

[Now They are Hid] / Gospel of Luke 19:1 – 48

~ We have another opportunity to spend some quality time with the Lord Jesus Christ in this leg of our Spiritual Safari. We have been to dinner with Jesus in the Gospel of Luke; and we have been to the temple for the Sabbath. The Spirit of God has taken wonderful care in teaching us some deep and marvelous truths. The parables alone that Luke records are mind-boggling. The remainder of his Gospel only adds more awe and wonder. In this report, we have before us an incident of extreme glory - with some very funny humor mixed in - which seems unusual because, remember, at the time in which we are studying, the Lord Jesus is on His way to die on the cross at Jerusalem.

On that way, we're going through Jericho. As we have already learned, Jericho was the first city of civilization. Joshua pronounced a curse upon it and the city was cursed. Jericho represents the world; we can easily widen it out spiritually like that and remain safe. The publicans were modern-day criminals – like the mafia. They were tax gatherers, but collecting taxes was an entirely different thing from what we know today. Jesus is coming from Samaria and we know that conclusively because the record says He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. The road Jesus is coming down right now is a little off the beaten path, friends. We see Jesus in this section of Scripture as He passes through Jericho, having come out of the north, going up to Jerusalem. Jesus went to Jericho because there was a sinner there who needed a Savior. There was no other reason for Jesus to go through Jericho other than to save sinners. Turn that over in your minds a few times and see what you come up with.

You and I came to this world to live – to live for Christ. Christ came to this world to die for us. That was the one purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. Jesus said He came from the Father and when He left this earth He went back to the Father! We have a tremendous movement similar to what we picked up through Matthew; and it is mirrored when the Lord Jesus passes through Jericho....

1 And Jesus entered and was passing through Jericho.

2 And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.

~ Most children's ministries rely heavily upon this passage and the account of Zacchaeus, but only three things are said about him. Sometimes, Christ can take just one sentence from a man's life and tell us everything we need to know about that person - if we are truly spiritually discerning. I think it's funny that some people say they are spiritually discerning, and they tell me in the same breath that I am wrong in my last statement! I can only laugh when I encounter those hypocrites. I am sure they are not even aware of their contradictory ideology.

The name Zacchaeus literally means "pure." I guess the momma and daddy of this little man, when he was a baby, looked down and saw a pure little brat? I bet they had a lot of fun with that around the tax office down in Jericho. I think every mother and father that has ever had a baby – even when the baby has a head like a ten-cent watermelon – they think they are the purest, most adorable, smartest one that has ever been given life to. The ones I feel the worst for are the children that are given Biblical names. There was a very famous true story of the murder of a woman who was named Vashti. It's utterly absurd. Why would anyone want to name their daughter the name of a queen who had been put away? There are other equally as weird cases out there. Maybe this tax collector had been a spectacular baby, but we see him as chief amongst the publicans now. His parents never dreamed he would turn out like this.

Anyways, we see a man now being forced to make a decision, for or against Christ on this dark night. The way a publican operated was to pay Rome a certain percentage of revenues for the rights to collect taxes in certain areas. Naturally, the books were a little cooked – to say the least. For Zacchaeus to be chief amongst this government sanctioned band of thieves means he had done quite well. Doing well meant you were a government-sponsored criminal. When this man relinquishes his position as tax collector, he also walks away from any position of authority he had in the temple. The two necessarily went hand in hand. We are witnessing a poor publican having a very troubling moment in his life. We see a disturbed

man that wants to get back to God - and he is sitting in a corner wondering where everything went wrong.

Thankfully, when Zacchaeus turned to Christ, he didn't do it half-heartedly. Before this night, if a widow couldn't pay her taxes, this man would have put her out on the street - or in jail. If the next man didn't have enough money Zacchaeus would have put a mortgage on the property with a very heavy penalty attached. Every penny Zacchaeus possessed in his luxurious life had been obtained by absolute fraud and theft on every level. Crime is what he did. Zacchaeus found out – all of the sudden – that all the riches in this world cannot satisfy our human hearts.

