

1. Jesus Gives Scandalous Invitations

- a. Of all the people that Jesus invites to spend one of his final evenings for dinner before his crucifixion, it is one of the most despised, corrupt, criminal people in all of Jericho
 - i. Chief Tax Collector
 1. only "chief" tax collector mentioned in scripture
 2. oversaw the other tax collectors
 3. collected heavy "commissions" and thus was extremely wealthy and powerful
 - ii. Zacchaeus would have been one of the richest, if not the richest, man in Jericho, **because he headed up all the tax collectors and gained health “commissions” by doing so**
 - iii. Even worse, he was seen as a traitor to the country, a sell-out to oppressive terrorizing Rome, who occupied Judea
 1. Rome controlled their occupied territories by taxing them heavily, and they accomplished this by hiring locals with exorbitant perks to collect the taxes
- b. This would have been incredibly shocking to the crowd, much more than the blind man, for Zach was a willing participant in white-collar crimes that were pro-Roman tax schemes that were seen as the active oppression of the Jewish people
 - i. Zach sold his Jewishness for money, power, and status – much like Benny in the Mummy, who sold his soul to the mummy to save his life and make him rich – Zacchaeus was Benny
- c. Jesus moves towards this man who really has no friends: no Romans trusted him and no Jews would be seen with him unless there were some advantage to them
 - i. Thus, he was only in relationships of use, that is, people only related to him to use him to get what they wanted
 - ii. Both Jews and Romans
 - iii. He was an absolute pariah
- d. The only way that you and I are able to follow Jesus is if we recognize that we are like Zacchaeus and be shocked and amazed that Jesus called us
 - i. When we do recognize this great grace towards me, the pariah, will I respond like Zacchaeus
 - ii. Unless you see yourself in the tree, with Zacchaeus, you will not develop the joy of Zacchaeus, receive the name he received, or celebrate with such generosity like Zach

2. Jesus is Urgent for Mercy

- a. Jesus sees and honors Zacchaeus
 - i. He stops and looks up
 - ii. He calls Zacchaeus by name
- b. Hurry up!
 - i. Look at the impetus of Jesus!
 - ii. He longs to save Zacchaeus, and he is anxious to bring salvation to his house
 - iii. **“Salvation has come” because Jesus has come to his house!**
- c. I must remain at your house
 - i. This is an affirmation of his love and honor of the pariah
 - ii. **To eat at someone’s house was to affirm them, to honor them, to bless them**
 1. Thus the grumbling of the others
 - iii. **Notice that Jesus doesn’t demand that Zach get his act together first, recompense those whom he has wronged, etc. and THEN Jesus will come to him**

1. Jesus comes to his house FIRST
2. **And it is this LOVE OF GOD FIRST** and the compels Zacchaeus' love and therefore repentance and the deeds commensurate to repentance
3. **"We love because he first loved us."**
- iv. This is the heart of Christianity
 1. God enables repentance by His own acts of shocking grace
 - a. **"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"**
 - b. **"handed over according to the predetermined counsel of God"**
 - c. **"God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten son"**
 2. God always acts FIRST!
 - a. This is amazing grace.
- d. **The heart of Jesus' mission is to bring outsiders inside by repentant faith in Him**
 - i. "it is necessary"
 - ii. Jesus is strongly stating that this kind of mercy and restoration of the repentant from all walks of life, past histories of evil, and those who have made themselves pariahs by their sin, is what He is there for
 - iii. Jesus is saying that people like Zacchaeus are the reason that he came and that he was going to Jerusalem to die
 1. People whom others had given up on, cast aside, lost hope for
 2. These are the people for whom Jesus came
 3. **"I've come to seek and to save the lost"**
 - iv. **This story isn't about Zacchaeus as much as it is about Jesus**
 1. He is the salvation that comes and to whom Zacchaeus responds
 2. He is the initiator of love before **Zacchaeus even knows what's going on**
 - v. **He is the one who came to seek...and to save...the LOST**
 1. Lost = ruined, destroyed
 - a. Luke 9:24-25 - "gain the whole world and LOSE his soul"
 2. It has to do with "ruin"
 - a. Literally, perfect tense "those having been ruined"
 - b. Those having been ruined by sin, destroyed
 3. If you have been *ruined* by sin, then Jesus came for you
 - a. Not merely broken, but destroyed

3. Jesus Gives a Restorative Name

- a. "Son of Abraham" = man of faith (Gal 3:7)
 - i. Abraham's glory was in faith in the Lord, not his own obedience
 - ii. Yet, his faith was shown by obedience
 1. Left Ur because he trusted the word of the Lord (Rom 4:3)
 2. Willing to sacrifice his son because he trusted that the Lords' promise of a multitude of descendants would be fulfilled by the resurrection of Isaac (Heb 11:19)
- b. Jesus puts Zacchaeus on the lineage of Abraham, the man of faith who believed God and was credited with righteousness
 - i. The people had put Zacchaeus in the lineage of dishonor, a thief and a scoundrel
 - ii. Jesus gives him a new name: son of Abraham, receiver of the covenant promises
- c. **This doesn't mean that Zach was accepted BECAUSE of his deeds of repentance, any more than Abraham was credited righteousness because of his righteous deeds**
 - i. Jesus came to seek and save the LOST
 - ii. Abraham was LOST, an idolater from Ur **who abused his wife multiple times...look it up.**

