

## Make Haste And Come Down

Please take your Bibles and turn to the book of Luke and find chapter 19.

It is interesting how many of us make our plans as though everything will keep on about the same. We are much like the rich man that our Lord spoke of in Luke 12:16-19 - "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

This man refused to take into consideration that there is a God in heaven and an ultimate and eventual appointment with that God. Our Savior went on to say in Luke 12:20 - "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" God can and often does change the well thought out plans of man. We are taught in Proverbs 19:21 - "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand." Which one of us in this room this morning has not been humbled by an experience over which we were totally powerless thus changing our well-thought out plans? We have learned that we need to always think along the lines of James 4:15 - "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

I want to bring to your attention a man this morning who believed that he had his life well under control. But on one spring afternoon, his life would be totally and forever changed. He certainly had his plans, he knew what he wanted to accomplish but he met Someone Who would transform him from the inside out. Now please come to my text in Luke

19:1-10 - "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

I would like for you to pay close attention to Luke 19:5 - "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house." There are three important observations to make from this verse. First, our Lord knew this man who was up the tree. There is no indication whatever that these two men had ever met. In fact, the evidence is overwhelming and conclusive that they had never met.

The background for what happened here is set for us in Luke 18:35 - "And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging." This blind beggar is most likely identified for us in Mark 10:46 - "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging." The scene is thus set, our Lord is on his way to Jericho and there meets a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus was told that Jesus was passing by and we read in Luke 18:38 - "And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Our all-caring Savior

heard the wail of this pitiful blind beggar as we learn from Luke 18:42-43 - "And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

Let me remind you this morning that our Lord always hears the cry of those who are sincerely calling out to Him. I love what we are taught in Psalms 18:6 - "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears." I read again in Psalms 40:1 - "I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." We can rest assured, that our tender-hearted God will hear us when we in faith cry out to Him.

So after the healing of Bartimaeus, our Lord with a great crowd about Him enters into the old city of Jericho. This must certainly have been one fantastic spectacle. The world has a tendency to do that to these most intimate issues of life and eternity. The world, if they can in any way, will make these matters of eternal life into some sort of circus and then endeavor to merchandise them.

In church after church, we are finding more spectacle than spiritual. Churches by the boatload, instead of singing the great songs and hymns of the faith, are now flashing nearly meaningless choruses on some large screen and singing those trivial words over and over again to the background of a poorly disguised rock band. Needy and hurting people are being given what they want and desire instead of what they need and require. Instead of challenging people and helping to raise the standards of the community, church after church now support and even confirm the falling moral standards of their area and offer them nothing more than spiritual pabulum. The basic problem is not that the people of our times are so wicked, but that our churches and our preachers refuse to preach and teach about a holy God, a sinful people, and a coming day of reckoning. How we once again need to have ringing in our hearts the words of 1 Peter 4:17 - "For the time is come that

judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

The spectacle was now moving inside old Jericho. There was a man who wanted to get a good view of that approaching show. His name was Zacchaeus. We know for sure three things about this man. First, "he was little of stature." Second, "he was rich." Third, he was "the chief among the publicans." Please understand that the word "publican" is not short for Republican, but what it means is that he was a tax collector. You can just imagine that he was not very popular in that line of work and since he was a "chief," he was most likely the one man who oversaw all of the other tax collectors in that entire region. If the regular ordinary collectors of taxes were hated and they most certainly were, this man would have been the more despised. His wealth did not come from what he had produced but from what others had produced.

But what is absolutely amazing here is that Christ knew Zacchaeus. He knew his name and called up to him directly. This man was just up that tree to see the show. But here now the Lord speaks to him directly. How could this be? I want you to notice what we are taught in John 2:24 - "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men." The Lord knew who Zacchaeus was. He knew him by name. I want you to know this morning that our Lord deals with the most sensitive parts of our life and He knows our name.

And He knows more than just our name. Please listen to what we read in Matthew 9:4 - "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" And let me add to that what we are taught in Hebrews 4:13 - "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." The Lord knew more about Zacchaeus than just his name. I want you to know that the Lord knows more about you than just your name. In fact, He knows you better than you know yourself. We are told in Matthew 10:30 - "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The Lord knows more than our name and our physical makeup because we are taught in Psalms 44:21 - "Shall

not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.” He knows what you are trying to hide, He knows what no one else knows about you. And He knows exactly how you stand spiritually. He knows every rotten and hideous matter that you have tried so hard to hide.

