

Lost, Loved, Liberated

Luke 19:1-10 In the last verse Jesus beautifully summarizes what took place here with Zacchaeus. The Son of Man came to SEEK and to SAVE what was LOST.

It's a story about love, about redemption, about a life changed forever.

Zacchaeus was LOST
He discovered that he was LOVED
And his life was LIBERATED

LOST

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Who is lost? Anyone without Jesus. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the Father said "...*this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.*' So they began to celebrate."

Zacchaeus had it all going on in the world. He had a deal with the Romans for collecting taxes in this prosperous region of Jericho. He was the Chief tax collector, no doubt with others under him. He had great wealth, power and influence.

We can all think of men and women with great power and influence, but without faith in Jesus, they are lost.

1 John 5:12 "*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life*"

2 Corinthians 4:4 "*...The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*"

So how do they get to where they can see? Well, how did you? Jesus who is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and infinitely more powerful than Satan, comes to seek you out. Someone spoke to you about the Lord and your journey started.

In **Luke 4** Jesus said he came to bring sight to the blind.

If all you see is believers, you are missing an opportunity. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. A cup of coffee with a friend can lead to an encounter with Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:22 "*...For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*"

LOVED

Having been found by Jesus, Zacchaeus discovered he was loved. The bible is a love story, the gospel is a love story, the teachings of Jesus have love at their core. Who else tells us to love our enemies?

Jesus said the entire law is summed up in love.

Jesus saw beyond everything that was wrong with Zacchaeus. He saw beyond his greed, his dishonesty, his selfishness, his worldliness. And he does that for all of us - aren't you glad? Jesus does that for all of us today. You may have messed up yesterday, but today's a new day. Don't run away from God when you mess up, RUN TO HIM.

The people standing around condemned Jesus for going to a "Sinner's" house. But that's exactly who Jesus came for - you and me, in all of our sin. As Jesus said in **Matthew 9:12,13** "*...It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick*"

Luke 6:37 TM "*...Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults - unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier.*"

Just as Jesus saw beyond Zacchaeus's issues, I believe He says to you and I today to go and do the same.

We can be inhibited from stepping out into "the real us" because of how we see ourselves. Our past, our present circumstances, I'm not smart enough, have the wrong background, I'm too short, too tall, I don't speak well, I'm damaged, I'm hurt, I've made too many mistakes... as the list goes on. BUT Jesus sees beyond that.

I AM CHANGED IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.

The personality of Zacchaeus was fundamentally changed when he encountered Jesus. He was headed in one direction, and was turned around in an instant.

I picture Jesus looking at him up in the tree and Zacchaeus seeing love pouring through those eyes.

It reminds me of the encounter that the rich young ruler has with Jesus told in Mark 10:21 “...*Jesus looked at him and loved him.*”

I think Zacchaeus was stuck. He'd heard about Jesus. And he did something different – climbed a tree – and that led to an encounter with God. I know that Jesus seeks us out, but sometimes, we need to do something. Reach out, cry out, and step out. Take a day off and go for a long walk and talk to God. Set the alarm and get up early to worship and spend time with God.

Act like the Bible is true – *that if God be for me who can be against me? That I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That the prospect of the righteous is joy. The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

LIBERATED

Those standing by still labelled him a sinner. But Zacchaeus became who he really was. No longer lost, he was found.

SAVED: Deliver, protect, heal, make whole, restore

Zacchaeus saw that he had built a life on wrong values. And his encounter with Jesus set him free.

And immediately he started righting the wrongs he has committed. V8 “*Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount*”

We all have to discover that a fulfilling life is a giving life.

2 Corinthians 12:9 Jesus said “...*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*” What was Zacchaeus' weakness? Money – he was a taker, a thief. And immediately he became a giver.

What you regard in your life as a weakness can be a stepping-stone to strength. Tend to be critical – you can become an encourager

Tend to withdraw and isolate – you can become a team player

Tend toward depression – you can become joyful and a joy giver

Tend to worry – you can become the eternal optimist, full of faith

Luke 6:38 TM “...*Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back – given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way...*”

Zacchaeus was liberated from his old ways into a new and living way.

Start giving your life away. Take a risk. Pick up the phone, reach out and touch someone.

Proverbs 10:28 “...*The prospect of the righteous is joy...*” No matter what your circumstances are, the future is always bright, always redemptive with Jesus.

CHANGE is a constant in the Christian Life. I may look the same as I did last year, but I am radically different. I will not be the same leaving this morning, as I was when I arrived. I am on a journey of transformation, getting better and better, through an ongoing relationship with Jesus.

I may not be exactly where I want to be, but I am not where I used to be, and that's progress.

Lost

Loved

Liberated