At a time like this, I'm sure Zacchaeus wishes he could go back and do a few things differently. Zacchaeus had traveled a very long ways down a very bad one-way street; and there was no way back to the mercy seat for this man without the Lord Jesus. Now, we see a man who recognizes he needs and desires mercy - and the Lord Jesus knows his heart. I believe it was only because Jesus knew Zacchaeus needed mercy that He went out of His way going down to Jericho at this time. Jesus is going to take him to the cross to show him salvation. We really have so much to consider in the Bible that it's mind-boggling to think about the wonders and truths we cannot grasp in the Word of God. We're really just bumping along the surface now....

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

~ A sycamore is difficult to climb with its slick bark and lengthy protrusion from the ground to the first limb. I'm sure this little man had a very hard time getting up in that tree! Zacchaeus was short in stature, but this tree wasn't. I think he scratched his way up and the tree scratched back until he goes way out on a limb where he thinks he is secluded in his own little box seating for the Jesus parade. Sure enough, Jesus came by the tree - and Jesus knew this man was really up a tree and out on a limb, to be sure....

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

~ I don't know about you, but I can't help but see humor in this account. I think many people take all day to work their way up the sycamore tree of religion trying to get a glimpse of Jesus; when He comes right up to them and asks, "do you want to see Me? If so, then come down." I wonder how fast Zacchaeus got down out of the tree. Well, coming down is usually easier than going up. Is the Lord coming to abide in your house? Jesus didn't make the stop by the mayor's house or the prominent restaurants. Jesus goes to the house of the short man climbing the tall tree. We certainly aren't going to be in the house of a Pharisee tonight....

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

~ It would seem Zacchaeus is having fun now and, friends, in Heaven you will be able to feel the joy intoxicating you. Some people cannot handle that statement. If you say that to a congregation, they will say about you what they say next here about the Lord Jesus Christ. When you teach the Bible properly, correctly and completely, you are going to separate people real fast into their own groups. The "they" is the same crowd that is the gossiping crowd, and they are still gossiping today. People ask me all the time if I know what "they" are saying about me. Well, I don't even know who "they" are so there's no way in the world I could know what they are saying. Frankly, I cannot control what others say - I can only make sure they are not telling the truth when they speak bad of me. You might think I over-exaggerated Zacchaeus as a sinner - but his neighbors wouldn't have thought so....

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted ought of any man, I restore fourfold.

~ There is an unspecified period of time where the neighbors are all standing around questioning if they trust their own ears that just heard this man say he was going to restore every man by giving all the goods from his own house. That was sure an awkward moment. Well, that's also exactly what we just heard. Zacchaeus was one who robbed the poor – not gave to them. Everything has changed in this man's life now; and it's genuine, friends. When Zacchaeus says "if" he had taken anything by false accusation that's also funny – because he had. This man had a whole lot of "restoring" to do! The four-fold restoration was according to the Mosaic Law, of course. These people just cannot believe that something has happened on the inside of this man. All we were told is that the door was closed, and something happened; and this man had a transformed life when the door opened again. Zacchaeus is a new man now! We have every other conversation of this sort accounted for by the Lord Jesus - except for this one - and I think I know why.

Whenever Jesus speaks, He speaks first about man's need and second about His ability to meet that need. Zacchaeus didn't need to be told he was a sinner because Zacchaeus was broken this night; he admitted and confessed as is proper. What Jesus told Zacchaeus next is that He was going to Jerusalem to die on the cross and THAT was the mercy seat that was being offered. That was DEEPLY disturbing to Zacchaeus. Well, the mercy seat always points to Christ and His shed blood, friends. If we didn't learn anything else in our Spiritual Safari through Leviticus, we should have learned that....

