

Moments *for* You

Volume 63, Number 2

Theme: Zacchaeus



ZACCHAEUS' SALVATION

Luke 19:1-10 describes the conversion of a soul. Like the stories of Nicodemus in John chapter 3, and the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4, the story of Zacchaeus should be studied by anyone who is seeking salvation. The Lord Jesus never changes. What He did for Zacchaeus, He is able and willing to do for you.

We learn, firstly, from the conversion of Zacchaeus, that no one is too bad to be saved, or beyond the power of Christ's grace. In the previous chapter, Jesus declared "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25). In this chapter, we find proof that with God all things are possible (Luke 18:27). We see a covetous tax collector transformed into a charitable Christian! There are no incurable cases under the Gospel; any sinner may be healed—if only he will come to Christ.

We learn, next, of Christ's free compassion toward sinners, and Christ's power to change hearts. Without being asked, our Lord stops and speaks to Zacchaeus. Uninvited, He offers Himself to be a guest in the house of a sinner. Unasked, He sends the renewing grace of the Spirit of God into the heart of a tax collector, and puts him that very day among the children of God! In Jesus there is an infinite *readiness* to receive sinners, and an infinite *ability* to save them.

The salvation of Zacchaeus also reminds us that salvation is not of works, but of grace. If there was ever a soul sought and saved, without having done anything to deserve it,

that soul was the soul of Zacchaeus. Grace—free sovereign grace—is the only thought which gives us peace in a dying hour. We must come to Jesus Christ just as we are, and not wait in the vain hope that we can make ourselves *worthy* to come.

We learn, lastly, that converted sinners will always give evidence of their conversion. We are told that Zacchaeus proclaimed, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). There was *reality* in that speech. There was unmistakable proof that Zacchaeus was a new creature. When a wealthy Christian begins to distribute his riches, and an extortioner begins to make restitution—then we may truly believe that old things have passed away, and all things become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Anyone who desires to give proof of being a believer should walk in the steps of Zacchaeus. Thoroughly renounce the *sins* which have most easily entangled you. Study God's word, speak with Him in prayer, and pursue fellowship with His people. Faith that does not purify the heart and life is not saving faith at all. Grace that cannot be seen like light, and tasted like salt, is not saving grace—but hypocrisy. The heart that has really tasted the grace of Christ will instinctively hate sin.

Let us make sure that we truly know Jesus as Savior. Let us take heed that our souls are saved. Once saved and converted, we shall say, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me" (Psalm 116:12).

—J. C. Ryle, adapted

A PRESENT, PERFECT, PERSONAL SALVATION

“This day is salvation come to this house” (Luke 19:9).

These precious words from the account of the conversion of Zacchaeus present three characteristics of the salvation which the grace of God brings. It is a *present* salvation, a *perfect* salvation, and a *personal* salvation.

“THIS DAY”

A PRESENT SALVATION

Dear reader, if you are still in your sins, you do not need to wait until tomorrow to be saved. The great fact on which salvation depends was accomplished nearly two thousand years ago on the cross. All is finished. Jesus has “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). He “once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). The soul that believes this grand fact is saved on the spot—saved now—saved forever. There is no need to go here and there, or do this or that; just believe what God has said about Jesus, and you will be saved.

“IS SALVATION COME”

A PERFECT SALVATION

Salvation is not coming in the future; it is not on the way; it is actually “come.” It was worked out for us by Christ, and is as perfect as He could make it. It demands nothing from the sinner. It is brought, in all its divine fullness and completeness, to our door, and our only qualification for it is that we are “lost.” It is only a lost sinner that needs salvation, and nothing but a perfect salvation would do for one who is utterly lost. It is not merely help I want, but *full salvation*. Many will say they hope to be saved “by the help of God.” This is a mistake.

There is a huge difference between God’s helping me to be saved and His saving me altogether. In the former case, I mistakenly believe that I can assist in His work; but in the latter case, God does all.

