barrier, this moral barrier of his wealth. We'll get to that a little bit later, but there's also the physical barrier. Because if we were reading through Luke's gospel in this way, we would also kind of notice this pattern. There's been five stories in a row, five stories in a row of someone who is seeking Jesus, but there is something preventing them from coming to Jesus.

And the stories begin with the Pharisee and the tax collector and how they go out to pray. In that instance, one of them finds Jesus and one of them doesn't. The Pharisee, his pride, his moral pride is his barrier that keeps him from, from coming, from being known by his master. But then after that, we see the story of the children that want to come to Jesus.

Now the children can't come to Jesus because there's a barrier. What's the barrier? The barrier is the adults who say, no, no, no, Jesus is here for the adults. So you can, you guys keep the children away. And then of course Jesus rebukes them about that, but he takes away the barrier. But then there's the, there's also the story of the rich young ruler, the rich young ruler seeks to come to Jesus, but he has a barrier too.

His barrier is the same as, as Zacchaeus is, which is his love of wealth, love of money. Jesus says, come and follow me. After giving everything away, but he cannot overcome his barrier. But then there's the story of the, the, of course, blind Bartimaeus. Blind Bartimaeus wants to follow Jesus, but his barrier is his blindness.

He can't see. Jesus overcomes his barrier. So if we notice, there's these five stories of people seeking Jesus. Jesus, seeking to follow Jesus. And there's something in the way. Now when the something, when the thing that's in the way is an earthly thing, an external thing like the age, the children or the blindness of Bartimaeus or the shortness of Zacchaeus.

In each story, Jesus overcomes that. Jesus says to the people keeping the children away, no, no, let them come to me. He overcomes that barrier and they come to him. The story of blind Bartimaeus, his lack of sight prevents him from following Jesus. Jesus restores his sight and he follows Jesus. Now, in the story of Zacchaeus, his shortness of stature prevents him from following, from seeing Jesus.

And Jesus overcomes that by making certain that there's a tree with a low hanging limb right there in just the right place at just the right time. So Jesus overcomes these barriers. For those

who seek to come to him, except when the barrier is the barrier of sin, such as the Pharisees barrier of his moral pride or the rich young ruler's barrier of his love of money, they don't come to Jesus because their barrier is their own sin.

So Jesus removes these other barriers, and Zacchaeus in the story, as we know, is going to have his barrier removed, but as he is seeking to see Jesus. Let's just remind ourself once again of this man who is this open violator of the 8th commandment and the 10th commandment. He is not a secret sinner. He is an open violator of the 8th commandment, which says to not steal, the 10th commandment, which says to not covet the possessions of another.

He doesn't violate these commandments in secret. He violates them openly. Everyone who knows him knows that he does what he does because of his love of money and his greed. And this open violator of the commandments. I mean, as we know, as the scriptures tell us, like when James tells us, violate one commandment, you've, you've violated them all, but nevertheless, he openly violates at least these two.

But he was seeking, verse three, he was seeking to see who Jesus was. Jesus fame is at its apex. He is the most famous person in all of Israel. In fact, he is the most famous person in all of Israel since the time of Moses. One of the things that can get obscured for us as we read through the gospel accounts is we can, we can sometimes have a hard time really grasping Jesus

We are told of the size of the crowds that come to Jesus and the words that the gospel writers use to describe the crowds that come to Jesus. They should leave us with this understanding that Jesus was drawing crowds in the tens of thousands. At one point in Mark's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples to have a boat ready.

If he needs to escape the crowd, for he says the crowd may crush me and I might need to get on the boat for my own safety. The Son of Man, the Eternal God, says have a boat ready in case the crowd is going to crush me. So Jesus fame has never been greater. His popularity has never been greater. His name is on the lips of everyone in Israel.

And Zacchaeus is the most hated man in Jericho. His... Wealth, his love of money, his greed has caused him to be the most hated man in all of Israel, but he is wealthy. He is successful. He's powerful and he's wealthy, but somehow all of his possessions and all of his wealth and all of his power and all of his status and all of his accumulations, all these things have still left him lacking and somehow deep in his heart, he knows that there's something within Zacchaeus.

That says to him, these things that I have chased and these things that I have received and these things that I've accomplished they still are not fulfilling me. There's something within Zacchaeus that is pressing him, that's compelling him to say, This man, Jesus, I don't know what it is, I don't know Who he is, I don't know what it is about him, but something about this man, Jesus is compelling Zacchaeus that he must see him.