9 And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

~ Zacchaeus did NOT jump for joy and sing, "... Jesus saves to the uttermost and keeps and satisfies!" Of course, that's a good testimony - if it's the truth; I think we hear a lot of forced thanksgiving today, to be honest - but I digress. Zacchaeus didn't make a promise to be better. He didn't make a vow to join the church. Zacchaeus didn't adopt some meaningless ritual. His life and his heart were changed when the Lord Jesus

Christ passed through his home. Jesus wants you to come down from your high tree of religion - where you are way out on a limb - and have dinner together. Jesus has some things to talk to you about privately regarding your soul.

So, how about it, friends? – Has Jesus visited your home? If He did; are you following Him now, or did He leave you behind? Jesus only comes to your house when He knows you want Him to be there - and that you mean business with Him. This is given in a supplemental illustration when James says later, “.... show me your faith without works and I’ll show you my faith by my works.” Zacchaeus wasn’t obligated to say any of these things about restoring what he had stolen; but he did say them. Moreover, he demonstrated his faith, and the life became new and different. See, the world today is looking for something; it is NOT listening for anything. You will always be able to tell the difference in the house where Jesus has visited....

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and [because] they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.

~ Jesus continued to announce He was going to Jerusalem and the disciples continued to mistakenly believe He was going to establish His Kingdom at that time. They didn’t hear, obviously, the part about dying on the cross. Jesus, here, is attempting to demonstrate that the Kingdom was to be postponed and that He would be coming again....

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

~ Christ has returned to Heaven today where He will receive the Kingdom from the Father; neither from you and me nor by something we do for Him. We don’t vote the Lord Jesus into power when He returns! When the Lord returns, He said He will dash the rebellion in pieces with a rod of iron. Jesus doesn’t hold a campaign and ask the people to decide anything. The way the Word of God says it shall be is the way it is going to be, my beloved. When Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom on earth, they will either

receive Him or be destroyed. Jesus came the first time as the Savior; He returns as the judge of mankind....

13 And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye [herewith] till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us.

~ This message from the world has not changed one bit today; they'll not have God to reign over them. I have some bad news for you, though; that isn't going to prevent God from sending Christ back as the judge and it doesn't change the fact that the Lord Jesus is the rightful owner of the earth today. Sure, man has rebelled against God and against His Messiah – God will rule over them anyways! ~

15 And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading.

16 And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more.

17 And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds.

19 And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.

~ Every man is afforded an opportunity and that opportunity is represented in the pound here. We are to be faithful with whatever it is that He has made us stewards of. Your pound may be a whole city, or it may just be a home. It's all the same in the eyes of God. God calls us to be faithful. When Christ returns, He is going to reward them according to their faithfulness; this is so important to see....

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, [here is] thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin:

21 for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow.

22 He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow;

23 then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds.

25 And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.

26 I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he drew nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples,

30 saying, Go your way into the village over against [you]; in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him.

31 And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus thereon.

36 And as he went, they spread their garments in the way.

37 And as he was now drawing nigh, [even] at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen;

38 saying, Blessed [is] the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples.

40 And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

41 And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it,

42 saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold,

46 saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.

47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him:

48 and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening.

~ **Our Spiritual Safari** beheld the so-called Triumphant entry in both Gospel's of Matthew and Mark; so, there's no reason to belabor the point here. We are going to see it in John again, also. This doctorate workshop called Luke has some very fine points that, I hope, are clearing up our thinking a great deal about the Bible. We saw Jesus entered the city on several different occasions but never remained overnight there - until the night of His arrest and trial. Jesus wept over Jerusalem for the things that were hidden from their eyes. Jesus is weeping still today for the things that are hid from their eyes. The sign on a curtain at a convention being held in Jerusalem decades ago read, 'Science Will Give Us Peace in Our Day!' That was seventy years ago. Two thousand years ago plus the Lord Jesus said, "you have no idea what the future holds." Science has not brought us peace. We have firmly and conclusively established that axiom on safari. Why don't you make time each day to go through the Word of God with us and make a concerted effort to find and learn about the Lord Jesus Christ? ~

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