“TO THIS HOUSE”

A PERSONAL SALVATION

It is important to understand this clearly. There are many who say, “We are all sinners, and we know that Jesus died for all.” But they have never gone past the *general* fact and made it a *personal* matter. They have never been brought to say from the depth of a broken heart, “I am lost; but Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The devils believe that Jesus died for sinners, but it does them no good. The thing is to believe that Jesus died for *me*—that a full, free, eternal salvation has come to *me*—that *my* sins were laid on Jesus, and that He bore them in His own body on the tree, and put them away out of God’s view forever. Of what value is salvation if it cannot be mine? But, blessed be God, it is for me, because I am a lost sinner. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

The very moment you recognize that you are a lost sinner and reach out by faith to Jesus Christ, trusting Him who died for you and rose again, the salvation of God applies itself to you as truly as the air is intended for all who have lungs to breathe. Does any one ever think of questioning whether the atmosphere is intended for him? Well, then, neither should any poor conscience-smitten sinner entertain a single doubt as to the precious truth that God’s salvation is not only a present, and a perfect, but also a personal salvation.

—Adapted from *Things New and Old*

SEEKING AND SAVING

“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

I suggest that this verse is the central, key text of the Gospel of Luke. What wondrous truths are stated here, in the most amazingly simple language. Here are fifteen one-syllable words, only one of which has as many as five letters, yet they tell the story of God’s eternal love in all its fullness.

“The Son of Man is come.” The term *Son of Man* declares that in matchless grace Jesus took a place of equality with man—He came to take our place and die for our sins. After sin came into the world, all humanity—knowingly or unknowingly—awaited Him who alone could undo the works of the devil and bring peace and deliverance. And now here is the triumphant cry: “He is come.”

As the “Son of Man,” Jesus represents no empire, nation, or tribe. All may claim Him as theirs. He does not call Himself the Son of Abraham, for there are no racial limitations in His kingdom. He is not merely the Son of David, for there are no royal limitations. He does not represent Himself as the Son of Mary, for there are no familial limitations. He is the Son of Man—to all people alike.

He came to “seek and to save that which was lost.” Jesus is seeking all people, from all nations. His love knows no classes, no ages. He saves the scholar lost amidst his philosophies, and the religious person lost in his rituals. He saves the common you and me. He is seeking weary souls, those that want His salvation. You find the world’s heroes where luxuries abound, but Christ is found where hearts are aching, where the

load is heaviest, where tears are bitterest. He is the Son of Man. He is for all, and would have all to be forever His.

The Son of Man is come. Shout it the world around!

—August Van Ryn, condensed

OBSTACLES

There is a priceless lesson in the interesting story of Zacchaeus. If anyone is serious about his soul’s salvation, serious in the pursuit of truth, serious in her desire after Christ, that person will—most assuredly—get all they seek for, and much more beside. The earnest seeker is sure to become a happy finder, regardless of the obstacles in their path.

When Zacchaeus desired to see Jesus, there was a crowd in the way. Add to this his physical limitations, and thousands would have found sufficient motive for giving up any thought of seeing Him. But Zacchaeus was not so easily discouraged. Was there a crowd? He could run ahead of it. Was he short? He could climb up into a tree. Had there been a thousand obstacles, I am convinced that the earnestness in Zacchaeus’ heart would have overcome them all. The same difficulties which give the careless and the halfhearted their excuses, provide the serious seeker of God an occasion to demonstrate their hunger for Him.

There is really no excuse for anyone; all are welcome. “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). Those who make excuses do not truly want to come to Christ. It would be far more honest of them to declare plainly that they do not want to have anything to do with God, with Christ, with holiness, with heaven, than to put forth their flimsy excuses, or to plead dif-

difficulties which would be considered as nothing if they had the heart of Zacchaeus. Jesus is as ready now, as He ever was, to save all who come to Him. “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

Reader, are you unsaved? Are you uncertain? Are you unsettled? Be serious about your soul’s salvation. Do not be hindered by difficulties. Let nothing prevent you from coming now, just as you are, to the loving Savior who stands waiting for you. He will meet you—just as He met the publican of Jericho—with a full, free, and everlasting salvation.

—C. H. Mackintosh, adapted

We too can be prevented from seeing Jesus. Pride can blind us from seeing Him as the Wonderful Counselor. Anxiety keeps us from knowing Him as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). Hunger for status and stuff can prevent us from seeing Him as the true source of satisfaction—the bread of life (John 6:48).

What are you willing to do to get a better view of Jesus? Any sincere effort to get closer to Him will have a good result. God rewards people who earnestly seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).
—Jennifer Benson Schuldt

HE KNOWS YOUR NAME

“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me” (Psalm 139:1).