Something about Jesus is drawing him to see Jesus or know something about Jesus. So, Zacchaeus, in his heart, senses a void, and something in his soul is speaking to him that the void that he has will never be filled by his wealth, never be filled by his power or his position. It will only be filled by this man, Jesus, whom he knows little or nothing about.

He was seeking to see who Jesus was. But, of course, we remember this is the story not of the Zacchaeus who was seeking Jesus. This is the story of the Son of Man who came to seek and to save the lost. This is not the story of Zacchaeus seeking to see Jesus. This is the story of Zacchaeus, who, because Jesus was seeking him, the Spirit had implanted within his soul a compulsion, a desire that he couldn't explain.

He couldn't put it in words, but it was there nonetheless. There was something about this man, Jesus, that he didn't even know what it was. Something was drawing him to Jesus. He was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd, he could not because he was small in stature again. That's his barrier.

Now, the irony of the whole story is, of course. As we're told, Jesus, Zacchaeus is seeking to see him, it's really Jesus that's seeking him, but verse four, So he ran on ahead, he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he, meaning Jesus, was about to pass by. So in this verse, we get this sense of Zacchaeus just throwing dignity into the wind, just forsaking dignity to, first of all, we're told, run to get to the tree in time to climb it to see Jesus.

Well, in these days, Jewish men, one of the things that Jewish men just didn't do was run. It was considered undignified. It was considered beneath the dignity, not of a Jewish boy, but of a Jewish man. So once you entered manhood. As a Jewish male, you just didn't run. That was not becoming of a Jewish man.

Remember the story, once again, of the prodigal father? I like to call it the prodigal father because I think that's a more fitting description. But the prodigal father, when the son is coming home, remember how he grabs his robes and runs to his father? That's the picture of one just casting aside social mores and social expectations and say, whatever these people think of me be damned.

I'm running. So the picture there is this man, Zacchaeus, who runs this, this act of running, considered undignified. It was, it was undignified because the culture of that day thought that, well, this was their thing for, for a man to show his ankles. What's considered shameful. Odd for us to think of something like that, but that's how that culture thought of it.

To show your ankles if you're a man was just not dignified. So that's why, even in fact the, the name, the word for the robe, remember the long, you've seen the paintings and everything, the long flowing robe that would be worn, that would go all the way to cover the ankles. Even the word for that was, was the word that literally meant that which covers my shame.

So, it was considered undignified to run because your robe would come up and it'd show your ankles. Well, if that was undignified, then climbing a tree was certainly throwing all remaining dignity out the window. So the picture that we're shown here is of a man who is so compelled to see Jesus. That he's willing to throw all of his respect and dignity out the window and run and climb this tree, which is an important Reality for us to see an important truth for us to see because that's the only way that the Son of Man seeks to save the lost The Son of Man doesn't seek to save the dignified.

In fact, you cannot come to the Son of Man and bring your dignity. Did you know that? You cannot come to the Son of Man and bring your dignity with you. There's only one way that He

receives lost sinners. And that is lost sinners who are willing to discard whatever dignity they may cling to in order to cling to him, him and him alone.

For Jesus would say that he didn't come for people that were healthy, he came for the sick people. He didn't come for the righteous, he came for those who were sinners and knew it. So this is a picture of what it looks like to be sought. For the Son of Man to seek means that when you are compelled by the Spirit to come to him.

You will do so in a way in which you will say, Jesus, will you take me, not me plus my dignity? I will not come to you clinging to some last measure of self-respect. I will come to you, seeing you as the pearl of great price, that which is worthy of

And when Jesus came to the place, what a blessed word there, the place, doesn't that remind you of all the anointed places in scripture, all the anointed places where God did miraculous saving work. In the scriptures, those anointed places like a well in Samaria, or a pool in Bethesda, or a seaside in, Decapolis, or a house in Capernaum, or a hill outside of Jerusalem.

When Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and He said to him, Zacchaeus. Hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today. So in those words that Jesus speaks to Zacchaeus, we see the Son of Man seeking and saving that which is lost. Because these words are a revelation to Zacchaeus, and they're a revelation about Who he is and who the Son of Man is and what his condition is and what this being saved will entail.