1. He was ruined by his sin, nothing without the grace of God towards him in God's unilateral promise to bless him
 2. It was God's provision of a sacrifice in his place, the ram in the thicket, that sanctified Abe because he was ruined
 - iii. Zach was LOST, ruined by sin
 1. He was not given a new name because of his works
 2. Salvation had already come to him because Jesus chose him and he entrusted himself to Jesus
 3. His deeds proved that his faith in Jesus was genuine, joyful, and complete
 - d. By FAITH in Jesus, Zacchaeus receives all the promises made to Abraham
 - i. He is in the family, receiving the promises, inside the Kingdom, etc.
 - ii. Because his dependence upon Jesus was all the way and no longer on his wealth, his power, his privilege, his status, his performance
 - iii. He gave it all away because Jesus was his hope and his king, and he trusted his king more than the others
4. Those Who Obtain Salvation by Faith in Jesus Respond with Restorative Generosity
- a. He was actively and continually seeking Jesus
 - i. imperfect verb "was seeking"
 - ii. implies persistence
 1. persistent because he could not see over the crowd, for he was "small" in either maturity or in stature
 2. He didn't let this stop him, but endeavored to find a way, he climbed a small tree
 - a. Sycomore Tree (*Ficus Sycomorus*)= Fig Mulberry Tree
 - b. up to 20m tall, 6m wide
 - c. Here we have a rich ruler who was bearing the fruit of repentance in a fig tree (see Luke 13:1-9!)
 - d. This is why Luke is so specific about the tree, it fulfills what Jesus parabolized in Luke 13
 - iii. We must not let our previous experience with religion keep us from pursuing and seeing the real Christ
 - b. Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully
 - i. received - honored Jesus
 1. Hospitality is a virtue
 2. It means that one shares with others, does not hold their goods for themselves
 3. **Generosity expounds one's understanding of mercy, forgiveness, and grace of Jesus towards oneself – and does not obsess about oneself, but looks more at others**
 - ii. joyfully - his heart was not proud
 1. He rejoiced at the LOVE of Jesus, and the contra-conditional honor
 2. Jesus was the first person who told him, contra-conditionally, **"I love you because I choose to love you."**
 3. This unleashes joy and it is the only thing that, when believed, unleashes transformative joy for you and me, too
 - a. This joy changed Zacchaeus in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye
 - b. His wealth had no power over him
 - c. His honor in the community held no sway
 - d. His over-desire for status melted away in the blazing love of Jesus
 - c. Zacchaeus gives all control over to Jesus

- i. Repentance trusts completely in Jesus
- ii. He calls him, “Lord”
 - 1. Before this, Zacchaeus was the master of his own life, chose what to do, what to purchase, how much, how little, when, where, etc.
 - 2. But now, having been confronted by the love of Christ, he gives over mastery of his own life to Jesus and His Word
 - 3. Now the words of Christ become his master and inform him what to do, how to live, what to purchase, how much, how little, when, where, etc.
- iii. This results in an extravagant restorative reversal of power
 - 1. He gives away a large portion of his wealth
 - a. This would have been a drastic change in lifestyle
 - b. Half of anyone’s wealth will change their lifestyle
 - c. Paying back 4 times an original debt would drastically change things
 - 2. In so doing, he gives away a large portion of his power
 - a. Now he has less to lean on, less to impress people with
 - b. Now he has no leverage over people or the wealth by which he could buy the “affection” and “friendship” of powerful or impressive people
 - c. This exchange of the power of the world for joyful submission to Christ is the essence of repentant faith
- d. The meaning of life is to worship God with self-giving other-edifying love
 - i. This is because God is like this, and we were made in his image
 - 1. The Father loves and glorifies the Son and the Son loves and glorifies the Father and the Holy Spirit loves and glorifies the words of the Son, etc.
 - 2. Thus, the biblical ethic of following Jesus means to give yourself away
 - ii. The cross is the preeminent work of God in self-giving other-edifying love
 - 1. In it, God gives Himself away for the sake of not only the less fortunate, but for his cosmically violent enemies who hated him and wanted him destroyed
 - 2. The Son of Man left his comforts, his wealth, and his power in order to submit himself to the will of the Father, lay down his life for those whom he, by his own sovereign choice, renamed “friends”

The paradox is amazing. The Creator assumed the human frailty of his creatures. The Eternal One entered time. The all-powerful made himself vulnerable. The all-holy exposed himself to temptation. And in the end the **immortal died.**”

— John Stott

- 3. And we are his friends, if we respond in like manner, give up our power and submit it to him for the joy of it
 - a. The servant is not greater than his master.
 - b. As Jesus was raised from the dead, the giving of his all, so his followers, too, are raised up to the fullness of his life as we give ourselves away

Conclusion:

Christ gives to unworthy people in order to make them worshippers of God. Those who belong to him put their trust in Him and in His Word, giving themselves and their power in response to the generous God.

Zacchaeus - "pure, innocent" – Hebrews 10:10 – “By that will [which submitted to the Father], we have been purified and set apart by the offering of the body of Jesus once and for all.”