

Lessons from Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree is a favorite of young children, but adults would do well to pay careful attention to this story found in Luke 19:1-10. Consider a few lessons we might learn from the man who climbed a tree.

1) Don't let anything stop you from seeing Jesus. Too short of stature to see over the crowd, this wealthy man of influence reverted to his childhood and climbed a tree. While we are not going to see Jesus with our physical eyes, we should not allow anything to stop us from learning about Jesus. Friends, family, work, play, religious traditions, etc. may get in the way, but let's climb whatever tree we must in order to know the Savior.

2) We must not simply be curious about Jesus. When Jesus informed Zacchaeus that He would be going home with him, the tax collector received Him joyfully. As we come to know Jesus, it is imperative that we allow Him to "come to our house" and change our lives.

3) Jesus came to "seek and save that which was lost." If you have already been found by Jesus, serve Him with a joyous gratitude. If you are still lost, won't you allow Him to change that? He wants to save, but He will not save you against your will.

Zacchaeus and Jesus—it's not just a children's song.

- by John R. Gibson

The Bible is Understandable

The multitude of different church buildings downtown in every city stands as a sad reminder of religious division and confusion. In man's loss of unity, he is tempted to blame God and His word, the Bible. Men conclude that, since we do not understand the Bible, then the Bible cannot be understood. This is a most serious and fundamental error. Furthermore, it is a personal attack on either God's goodness or His ability to communicate to men. The Bible declares plainly that it can be understood.

The Bible gives a man all the truth that he needs to please God:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Even though we do not have the complete record of what Jesus did on earth, we have what we need to understand, believe and be saved.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

It is the truth that will make us free as Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32).* Jesus has provided that truth for us today in the pages of the Holy Bible.

It is clear from the Bible itself that God intended for us to understand and obey it. Paul said, *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).* He also made it clear that God's revelation of the Bible through Him could be understood upon reading. *"... How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)" (Ephesians 3:4).*

Some parts of the Bible are more difficult than others. Peter said, "...Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:15-16). Even though it takes more study to understand some of the scriptures, you will notice in this passage that God neither condoned or excused the error that was taught because of Bible misunderstanding. He rather pointed out that the misusers of the Bible brought their own destruction. People will be lost in hell because they misuse the scriptures to teach error.

In a time of flooding religious error and misunderstanding of the Bible let us not blame God and His word, but with great determination find the truth revealed within the pages of the Holy Bible and unite on that truth to salvation. May God richly bless our efforts to know and do His will.

- by Dwight McGee

When Traveling

Vacation time is here, and lots of Christians are hitting the road to visit new places and/or old friends. If you are planning a trip, we hope you will have a safe and pleasant journey. And while we know that you already know this, let us add an encouragement to you to maintain faithfulness to God during this busy, hectic time.

Part of your planning for a vacation should include some thought as to where and when you will worship. You need to search out the various locations along your route where faithful Christians meet, and you need to set your schedule so that you'll be in those places at the appropriate times.

Church directories are available that list sound congregations. And in recent years some industrious brethren have built websites that allow for easy searching on the Internet (Findthechurch.com, Goodfight.com, and Bible.ca are useful sites.) Use them! And, it may also be advisable to call or write in advance to be sure that you have all the accurate information.

Remember that such listings of churches have mistakes in them. That being the case, you should certainly keep your eyes and ears open to the announcements, the bulletin board, to the sermon preached, etc. You may discover that you've located an unfaithful group, and while it may be too late to do anything about it this time, you can note this situation for any future trips into the area.

Vacations are great, but there is no time to be on vacation from serving God. Don't be guilty of excluding God from the careful planning of your trip. And also remember that all the rules of godly conduct (activities, clothing, etc.) still apply no matter how far from home you travel - because God is still there wherever you are!

- by Greg Gwin