So the first thing that Jesus says is he says Zacchaeus. So here is the most popular man in all of Israel. A man whom thousands of people are crowding around just to touch the hem of his garment. And he comes to this tree in which is the most hated and reviled man in all of Jericho. And Jesus looks straight at him.

This is not in the text, but I can guarantee you that was the most shocking moment in Zacchaeus life. For Jesus to look at him and speak his name, Zacchaeus. So what is he saying when he says his name to Zacchaeus? He's saying, Zacchaeus, I know you. I know you.

And I don't just know you, I have known you from your mother's womb.

I knew you when you decided, when you chose to become a tax collector. I knew you when you were in your mother's womb. I knew you before your mother's womb because Zacchaeus, I have always known you. If the words of Ephesians one verses three through five are true, then Jesus is saying to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus.

I have always known you. I have known you from the foundation of the world and I have loved you from the foundation of the world. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ Jesus with every spiritual blessing in him. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

He predestined us unto adoption in Christ Jesus, according to the riches of his glory. If those words are true, then Jesus is saying to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus, I have always known you and I've always loved you.

Something about the Messiah was understood by Jesus's contemporaries. And that was. That when Messiah came, he would know things, he would just know things about you. We see this, of course that was biblical, that was scriptural, they believed that because that's what their scriptures taught them, but we see this evidenced in a couple of interesting places.

For example, we think of John Chapter one, verses 40, 47 and 49. This was the interchange between Jesus and Nathaniel. You may remember this. Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him and said of him, behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit. Nathaniel said to him, how do you know me? Jesus answered to him Before Philip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

But look at this or listen to this Nathaniel's response when Jesus says to Nathaniel. Something to the effect that I knew you. Listen to Nathanael's response. Rabbi, you are the Son of God and the King of Israel. Something about Jesus knowing Nathanael told Nathanael, this man is the Son of God. So there was something about Messiah, when Messiah would come, that the contemporaries of Jesus believed when Messiah comes, He will know things.

He will know us. He will, well, as he will say in John 8, Know his sheep and his sheep will know him or listen to the exchange between the Samaritan woman at the well and the villagers. After Jesus told her about her sexual deviancy and her sexual sins, she goes into the village and says in John four and verse 29, come and see a man who told me all I ever did.

Can this be the Christ you see? He knew me. He knew things about me. This must be the Christ. Zacharias, I know you hurry and come down. I don't think Jesus needed to say, hurry, do you? I think perhaps it may have been better advice if Jesus had said to Zacharias, don't fall because that's what I would have done.

If Jesus looked at me and said my name, I would have probably fallen out of that tree. But he says to Zacharias. Hurry and come down. Now, here's what we should understand about that statement. Jesus is not giving Zacchaeus a request. Jesus is saying to Zacchaeus, I possess all authority. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, and now I command you, Zacchaeus, come down from that tree, for I am staying at your house.

You see, he is commanding Zacchaeus. He is saying to Zacchaeus, I know you, Zacchaeus, and I hold authority, and my authority includes you, and I'm telling you to come down from that tree, for we're going to your house. You know, oftentimes we want to think about the invitation to repent and believe that we see in the scriptures.

Oftentimes we want to think about that in our contemporary Western church culture. We want to think about that as this. Request as though Jesus is this weak, impotent beggar coming to lost sinners and just saying, Will you just please turn from your sin, please? Will you just please leave your sin and will you just please come to me and believe in me?

And listen, that is not a biblical picture of Christ. Jesus Christ commands the sinner, repent, turn and believe. That's his command. It is an imperative in the scriptures. Listen to Acts chapter 17 and verse 30, the times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. So his words to Zacchaeus are saying to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus, let's be clear about this.

I know you. And I possess authority over you and I'm telling you right now, I don't care what sort of power you think you have in Jericho. I'm telling you now to come down out of the tree for we are going to your house. He says, I must stay at your house. Now, when Jesus says, I must stay at your house, he's not saying, um, let's, let's go and have a cup of tea.

He is saying to Zacchaeus, I am going to come and I am going to stay a while. I'm going to abide. In fact, that word. Stay there literally means to loose one's clothing. So if we were translated literally or ultra literally, we would say that Jesus said, hurry and come down for I must loose my clothing at your house.

Meaning I'm going to come to your house and I'm going to be your guest, and I'm going to be there for quite some time. So he's going to come to Zacchaeus house. He's going to abide in his house. And in this statement, we see two things that Jesus is revealing to Zacchaeus. First of all, he is saying to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus, your sins will be laid bare.

