

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Zacchaeus’ Salvation” Luke 19

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 19: 1-10

1. *The seeking sinner meets the seeking Savior*

- A. The name ‘Zacchaeus’ means “righteous one.” But, this supervisor of tax collectors in the city of Jericho was not living to his name. In those days the publicans were notorious for collecting excess taxes from the people beyond what were their due so as to enrich themselves. That is why John the Baptist warned them to stop this evil practice [Luke 3: 12-13]. Zach was the chief of such publicans in Jericho.
- B. The new Jericho, which was next to the old Jericho, was an important trading point where merchants from the east of Jordan gather upon crossing the river and trade with the merchants of Israel west of Jordan. Here, we see Zach seeking to see the Savior by climbing to a sycamore tree [19:1]. He sought to see the Savior with curiosity and simplicity of a little child that drew the attention of the Savior to him [Luke 18:17].
- C. “Jesus entered and passed through Jericho [19:1].” Seemingly, He was only passing through the city with no lodging plan. But, the seeking Savior was looking to save a lost sinner in this city and found him on a tree [19:10]. Certainly, He did not tell His disciples of any plan of staying for a night in this major city, which had the legacy of God helping the army of Israel throw down the walls and conquering it many centuries ago. On this day, Lord Jesus showed again how what is impossible with men was all possible with God [Luke 18: 27].
- D. Lord Jesus knew the heart of Zach, who was yearning to be saved from the decadence of his life. He sought the truth of God, not the corrupted way of extorting the people to serve the corrupt powers that had a firm control over his life. He may have heard about the Savior Jesus through Levi, who was a former tax collector [Luke 5: 27-32].
- E. Lord Jesus invited Himself to Zach’s house---“Zacchaeus, make haste and come down. Today I MUST stay at your house [19: 5].” Zach received the Savior joyfully. Lord Jesus knew his name before they met. He knew of his yearning for salvation. And salvation came to Zach and his family that day. The materially rich but spiritually bankrupt sinner became rich toward God on this day. And we come to see why Lord Jesus wanted to pass through the city of Jericho on this day. This story is a testament to the truth, “The seeking Savior will find seeking sinners.”

The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. [Psalm 34:18]

2. *Zach’s restitution for his past wrongs*

- A. Without being told, Zach voluntarily confessed his sins and told the Lord his plan of restitution for the wrongs he had done to meet the requirements of the Mosaic law stealing the goods of others [19: 8]. “Today salvation has come to this household [19:9].”
- B. From this story we can see how a sinner can be saved:
 - i A sinner must welcome the Savior to his life and household.
 - ii A sinner must confess the wrongness of his past sinful life and express his desire to turn away from it.
 - iii There has to be a restitution for the wrongs done in the past.
- C. We can be assured that Zach joined the fellowship of the Jesus followers after this conversion. His life would have changed much. He may have changed his profession from tax collecting to an honest career. His example is a testament to how people meet Jesus and life being transformed as a result.

3. *Message for our generation*

- A. Compare the difference between Zach’s case and the rich young ruler, who did not invite the Savior to his household, was proud of his righteous life, disobeyed the Savior’s command to make restitution for the wrongs of his past, rejected the Savior’s invitation to join His ministry. “How hardly a rich man saved!” Yet, we see Zach was saved without difficulty. The difference is in the attitude of a person. We can be proud of ourselves and be

rejected of God's grace and mercy, whereas when we come to God in humility and with a repentant heart, God will bring great riches into our lives.

- B. Success and prosperity have brought in pride, arrogance and self-indulgence. There is much pride in American achievements, wealth and might so that many people do not feel the need for God in their lives. Many are self-sufficient and very focused on success in this life, pleasures and wealth. God sounds a great warning to the American people:

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. [Isaiah 55:1]

- C. To those who find their hearts void of peace and satisfaction in spite of wealth and success, the seeking Savior cries out even now as He did thousands of years ago through the prophets – to come to Him and drink the true living water that will bring joy and satisfaction that come from knowing God the Creator of heaven and earth and Jesus Christ, the One who died for all humanity so that they might come to God the Father. Let us come to the seeking Savior in the curiosity and simplicity of a little child as Zach did and find the riches that only God can give us.

Discussion topics:

1. *What changes were made in your life when you accepted the Savior?*
2. *Is true repentance possible without restitution for the wrongs?*