

“Up a Tree!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. Columnist **Herb Caen** wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "**Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up.** It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. **Every morning a lion wakes up.** It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a **lion** or a **gazelle**; when the sun comes up, **you'd better be running.**"
 - 1.1.1. **Spurgeon** wrote likewise: "If you are not seeking the **Lord**, the **Devil** is seeking you. If you are not seeking the **Lord**, **judgment** is at your heels."
 - 1.1.2. **In the pursuit of the Christian life**, it's not enough simply to **wake up & visit church**. You are called to run to Jesus!
 - 1.1.2.1. Let's meet a man who ran to see **who Jesus was!**

2. **UP A TREE! (1-10)**

- 2.1. **ZACCHAEUS THE SINNER!** (1,2)
- 2.2. (1) **Jericho** – 17 m. E/NE of Jerusalem.
 - 2.2.1. In Jesus day it was **famous for its balm** (an aromatic gum known for its medicinal qualities)
 - 2.2.2. It was also the **winter capital**, which made it a **wealthy city**.
- 2.3. (2) **Chief tax collector** – He was in the service of the government or foreign bankers who had **bought** the privilege of collecting Taxes. (LKGNT)
 - 2.3.1. They weren't salaried but lived by farming taxes w/many chances for fleecing
 - 2.3.2. He was the proverbial "**middle-man**"!
- 2.4. Zacchaeus was **morally lost** (he was sinful); he was **intellectually lost** (he did not know who Jesus was); he was **socially lost** (he was of the despised class being a tax collector).
- 2.5. **ZACCHAEUS THE SEEKER!** (3,4)
- 2.6. (3) **Sought** – the imperfect tense pictures **his continual effort**.
- 2.7. **Sought to see who Jesus was** – He obviously didn't know who He was.
- 2.8. **Crowd** – the blind man **heard** it, he **saw** it.
- 2.9. **Short stature** – Or, in the Greek, "**vertically challenged**"! 😊
 - 2.9.1. He didn't let **anything** get in his way: not the crowd; not his reputation; not his wealth; not even his **little man** condition.
- 2.10. (4) **Sycamore tree** – Fig-mulberry tree. (leaves like mulberry, fruit that of a fig)
 - 2.10.1. And this tree was about to **bear fruit!!!**
- 2.11. **Zacchaeus** showed the same determination to contact Jesus, as **Bartimaeus**.

- 2.12. **ZACCHAEUS THE SOUGHT!** (5-7)
- 2.13. (5) Though Jesus was surrounded by a great crowd of people, Jesus took time for individuals, ... He even saw a man **up a tree!**
- 2.13.1. Jesus even called him **by name.**
- 2.14. But, **why call Zacchaeus?** There were better men in the city. **Why him?**
- 2.14.1. Simply because the call of God comes to **unworthy** sinners.
- 2.14.2. There is **nothing** in man that can **deserve** this call; **nothing** in the best of men can **invite** it.
- 2.14.3. So, the very question shows we still think there is???
- 2.15. Together they traveled to Zacchaeus's home.
- 2.15.1. We don't know their conversation, but he emerges a **changed man.**
- 2.16. Wait! **Who found who?** (maybe this story will help)
- 2.16.1. There was a **man** who had a **hunting dog** for that he loved dearly. One time while out hunting they were separated. No matter how loud the master whistled the dog would not come. The man had an appointment in town & needed to leave. Would he ever see his best friend again? He did a trick an old trainer told him. He took off his coat & the removed his tee-shirt & placed his shirt on the ground under some small branches of a bush. The man returned the next day to find his dog cuddled up on the tee-shirt, with his nose under the sleeve.
- 2.16.1.1. **Who found who?** – The dog sniffed out the scent of the master & waited, but it was the Master who returned to seek & save the dog.
- 2.17. (6) He obviously didn't come out of **mere curiosity** or with **any skepticism**, but w/an openness to Jesus' message.¹
- 2.18. (7) The curtain falls for a little while. I almost don't want to ruin such a wonderful story with "*these grumblers*".
- 2.18.1. Wait, He was **accepting** hospitality from a rogue? No, He **asked** for it! 😊
- 2.18.2. It was thought to be wicked to eat the fruit, of a person whose earnings were tainted. **What was Jesus doing?**
- 2.18.2.1. Well, the very next verse shows his intention to make restoration, which indicates his repentance, & makes it possible for Jesus to eat w/him w/o contamination. (LKGNT)
- 2.19. Did those murmuring ever stop for a minute & ask, "**hey I wonder why He **didn't** want to come to **my** house?**"
- 2.19.1. Jesus **found shelter** within the gates of a sinner, to whom others had utterly **given over** & considered **hopeless!**
- 2.20. Well, let's open back up the curtains.

¹ Shepherd's Notes; pg.69

2.21. **ZACCHAEUS THE SAVED!** (8-10)

2.22. (8) His **spontaneous act of repentance** revealed the work of **grace** in his heart, & proved that he was now a **son of Abraham**.

2.22.1. Christianity is **not** a **sphere** of life, but its very **atmosphere!**

2.22.2. Christianity is **not** a **section** of life, but an influence that **pervades the whole field of it**.

2.22.3. It changed this man to the **very core** of his being.

2.22.4. **My Zacchaeus experience:** (1978-1980) I ran a parking lot for a guy named **Gene Selznick** (His son Dane is Kerry Walsh & Misty May's coach; Beach V.B.)