Your sins will not be hidden from me, for I am coming to your house. Now, what sort of house do you suppose Zacchaeus lived in? We're not told. It's pure speculation. But is it safe to speculate that Zacchaeus lived in a house that was slightly above the standard of his neighbors? Do you think that Zacchaeus may have lived in a wealthy mansion?

Do you think that Zacchaeus's house may have been furnished with the best that money could have bought? Do you think that his house would have plates and cups that were the finest that the artisans could make? And maybe there was an expensive chandelier? And do you think Jesus is going to see all of this?

You see, there's going to be no time for Zacchaeus to do any cleanup. You ever had somebody come over unexpected, just pop in? You know what that's like. There's no time for cleanup, right? Whatever the dishes piled up in the sink, that's what they're going to see. The dirty clothes on the couch, that's what they're going to see.

That's what it's like to come over unannounced. Jesus is going to Zacchaeus house unannounced. And Jesus will walk into his house, and it's as though Jesus will see all of his life right there. What do you think Zacchaeus will think as they turn the corner? He and Jesus are beside one another now, and as they turn the corner, and the biggest house on the street is the one they're going to.

And a servant meets them at the door.

And as they walk in, Zacchaeus is thinking, I remember how I bought this. I remember what paid for this house. I remember what furnished this house. I realize That all of this is the result of my sin, and now my master is walking into it. Because that's the only point of entry Jesus has. The only point of entry into your soul is your worst possible moment.

There is no entry point into your soul that's the point of what your house looks like after you've cleaned up. What Jesus enters is the real you. It's the you that... Lays everything bare and exposed. We used to have a sweet, dear lady in a previous church of mine. This church, we would, we thought highly of, of believers meeting together in our homes.

And so we would go to one another's homes. We spent a lot of time in one another's homes. And she would say the most precious thing to me. She would say, you know, I learned a long time ago

that when my brothers and sisters are coming over, I intentionally don't clean up because she said, why would I clean up?

Because for me to clean up is showing you what's not really me. If you're my brother, if you're my sister. And I invite you over to my house. You should come over and you should see this is the real me. This is the real Julie. Isn't that precious? Now, in that is something that speaks to us of this man, Zacchaeus, as Jesus would walk in and the embarrassment.

If Zacchaeus's conscience has been pricked, which it has, then the embarrassment over the opulence that most likely was his life. Is laid bare before the Messiah and Jesus will know. He will know every single person that was cheated to buy that house he was. He will know every single sin and every lie that Z is told to acquire that house.

Hebrews th four in verse 13 tells us that no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him. to whom we must give an account. This is the same way, of course, the Samaritan woman at the well, as Jesus says to her, go and get your husband, knowing of her sexual sin. Or he says to the rich young ruler, sell everything you've got, knowing of his love for his money.

But nevertheless, he enters the house, and here we see the second Revelation from the statement and that statement is this, though you are a sinner Zacchaeus, and though your house is literally built upon your sin, I have come to abide with you. And that is the only way that you know me. For you will only know me if I abide with you.

For I came to abide with sinners. I came to fellowship. with sinners. I didn't come to save from a distance. You know, Zacchaeus could have made his little speech to Jesus of how he's going to give his stuff away and everything. We know that's coming. He could have made that little speech there at the bottom of the tree, but that's not what Jesus came for.

Jesus came to abide, to enter into his life and abide. Every lost sinner that the Son of Man seeks and saves.

I know you and all of your past is laid bare and that's the past that I came to abide in for Romans 8 Romans chapter 5 in verse 8 tells us that that is how God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us. So now verse six, so he hurried, he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.

You could preach that verse to yourself because that's plain open, isn't it? He received him joyfully. Now from verse six to seven, some time passes is the way I see it. Some time passes, maybe an evening, maybe a day passes. And verse seven, Jesus has now been in Zacchaeus's house and they have conversed and Jesus has taught him and, and they have come to know each other.

I think a little more verse seven. And when they saw it, meaning the Jerichonians, when they saw it. And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. Again and again and again, our scriptures will show us this truth. And the truth is, when the grace of God is lavished upon the undeserving sinner, people see that and they don't like it.

