

SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE A MAN CLIMB A TREE

Text: Luke 19:1-10 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest 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 taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Introduction: Let us consider the Story of Zacchaeus. Although his encounter with Jesus happened many years ago, it is timeless story of an unexpected meeting between an outcast of society and the Savior of the World – Zacchaeus and Jesus.

I. First, an explanation of my ODD Sermon Title: Something that will make a man climb a tree!

Although the sermon is unique and personal, *the title is not* – it was borrowed from a sermon I heard over 40 years ago (*note: I don't remember who gave me the sermon*) by an unknown preacher from a Mississippi Baptist Convention for Preachers. I remember being greatly touched by it - so touched that it has stayed with me after all these years - so touched that I will probably carry the sermon title with me to my grave! **MAY IT TOUCH SOME OTHER HUNGRY SOUL AS IT TOUCHED ME SO LONG AGO!**

What I will attempt to preach in this sermon is mine: I could never preach another preacher's sermon!

Something that will make a man climb a tree!

II. The Story of Zacchaeus is 1st and Foremost- A REMINDER of THE GREAT COMMISSION!

Text – Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.** ⁽¹⁾ Go ye therefore, and ⁽²⁾ *teach all nations,* ⁽³⁾ *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* ⁽⁴⁾ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (**TEACH THEM TO KEEP GOD'S COMMANDMENTS**): and, lo, ⁽⁵⁾ *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* (GOD IS HELPING US IN THE WORK OF HIS GREAT COMMISSION!)

III. The story of Zacchaeus is a Wonderful Story of the Salvation of a LOST SOUL!

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, **This day is salvation come to this house,** forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

❖ JESUS IS STILL WALKING THE ROADS OF LIFE TODAY SEARCHING FOR MODERN-DAY ZACCHAEUS'

❖ He uses his Followers as his Ambassadors but he personally arrives to DRAW lost sinners to Himself!

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (*Note: If the Spirit is present to DRAW one to the Father, isn't JESUS present there too?*)

Do you remember your own personal encounter with Jesus? Although the location was maybe different (not sitting in a tree), the encounter was similar:

(1) *Jesus spoke to your heart in a personal and private way!*

(2) *He knew all about you – just as he called Zacchaeus by name, he called your name!*

- (3) *He knew exactly what you needed!*
- (4) *He showed compassion and sought to deliver you from a lonely and empty life!*
- (5) *He offered you a choice – to stay in the tree or come down and follow Him in a new direction!*
- (6) *He sought to come into your heart and fellowship - as he sought to come to Zacchaeus' house!*
- (7) *The encounter with Jesus changed you just as it changed Zacchaeus!*

IV. Let's look at some things about Zacchaeus:

1st, things we think are important but are not:

- (a) Short in statue – our size is irrelevant – God sees all – those who are in front does not prevent Him from seeing those who seem to be hidden or in the back! irrelevant to salvation
- (b) A Son of Abraham – Linage and Chrisitan Family History – noted in scripture but irrelevant to salvation – GOD DOESN'T HAVE GRANDCHILDREN – ONLY CHILDREN!
- (c) Zacchaeus was rich – noted in scripture but irrelevant to salvation
- (d) High standings with important people (Romans) – noted in scripture but irrelevant to salvation – knowing important people does not affect salvation in any way!
- (e) Despise by others – an outcast of society – a reject – hated by those around him - irrelevant to salvation – **JESUS IDENTIFIES WITH OUTCASTS BECAUSE HE WAS ALSO AN OUTCAST - REJECTED BY THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY AND HATED BY THE WORLD!**

John 3:19-20 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

- (f) Chief among the publicans - noted in scripture but irrelevant to salvation – **PAUL – chief among sinners - I Timothy 1:15** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

V. Something that will make a man climb a tree!

Sycamore Tree: Sycamore trees, like the one Zacchaeus climbed in the Bible, can be quite large, typically growing to 98-131 feet tall. Some can reach even 174 feet tall, with diameters of almost 13 feet. (ref.: GOOGLE AI). A SYCAMORE TREE SIZE IS COMPARABLE TO OUR OAK TREE

Common in Israel – II Chronicles 1:15 And the king (Solomon) made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance.

Climb a Tree:

- *A Man – not a Boy - We picture boys climbing trees but not men.
Embarrassing for a man to climb a tree?*
- **Short in Statue** – *Is it difficult to climb a large tree? Probably, yes - for a short person - NOT EASY!*
- **Rich/Chief Publican** – *Undignified for a rich man from a high ranking position to climb a tree?*

WHAT WOULD MAKE A GROWN MAN SUCH AS ZACHAEUS CLIMB A SYCAMORE TREE?

1) Curiosity will cause a man to climb a tree – Searching for Something More!

Something was missing in Zachaeus' Life – He was searching for the missing part of his heart!

NICODEMUS was curious too –

John 3:1-3 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

2) **Dissatisfaction will make a man climb a tree!**

Dissatisfied with a meaningless Life! *Seeking to change from life's circumstances!*

- **chief among the publicans -- A Prestigious Position in Society did not Satisfy Zacchaeus!**
- **and he as rich – Riches did not satisfy Zacchaeus!**

Ecclesiastics 1:1-3 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

IF YOU ARE DISSATISFIED WITH LIFE – DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT -TAKE THE 1ST STEP – CLIMB A TREE – SAY A PRAYER – GO TO CHURCH - SEEK GOD AT AN ALTAR!

3) **To Get a Clearer Picture of Jesus will make a man climb a tree!**

Seeking to overcome the obstacle of the RELIGIOUS CROWD – *they warp and block the TRUE VIEW OF JESUS!*

- only a glimpse could be seen – **organized religion** (only a glimpse of Jesus is in religion – not the full view of Christ you see when you are BORN AGAIN)!

Zacchaeus could not (SEE JESUS) for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

The crowd murmured – Matthew 19:7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

4) **A Spiritual Hunger for Love and Acceptance will make a man climb a tree!**

Seeking to Fellowship with our Creator through Christ!

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

5) **CLOSING - Seeking Freedom from the Chains and Bondage of Sin will make a man climb a tree!**

Zacchaeus was a changed person – A NEW CREATION – the OLD MAN was BORN AGAIN!

Matthew 19:8-9 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, **This day is salvation come to this house,**

Only JESUS HAS THE POWER TO BREAK THE POWER OF SIN'S BONDAGE AND SET THE CAPTIVE FREE!

NICODEMUS - John 3:7&10 ...ye must be Born AGAIN ... Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

*****Sometimes Zachaeus's are hidden within the Church - PAUL ADDRESSED THE SIN IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH – SIN INSIDE THE CHURCH -THE RESULTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

II Corinthians 7:8-11 *For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*