What did they call Zacchaeus in his hometown of Jericho? Most folks recognized him as the chief tax collector. The Romans may have identified him with a number. He was merely one cog in the huge machine that brought revenues pouring into Rome. Zealots in Israel spoke of him as a traitor because he had sold out to the enemy. Others in the community may have

called him names behind his back.

Yet Jesus, when He passed through the village, called Zacchaeus by his name. Looking up into the leafy tree where the little man was perched, Jesus said, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house” (Luke 19:5). Although the two men had never met, Jesus called him by name.

Hearing our own name spoken means that we are known. When Zacchaeus heard Jesus speak his name, it had a dramatic impact on him. God knows you intimately. He is keenly interested in your life. How you respond to Him will determine what you live for on this earth. It will also determine where you will spend eternity. It’s your call.

The Creator knows you well; do you know Him at all?

—Haddon W. Robinson, *Our Daily Bread*

BETTER THAN GOLD

There are some who think that salvation is similar to a present they receive in the mail. While it was good and kind of the Lord to send this gift to them, they imagine that He remains at a great distance from them. Have you ever felt like this? If so, allow me to dispel this false notion and unlock the secret of peace and joy for you!

When the heart of Zacchaeus began to hunger for something better than gold, he climbed into a tree to see Jesus. Jesus saw his desire for a new life of freedom and purpose, and when He reached the threshold of Zacchaeus’ home, He said, “This day is salvation come to this house” (Luke 19:9). But why and how had salvation come there? It was because Jesus—the Savior—had come. Salvation is in *Him*; He is salvation. In having Him, we have eternal life and every other

priceless blessing that God can give (Ephesians 1:3).

Jesus does not *send* salvation, He *brings* it. And where He is received, there He abides, saying, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). It is as though He says, “I have sought you so long, and love you so well, that never again will I allow you out of My company and care!” This is salvation—blessed, present, every day, all-the-way salvation. For those who trust in Him, it means to be protected, cared for, and upheld by the ever-present and infinitely tender Savior, who has suffered for our sins, endured all our judgment, broken the dominion of the devil, and lives as the victor over death.

What a blessed, joyful, vibrant thing salvation becomes when it dawns upon the soul that it is in Christ Jesus—that it is ours because *He* is ours and we are His. How invigorating it is to know that we are joined to the Lord by everlasting bonds, which no device of the devil nor power of hell can sever. Nothing less than this would suit our wonderful Savior, and nothing less than this could meet our need.

—J. T. Mawson, adapted

HURRYING TO JESUS

We live in a day and age where people like to hurry. We like to run around and see how much we can get done. Luke describes for us how Zacchaeus “Ran ... and climbed up into a sycomore tree” in order to see Jesus (Luke 19:4). Zacchaeus, though he held a prominent position in society, was untroubled by any concern for dignity. A proud man would never be seen running, let alone climbing a tree.

Luke then tells us that when Jesus came to where Zacchaeus was, He said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste,

and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house” (Luke 19:5). What does Zacchaeus do? Luke writes that Zacchaeus “made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully” (Luke 19:6).

We all know that Jesus calls us to do many things, but what we often fail to see is the urgency behind the commands of Jesus. Jesus does not say, “Hello Zacchaeus. When you get a chance, would you mind coming down from that tree and perhaps you might think about getting your house ready for Me to visit?”

No, Jesus is not that cordial. Jesus summons Zacchaeus to speed down from the tree. And this is how Jesus summons us. He is not saying to us, “Excuse me. I know you are very busy, but if you get a break from work or from watching television, would you consider the merits of being in a relationship with Me?” No, Jesus says to us, “Drop what you are doing and hurry to Me!”

Notice that Zacchaeus “received Him *joyfully*.” It often happens that when we are summoned to do something, we begrudgingly do it out of obligation. But serving Christ is never meant to burden us; it is meant to make us glad! If we believe that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is truly amazing, then we should not be indifferent about His summons on our life. If grace is amazing, we should be hurrying to Christ, receiving Him gladly, and serving Him with a joyful heart!

—Bryn MacPhail, adapted

TIME WITH JESUS

“I must abide at thy house” (Luke 19:5).

Without question one of the most remarkable Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ Himself through the presence of the Holy Spirit will actu-

ally enter a heart, settle down, and be at home there. Christ will make the human heart His abode.