That's what the scriptures show us time and again, that when God bestows His grace upon the undeserving, those who feel themselves to be more deserving will hate that. In fact, that's what Jesus parable in Matthew 20 is all about. Matthew 20, the parable about the workers in the vineyard. Jesus begins that parable by saying, the kingdom of heaven is like this.

In other words, Jesus is saying, let me tell you about my kingdom. And the parable that he tells is a parable that says. My kingdom is a kingdom of grace. And if you are to be a part of my kingdom, you must be okay with grace bestowed upon others. Because that's the whole point of the story. Those who work from the early morning hours, those who work most of the day, then some come and they work just a short time, some work none at all, and everybody receives the same thing.

And they're angry. And Jesus says, This is like the kingdom of God. So this is an important lesson for us because all of us brothers and sisters all of us struggle with this You know what? It's like to watch another person another believer a brother and sister in Christ whom? You in your heart you feel yourself to have been more faithful than they you feel yourself to have been more Devoted to Christ than they you have been devoted to his body And then there was this other person who has lived for himself for most of those same decades.

But yet God has pricked their attention. He has convicted them and he has brought them into fellowship. And they have come into fellowship as faithful brothers and sisters, yet their faithfulness is short lived compared to yours. And then you witness God begin to bless them in ways that you wish he would bless you.

Maybe bless their business, maybe bless their, their employment, or bless their family. And you ever have that sinking feeling. Why is God doing that for them and not me? That is what Jesus is addressing. This is like the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of grace and you must be okay with grace bestowed unto others.

This is, I believe, what was behind John the baptizer when he was thrown into prison. You remember when he was thrown into prison and he sends the message to Jesus to say, are you really the one? And what is Jesus's response? Jesus response is, well, go back and tell John this. Tell him what you see. You see the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the lame walking, the prisoners set free.

And blessed is he who is not offended of me. What did that mean? I think it meant that John is in prison while everybody else is being set free, set free from their blindness, set free from their deafness. And literally as the passage goes from Isaiah, the captives are set free. Meanwhile, John is forgotten in prison.

And he begins to think, were you really the one? And if so, why am I still here? And Jesus words to him are, Blessed are those who are not offended when I show more grace to others than you. So they grumbled, how can he do this? He's gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. Verse 8, and Zacchaeus stood.

Now that word stood there is the same as our English word for stand, which can have two meanings, can it? Stand can mean what I'm doing now. I'm vertical, my weight's on my legs. But stand can also have a metaphorical meaning. It can mean to take a position, to take a stand, so to speak. Same thing is true in the Greek.

However, the way that this word is used here, it's communicating, not that Zacchaeus was sitting down. And then at that moment, Zacchaeus stood up. Maybe he did stand up. But what it's communicating is that Zacchaeus, this is a moment in time in which a flag is planted into the sand and Zacchaeus declares something.

He takes a stand. The same word is used in the same way in places like Matthew 12 and verse 25. Knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. You see? Or Matthew 12 and verse, 20, the next verse, next verse 26, How will His kingdom stand if it's divided against itself?

Or Matthew 18 and verse 6, He who does not listen, take one or two along, others along with you, that every charge may be established. The, by the evidence of two or three witnesses, this there's translated established and has this idea of a charge of a sin of a charge for sin that's brought against a brother and sister that that charge must be established.

So you see the idea, it's not just standing up. It's not just Zach. He is saying, Oh, I'm tired of sitting. Let me stand up and say this. It's Zach. He is saying, this is a moment where everything is different from this point forward. Everything is different. So when the Son of Man seeks and saves the lost, the lost must necessarily take a stand.

That must necessarily be a point of separation between their past sinful life and their future life of growing righteousness. So Zacchaeus stood and he 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. That's his stand that he takes.

The half of my goods I give to the poor, if I've, if I've cheated anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. Now, we could take ten minutes or so, and we could look through the Old Testament, and we could see how the Old Testament gives lots of prescriptions about restoration when a thievery has taken place.

Restoration when something has been stolen or taken unlawfully. And the Old Testament will prescribe lots of different restorations, depending on how the thing was stolen, or what was stolen, or the circumstances around it. But we'll skip all of that and just sort of cut to the chase. And to cut to the chase, we would see this.

Zacchaeus, it's as though he thinks about the Old Testament law. And he determines in his mind, I will choose the path. In other words, Zacchaeus makes restoration according to the law as though he had, according to the law of Moses, stolen maliciously with violence. Okay? So, not just, you know, you pick somebody's pocket.

