

THE SEEKING SAVIOUR

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

Crowds were on their way to the Passover Feast. Christ Jesus was passing through Jericho. The crowds were eager to see Him. On the edge of the crowd was a well-known and well-to-do man named Zaccheus.

I. The Character of Zaccheus.

1. He was a Jew by nationality.
2. He was a publican in position.
Officially, he was chief among the publicans.
3. He was a tax-gatherer.
Israel had lost her independence. The Romans had the upper hand. Rome decided how much tax she wanted and sold the privilege of collecting that amount to a set of Jews. Zaccheus was the leader of this gang. Rich, unpopular. Held in contempt. Hated.
4. He was an extortionist.
He levied the taxes to the limit, paid Rome her demands, and added the rest to his bank account. Since he was the chief of the collectors, he probably got a "rake-off" from the rest of the crowd.
5. He had a passion for money.
This was the only thing that could compel a man to work at this despised trade. He loved money better than he loved his nation, the respect of his fellowman, his soul, or God.

II. The Condition of Zaccheus.

1. He was small in stature.
2. He was a social outcast.
He was a traitor to his country. He was hated by his fellowmen. No decent man would enter his house. Everybody thought the worst possible about him. And you are aware that nobody goes wrong quite so easily as the man that everybody expects to go wrong. Bad reputation. Nobody thought much of him.
3. He was rich.
As is often the case, Zaccheus, perhaps, owed his official position more to his purse than he did to his purity -- more to what he had than to what he was. He got rich through extortion, misrepresentation, fraud, trickery, and chicanery in general.
4. He was curious.
Sitting in his booth one day, he looked down the street and saw a great crowd of people. He inquired what it meant. He was told that the man who claimed to be the Messiah had come to town. Doubtless he had already heard many things about Jesus, and especially about His dealing with tax-gatherers in other parts of the country. Therefore, he decided that he would get some definite information about Jesus for himself. He was curious to see this man who was courageous enough to rebuke the religious leaders of the day, and at the same time say a good word for the under-dog.

5. He was lost.

He was lost to himself. He was lost to the world. He was lost to God. God had a beautiful plan for his life, but Zaccheus did not fit into that plan because he was lost.

6. He was anxious to see Jesus.

Doubtless, various motives prompted him to try to see Jesus. It is possible that curiosity had something to do with it. His conscience did not give him peace. He had found that money had no power to satisfy the longings of his soul, or to heal the hurts of his heart. He was thirsty for God.

7. He longed for a better life.

He was dissatisfied and unhappy and had a serious longing for a higher and holier life.

8. He resolved that he would go to see Jesus.

When he determined to do this, he faced a twofold difficulty: --

(1) The multitude surrounding Jesus

(2) The smallness of stature of himself

But, he showed the stuff that was in him. He was full of grit. That is the kind of man I admire. If a man is going to serve God, I like to see him on the job 365 days in the year, and an extra day when leap year comes around. It was not at all easy for Zaccheus to accomplish his desire. He saw a tree down the road. He went on ahead of the crowd and climbed the famous sycamore tree. It was a rather undignified thing for a state official to do, but Zaccheus was not out after dignity. He was out for something far bigger and far better. He saw out to see Jesus. I suppose that some laughed at him. People often laugh at you, but that makes little difference. They can laugh you into hell, but they can't laugh you out again.

III. The Call of Zaccheus.

1. An invited call.

That is, he himself invited it by his action in climbing into the tree.

2. A personal call.

Out of all that multitude surging around Jesus there was just one man whom He singled out and called by name. Christ Jesus knew his name, his nature, the place he occupied, and the thoughts he cherished.

3. An unexpected call.

It was so unexpected that it startled Zaccheus.

4. A gracious call.

Zaccheus was a notorious sinner. Men would have said to that mean, deformed, corrupt, unpopular, avaricious, tricky sinner, "Give up your vices, your oppressive office, your nefarious gains, and reform and purify your character and life and then you may stand some chance of receiving Jesus," but Infinite grace, reversed all this.

5. An urgent call.

"Make haste", as much as to say, 'It is now or never.'

6. An humbling call.

"Come down."

7. An effectual call.

"And he made haste and came down." He answered the call.

IV. The Conversion of Zaccheus.

When Jesus thus singled him out by a glance, addressed him by name, and called him to minister to Him, it broke his heart to think that here is One Who cares for me in spite of my soiled past. His conversion was the direct effort of the Lord's conduct toward him. What are the evidences of his conversion? ---

1. His conviction of sin.
2. His unfeigned repentance.
3. His reception of Christ.
4. His joy of heart.
5. His confession of Christ.
6. His restitution of possessions.
7. His reformation of character and life.

A marvelous change was wrought in his character. The dishonest man became honest, the selfish man became generous, and the sinful man became righteous. Instead of living for self, he began to live for the Saviour. Instead of seeking the things of time, he began to seek the things of eternity.

It strikes me that his reasoning was along this line: ---

1. The Lord sees me.
2. The Lord knows me.
3. The Lord needs me.

Therefore, instead of being a great sinner, I want to be a great saint by and with the help of the Lord.

1. Why you should decide for Christ.
 - (1) For the sake of Christ. He died for you.
 - (2) For the sake of the world. Never fulfill purpose for which born, nor reach zenith of manhood unless give your life back to Him.
 - (3) For the sake of your loved ones. Cheer hearts.
 - (4) For sake of your own soul. Past, present, future.
2. How you can decide for Christ.
 - (1) Recognize your lost condition.
 - (2) Repent because of your lost condition.
 - (3) Receive Christ for your lost condition.
Look away from sin and self to the Saviour.
3. When you should decide for Christ.
Here and now.
 - (1) It will never be easier than it is now.
 - (2) God says "NOW"
 - (3) This might be your last opportunity.
He pleads with you, but if shut door in His face, then there is nothing more He can do for you.