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart. What an entrance He made! It was not a spectacular, emotional thing, but very real. It was at the very center of my life. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire in the cold hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will—not into eternity!

After Christ entered my heart and in the joy of this new relationship I said to Him, “Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want to have You settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to You. Let me show You around and introduce you to the various features of the home that you may be more comfortable and that we may have fuller fellowship together.”

We walked into the living room. He said, “This is indeed a delightful room. Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can fellowship together.” Well, naturally as a young Christian I was thrilled. I couldn’t think of anything I would rather do than spend time with Christ every day.

He promised, “I will be here early every morning. Meet Me here, and we will start the day together.” So morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the living room and He would take a book of the Bible from the bookcase. He would open it and then we would read together. He would tell me of its riches and unfold to me its truths. He would make my heart warm as He revealed His

love and His grace He had toward me. These were wonderful hours together.

But, little by little, under the pressure of many responsibilities, this time began to be shortened. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to miss a day now and then. I remember one morning when I was in a hurry, rushing downstairs, eager to be on my way. As I passed the living room, the door was open. Looking in, I saw a fire in the fireplace and Jesus was sitting there. I turned and went in. With downcast glance, I said, “Blessed Master, forgive me. Have You been here all these mornings?”

“Yes,” He said, “I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you.” Then I was even more ashamed. I asked His forgiveness and He readily forgave me as He does when we are truly repentant.

He continued, “The trouble with you is this: you have been thinking of the quiet time, of the Bible study and prayer time, as a factor in your own spiritual progress, but you have forgotten that this hour means something to Me also. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost. I value your fellowship. Whatever else may be your desire, remember I want your fellowship!”

You know, the truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He loves me, wants me to be with Him, wants to be with me and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any other single fact. Don’t let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day find some time when, with your Bible and in prayer, you may be together with Him.

—Condensed from *My Heart, Christ’s Home* by Robert Boyd Munger

SAVED AND KEPT

“This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9).

Jesus does not mean that every member of Zacchaeus’ family automatically got saved because Zacchaeus did. A man’s salvation does not extend to his wife and children—they must personally repent and believe. Salvation is always individual and personal. But, when the head of a household believes, the entire household comes under the influence of the gospel and in that sense is set apart from the unbelieving world (1 Corinthians 7:14; Acts 16:31-34).

When Jesus says that Zacchaeus is a son of Abraham, He does not mean simply that he is a Jew by birth. He meant it in the sense that Paul put it, “They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7). Jesus used that phrase because the Pharisees self-righteously thought that they were right with God because they were physical descendants of Abraham and they outwardly kept the law. But Jesus is saying that this sinner whom they despised was a true son of Abraham, possessing salvation, because like Abraham, Zacchaeus believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).

Jesus proclaimed Zacchaeus’ salvation before the crowd, in Zacchaeus’ presence, to give him assurance of God’s forgiveness. You can be sure that as soon as Jesus left town, Satan would come to Zacchaeus and say, “It was just a flash in the pan. You know how wicked your heart is! How can you call yourself a child of God?” The self-righteous crowd would have taunted him, “So you’ve become a follower of Jesus, have you! It won’t

last! Just wait! You’ll go back to your old cheating, greedy ways!”

But whom the Lord saves, He keeps. And whom He keeps, He assures repeatedly with His love and kindness that they are His children forever. As Paul put it, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who ... also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:33-34). As he goes on to show, nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).

—Steven J. Cole, condensed

DON’T GIVE UP

If you had taken a poll and asked, “Name the most hated man in Jericho,” Zacchaeus would have been named on 99% of the ballots. And then you’d ask the second question, “Who is the least likely person to want to see Jesus?” Zacchaeus would once again have been at the top of the list. People had written off this crooked tax collector long ago.

Sometimes in our effort to share the gospel we get so discouraged. We try to share Christ at work. We try to share Christ with our family and friends and neighbors. We try to build bridges with people who don’t know the Lord. We get discouraged when they don’t respond quickly. Sometimes they go months and years without responding at all. We conclude that they are hardened to God.

Zacchaeus reminds us not to jump to hasty conclusions. If you had looked on the outside you would have written him off because his society had written him off. But in his heart, the Holy Spirit was working, waiting for the day when Jesus would arrive.

—Ray Pritchard