But you hit him over the head and pick their pocket. That's that was the offense that Zacchaeus zoned in on. Now, was he violent physically? I don't think so. But what he's saying is. What he's saying is I will not take the minimum. I won't ask myself And here's a question that probably all of us have asked myself.

I won't ask the question of myself. What do I have to do? I will ask what can I do? I will do the maximum So he gives away half his goods to the poor. Why does he only give away half?

Because the other half was restoring fourfold to all the people he cheated. Zacchaeus will follow Jesus to Jerusalem. And he will follow Jesus penniless.

But he will be the wealthiest he's ever been. He will give away everything. He will give it all away. Now the thing to see here, there's two things to see. There's two really crucial things to see. The first thing to see is this. The point at which the lost sinner's sin is most dominant in their life must be the point that the grace of Christ is most transforming.

Did you catch that? I'll say it again. The point of the lost sinner's life in which your sin is most evident and does the most violence to others is the point at which the transforming grace of Christ must

Notice how Zacchaeus didn't stand and say to Jesus, Jesus, I will observe the Sabbath and keep it holy in my heart. Jesus, I will honor my father and mother. Jesus, I will be at the temple twice a day to pray. He didn't say those things. What he says is. The sin that most gripped my unconverted heart is the point at which your transforming grace will be most evident in me now.

And that is the way it must be for every lost sinner whom the Son of Man has sought and saved.

If your domineering sin was the sin of pride, then the transforming grace of Christ must make you evidently humble. If your most domineering sin was the sin of, of harshness and callousness towards your wife, then the transforming grace of Christ must transform you into one who is known for kindness and empathy and compassion.

If your sin was the sin of being a grumbling and complaining wife, then your transformation must be evidenced in your biblical submission. You see, whatever your defining, most, vexing sin was, must be the point that the grace of Christ most touches you. You cannot give testimony to the transforming grace of Christ by saying to someone, you know, since I met Jesus.

I tell you what, I, I no longer, I don't hit that bottle. I am not a drunk. And they say, well, how much of a drunk were you before? I wasn't, but I'm not a drunk now. That means nothing, does it? It means nothing for Jesus to deliver you from sin, which didn't own you before. The sin of the love of money is what owns Zacchaeus's heart.

And that's where the point of transformation is made. And he says, This is the point at which I now stand, because that's where the grace of Christ always touches most. So let's just see some biblical examples of this. You want some biblical examples of why it is that we can say that the transforming grace of Christ must touch, first and foremost, that sin which has most of the dominion over you?

Well, think with me of Luke chapter 3, verses 10 through 14. In this, in this passage, John the baptizer is here baptizing in the wilderness and people come to him and the crowds come and they ask him then what Shall we do and he answers them whoever has two tunics to share with him who has none Whoever has food is to do likewise tax collectors also came to be baptized and they said to him teacher What shall we do?

He said to them collect no more than what you are authorized to do Soldiers came and asked him what shall we do? He said to them do not extort money from anyone by threats or false

accusations and be content with your wages Do you see what John says? They say, what must we do? And John touches on the sin which most owns them.

Now, they didn't come to John saying, how must we be saved? And John says, well, you must be saved by not taking more than what is your proper due. Or if you've got two tunics, give away one. Because the question is not, how must we be saved? The question to John is, what must we do that we may be keeping with repentance?

That we may exhibit repentance? Because that's what John's baptism was. A baptism of repentance. And so the evidence of repentance, John says, is if you want to evidence repentance, Then address the sin that most dominated you prior to that. What about another example? What about the Apostle Paul? Remember how the Apostle Paul talks about his prior life a life of such pride and such arrogance over his standing and his learning and his position and And his reputation, and Paul clearly says that to us in a number of different places.

Philippians 3, 1 Corinthians 12. And in saying these things to us, he's painting a picture for us of a man who's consumed with the fear of man, with what people think about me. Paul wanted everyone to know how smart he was, how educated he was, what a heritage he had, Hebrew of Hebrews. Well, now we learned that after his conversion, his humility becomes his badge of honor.

To the Corinthians in 2nd Corinthians 12 verses 9 and 10, we know that passage where Paul prays and the Lord says to him, my grace is sufficient for my power is made perfect in your weakness, Paul, Paul took great pride in his strength until his conversion, at which point he took great pride in his. His weakness.