He knew Zacchaeus' name. The second observation from verse 5 is in the specific invitation that was given by Christ. Our Lord said - “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down.” Pay close attention now, Zacchaeus had to come down. And that is always the way that it is to God. We must come down from where we are perched. We must come down from our vantage point. We must set aside our lofty ideas, our personal philosophies, our individual notions no matter how formidable or even awe-inspiring that they might seem. We can never come to God when we are higher than He is. It does not matter that we are short of stature or that we have gained some wealth by the hard work of others or that we are anything else in our own eyes or in the eyes of the world. We might have some prestigious title, or some significant occupation, or we might be revered by our peers but we have to come down to meet the Lord.

There was a great deal of urgency in this invitation given by Christ. Notice that He said - “make haste.” The Lord was inviting Zacchaeus to come to Him but he had to do it quickly. The Lord would soon pass by and then He would be gone. The invitation to Zacchaeus would not last forever. If Zacchaeus was going to come to Christ, then he must do it at that very moment. And that same urgency which was present in the invitation given to Zacchaeus, is present at this hour. We are much like Isaac of old, of which we read in Genesis 27:2 - “And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.” We need to be constantly reminded of what the Bible says in Proverbs 27:1 - “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

But that invitation that was given to Zacchaeus many years ago, is open to us individually and personally this morning just as it was to Zacchaeus. We read about this gracious invitation in Matthew 11:28 -

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” I once again hear those sweet words of invitation drifting from heaven's golden shore that are recorded for us in Revelation 3:20 - “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

Our Savior knew the name of Zacchaeus and He gave to Zacchaeus a most personal invitation. The last observation is the specifics of that invitation. Our Lord said - “for to day I must abide at thy house.” Would you please underscore that word “abide.” The Greek word from which it is translated is a most common word. It occurs 118 times in our New Testament. It speaks of dwelling, of enduring, and even of remaining. This word is used in 1 Peter 1:23 - “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” There it is translated “abideth.”

We need to understand that the Lord wants to abide with us. He is not interested in meeting up with us and visiting with us merely on Sunday morning. He wants to abide in our homes, in our lives, in all that we do. The difficult question that confronts each of us is this, Do we want to accept this invitation? Unfortunately, there are many who refuse it and let the Lord go on by. They will not come down from the tree which they climbed. They are too comfortable in their tree of work, in their tree of pleasure, in their tree of education, in their tree of amusement. They fail to realize that one good wind could blow them away.

What did Zacchaeus do? I like this, would you notice please what we read in Luke 19:6 - “And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” Whenever one truly and sincerely receives our Lord, it will always be “joyfully.” Please pay close attention because Zacchaeus did exactly what he was told. He was not like so much of the religious crowd today. They would have heard the words of Christ and they would have said something like, I think that Jesus meant to say that we need to take a moment and notice the beauty of this large

sycamore tree. The Lord must want us to set out and start up an environmental group to save all of the sycamore trees. They would look at what Christ said here and start to find some symbolism in the tree or maybe in the fact that diminutive Zacchaeus was some sort of a victim. After all, he was short. They would probably suggest that the people hated him because of his physical defect. Many in today's religious crowd would have started some sort of awareness group, probably called it the Zacchaeus People, and raised money to make shorter people feel better about themselves. But Zacchaeus did not try to speculate or theorize, he just did exactly what he was told. And because he did what he was told, he became a changed man. He was transformed on the inside and then his outside was changed. How do we understand that he was so changed? Please look at his remarkably new attitude that is expressed in Luke 19:8 - "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

Our Lord knew the name of that man who had climbed that tree. He knows your name and he knows everything about you. He came to Zacchaeus and gave him a personal invitation. At this very moment, our Lord is knocking on the door of your heart and giving you the same kind of personal invitation. Our Lord said that He wanted to abide with Zacchaeus and I want you to know that the Lord desires to abide with you.

Let me ask you this morning if you are willing to accept the invitation given by Christ? If you are then there will be "much fruit." But if you turn him away then always remember that the Savior said that you "can do nothing." Just as with Zacchaeus of old there is some urgency in this invitation. You need to make haste and come to Christ now. We are told in 2 Corinthians 6:2 - "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."