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True Repentance and True Discipleship - Luke 19:1-27

Introduction – As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, we meet another rich ruler and another safe, play-it-by-the-rules servant. And once again Jesus surprises everyone.

Zacchaeus (vv1-10) – Children’s ministries love the story of little Zacchaeus. Little children can relate to not being able to see above the shoulders of a crowd, can imagine climbing a tree in order to get a better look, and are delighted to hear Jesus’ winsome words to “*make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.*” They often miss the point that Zacchaeus was more like the Godfather of the Tax Collection Agency (v2). Zacchaeus would have been despised, and it would have horrified the citizens of Jericho to think that he would be the one known by name to millions of people two thousand years later.

Jericho – Like the story of the healing of the blind man (18:35ff) this story takes place around Jericho. We should not forget that Jesus’ Hebrew name is Joshua. The New Joshua has come, and like Rahab, finds a sinner who will receive Him into his home.

A Camel Got Through – This story also compliments Jesus’ teaching with the rich young ruler (18:18-30). Like the healing of the blind man, we see that nothing is impossible for God, not even getting a camel through the eye of a needle.

Joyful Repentance – This rich man does repent. Notice that he doesn’t have to give up all his riches in order to follow Jesus. But his repentance is shown in his use of wealth. Opposite of the rich young ruler, Zacchaeus wants to make right, paying back any he has defrauded and giving away half of his possessions to the poor. As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, these stories proclaim the kind of healing, the kind of new life that Christ intends to bring. If only Jerusalem would see and make a similar response (19:41-44). Zacchaeus, and not Jerusalem, is a son of Abraham (v9).

The Kingdom of God – Would it Appear Immediately? (vv11-27) – As they heard and saw these things approaching Jerusalem, they wondered if the kingdom would appear immediately. Context, context, context....

First – Jesus had already told them the kingdom of God was among them, in their midst (17:21).

Second – The coming of the kingdom also meant (to the Jew) that God was coming to judge His enemies. The irony was that the Jews themselves had become the enemies of this new King. Because of their unbelief, the manifestation of this kingdom would be the destruction of the so-called city of our God, Jerusalem and it’s Temple (which Jesus will call a Robbers Den in v46).

Third – The parable of the Minas sounds very familiar in the ear of the Jew. Herod the Great died around 4BC and Archeus, Herod’s son went to Rome to be confirmed as king (he is mentioned in Matt 2:22) and was followed by a large delegation of Judaeans who didn’t want him (notice Luke 19:12). Eventually Archeus returned, having received the kingdom (sort of) and reigned for a time in Judea.

Fourth – The Jews knew that the Son of Man would ascend to the Ancient of Days to receive His kingdom (Dan 7:13-14). Coming in the clouds was not a picture of Jesus coming to earth but coming to heaven.

Conclusion – This parable is teaching the disciples that there will be a short delay before the coming judgment upon unbelieving Israel/Jerusalem. Jesus will leave, ascend up into heaven and receive a kingdom. Before the generation of those who rejected Him ends, He returns in judgment over them, destroying the Temple and slaying those who did not want Jesus to rule over them (v27). The charge to the disciples is to take the “mina” given to each one and use it to produce fruit while He is gone, proving their true faithfulness to Him upon His return.

Zacchaeus, the Servants, and Us – Understanding this passage as being a warning fulfilled in 1st Century history does not at all diminish its application for us today. There is still a physical return of Jesus Christ that will occur and a final judgment of all things (Rom 2:16, 14:10, 2 Cor 5:9-10, Rev 20:11-15, Matt 25:31ff).

Love With Your Feet – There is a saying that “love is a matter of the heart,” but in all of these judgment passages as well as in the story of Zacchaeus and the servants with the minas love is actually a matter of the “feet.” What are you doing with what you have been given? It appears there are always three kinds of people wherever Christ is proclaimed; those who serve Him, those who oppose Him, and those who supposedly serve Him but actually oppose Him.

To Do Nothing is To Show Contempt – Over and over again we see that our faith is justified by our works. Our works do not justify us, but our works demonstrate the kind of faith that we actually have (James 2:18). Zacchaeus was a son of

Abraham who was a man justified by works and not by faith only (James 2:23-24).

Every Servant Has Been Given a Mina – How can we see our understanding of the Lordship of Christ? Look at your pocketbook, your calendar, the use of your gifts and talents and opportunities. Do we look like the servants who find their minas multiplying, or like the servant who thinks he can sit in front of his idiot-box all day (or his computer/x-box games or...) and hand the mina back to the Judge when He returns?

Inescapable Observations – The faithful servants took risks for the kingdom. The man who risked nothing was not commended. If you do not use it you will lose it. To whom much is given, much is required. Don't waste your life; don't waste your mina.

But remember verse 10. Jesus came to save lost sinners like that wicked Zacchaeus, and like you and me. He is in the business of turning lost lives around.

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