You see? You see how his greatest sin was the point of greatest transformation. One last example, and then we'll move on. What about the example of the Apostles James and John, the brothers James and John? Remember James and John? And you remember the name that Jesus gave to James and John? Boagernes, sons of thunder.

What in the world does sons of thunder mean? We're never told. But I can guarantee you it's not speaking of their timidity. I can guarantee it's not talking about their politeness. I think it's talking more about some of the examples that we see from James and John, like, for example, when they are leaving the Samaritan village that refuse to listen to Jesus, and they say, Jesus, you want us to do the Elijah thing on them and call down fire and thunder upon them?

I think that's more in line of why Jesus called them sons of thunder. Now, James was the first martyr of the church, so he doesn't last long after the resurrection and the ascension of Christ. But John, of course, goes on to write for us the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Revelation. Just last week, I was reading through John's gospel and I was struck once again, you know that John is the apostle of love.

I was struck once again to just what a degree he is the apostle of love. And I was struck once again to the degree in his gospel and his three epistles, how many times he brings to the forefront to love one another. Here's the son of thunder who now hangs his hat. On love one another. You see how his defining sin became his defining transformation.

So now let's move on. Lastly to the final verse, verse nine. And Jesus said to him today, salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham. So as we finish, just just ask the question, what's the difference between Zacchaeus and. Just two episodes ago, the rich young ruler, both of them are consumed with the same sin, the love of money, money as their God, the rich young ruler does the same thing as Zacchaeus, he comes to seek Jesus, but the result is completely opposite.

So what's the difference between the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus? The difference is... The rich young ruler was not told as an illustration of the Son of Man came to seek and to say the laws. Zacchaeus is. And so guys, Zacchaeus is an illustration of the one who has received conversion, received a new heart, received a spirit, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him.

And that's what makes all the difference in the world, brothers and sisters. I like to think of it like a balloon,

a balloon that's Well, I don't know just creating your in your mind is the scenario. What if I were to say to you Here's a balloon and upon penalty of death keep this balloon in the air at all times You remember being a kid and you had a balloon Tapping it up in the air and you go out on the front yard and tap it up on the air and into the air And you'd always do it.

Like I did it. You'd always do it right after Your dad mowed the grass and you got those sharp little pieces of fescue grass, and as soon as the balloon touched it, it was gone. Remember that? So you're keeping this balloon up in the air and that's, that's the picture I have in my mind. And the task is your eternity depends on this balloon never touching the ground.

If that were true, would it not make all the difference in the world what's in the balloon? Because if what's in the balloon. Is your breath. You are doomed. If what's in the balloon is helium, why you can't fail. And that's what it's like for the Son of Man to seek and to save the loss. His commands in the words of the Apostle John are not burdensome, and that's why this man, Zacchaeus can say, I don't care about the minimum.

My question is, can I give it all away? Jesus, is that okay if I give it all away and follow you? Meanwhile, there's a rich young ruler who, not too long ago, went home disillusioned. Ah, this Jesus guy, just wondering who I thought he was. I thought he was different. I thought I'd found something different. I guess I was wrong.

He's just like everybody else. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus has given away every penny. And he's done it without any coercion. Because, you see, I think if I might could just end with this analogy, just a little bit of a... Uh, just a little bit of a metaphorical view of what's happening in the story, if I may. I think that God wants us to see the tree, the old sycamore tree.

The sycamore tree, that's like Zacchaeus trying to get to God. You see the analogy? Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. What did he do to see Jesus? He climbed a tree. So the tree is like his works, his works, righteousness, his human righteousness. The tree is what he did to try to see Jesus, which is why Jesus comes to him.

And the first thing Jesus says to him is get out of that tree. In fact, Jesus says, hurry out of that tree because that tree is not how he will come to me. That tree is not how you will see me. You

will not come to me. On what you do on your efforts. So I command you to leave behind that tree and you can come down out of that tree, Zacchaeus.

Because in a few days, I'm going to be put on another tree.

And I'm not going to be put on a tree of works righteousness. I'm going to be put on a tree of your sin.

And no one will come and take me down from that tree. Oh, they'll mock me and they'll say, come down from that tree. But I won't come down until your sins, Ikeas, is atoned for. For I will stay on that tree until dead. And because I will stay on that tree, you must come down from your tree.

I wonder where you are. Because all of us are in one of two places. We're either in the tree, or we're hurrying down out of the tree.