2.22.5. I collected all the tips of the evening & then we'd get paid hourly. But when you ran the evening no one knew how much came in. Myself, & the other couple guys who ran it would take from \$80-\$100 off the top. **Then I got saved!** I didn't take ½ of what I stole & give it to the poor, nor did I restore 4-fold to Gene (I really never thought of that)...but I started turning in all my tips from that point on. And the other guys were pretty upset w/me because it became very noticeable that when I ran it, my nights were always huge!

2.22.6. Christianity should change **all** of your life!

2.22.7. If we hold to the **Golden Rule** in **all** our business, we will once again be communicating the **Law of Love** in life!

2.22.8. *Hudson Taylor* said, "If Christ is not Lord **of** all, He is not Lord **at** all!"

2.22.9. Paul said, "**Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

2.23. He made 2 promises/resolves:

2.23.1. [1] To give ½ of his possessions to the poor.

2.23.2. [2] To pay back 4 x's in cases where he had **defrauded** someone.

2.23.3. **I give! - I restore!** [He went in mastered by the passion to **get**. He came out swept by a compassion that **gives!**]

2.23.3.1. The core of his personality changes to "**I give, I restore!**"

2.23.3.2. Not like the Rich Young Ruler, "**I keep, I go!**"

2.24. **What diligence, what determination:** He ran ahead of the crowd; he climbed a tree(not to dignified); he hurried down the tree; he received Jesus joyfully; he stood(8); he gave; he restored.

2.25. **But what exactly happened inside?**

2.25.1. We don't have to speculate...**Jesus answers it in the next verse.**

2.26. (9) Listen to **Jesus' testimony** of Zacchaeus's being a **saved** man.

2.26.1. [1] **Today salvation has come to this house.**

2.26.2. [2] **He also is a son of Abraham** (not just a seed of Abraham/i.e. a Jew)

2.26.2.1. A **spiritually** true descendant of the "*father of the faithful*".

2.27. This is the 2nd to last **conversion** recorded. (thief on cross)

2.28. (10) This verse is illustrated in the experience of Zacchaeus:

2.28.1. Jesus **came** to him, **sought** him, & **saved** him.²

2.28.2. The **whole gospel** is in this **simple sentence**(10); & there is not a word that has even **two syllables!**

2.29. Ezek.34:16 **“I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick...”**

2.30. If the devil loads your mind w/accusations like, *“you are a great sinner”*, just agree with him & say, **“Jesus came to save sinners, & thus he came to save me.”**

2.31. If he says you are **lost altogether** say, **“Jesus came to seek & save that which was lost.”**

2.32. **Salvation** is **free**. But **discipleship** is **costly**.

2.32.1. Zaccheus not only illustrated **the power of faith** in Jesus to bring new life, but also introduced **the cost of discipleship**.

2.32.2. **What did the disciple decision cost Zaccheus? Everything!**

2.32.3. His life had been built on \$. His goals, his purposes, his very identity as a person were built on the importance to him of **wealth** and **material success**.

2.32.4. The **core of his personality**, the **values** that had given him direction in life, had suddenly shifted.

2.32.5. Shockingly, **people** became more important than **dollars**. **Honesty** became more important than **gain**.

2.32.6. **Zaccheus had become a different, new man!**

2.33. He is still the **seeking** Savior, but now he uses **your** eyes & lips!

2.33.1. **If we are to win souls we must seek them.**

2.33.1.1. **The hunter** knows his game will not come to the window of his house to be shot. (well, sometimes at Eric's in Tennessee)

2.33.1.2. **The fisherman** knows that the fish will not come swimming up to his house.

2.33.1.3. **No, they must go out & seek! - And so must you & I!**

2.33.2. I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the market place

As well as on the steeple of the church, I am recovering the claim that

Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles:

But on a cross between two thieves; on a town garbage heap;

At a crossroad of politics so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek...

And at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, & thieves curse & soldiers gamble.

Because that is where He died, and that is what He died about.

And that is where Christ's men ought to be, and what church people ought to be about. George MacLeod

² Warren Wiersbe; pg.682

- 2.34. **Q:** Are you feeling **spiritually short of stature?** (i.e. not measuring up to Gods righteous standard)
- 2.35. Maybe this morning **you** recognize you are like Zacchaeus as you've recognized you're **morally lost** (sinful); **or intellectually lost** (you don't know Jesus); **or** feel even **socially lost**.
- 2.35.1. See, "**lost**" usually excites **pity, alarm, or grief**.
- 2.35.2. **Examples:** A lost dog; a lost child; a lost hiker; a lost ship.
- 2.35.2.1. **Q:** But what are the greatest **physical losses** compared w/the loss of the **soul**? {**Lost fellowship w/God; lost to life's highest purpose; lost to life's purest joys?**}
- 2.36. **George Whitefield**, one of America's greatest evangelist, had **a brother** that was **backslidden**. One day he found himself **sitting at tea** with the **Countess of Huntingdon**. He said, "I know what you have said is very proper, & I believe in the infinite mercy & goodness of God. But I do not believe in its application to me, for I am a lost man." **the Countess** put down her tea & said, "I am glad to hear it, Mr. Whitefield!" "Madam," he said, "I did not think you would rejoice & glory in a thing so terrible as that." "I am glad to hear you say you are lost Mr. Whitefield," she said, "for it is written that Jesus Christ came to seek & to save that which was lost." **His eyes sparkled, & he said, "I thank God for that text, & for the extraordinary power with which it has now come into my heart." He died later that night.** (Spurgeon #1863)
- 2.36.1. Until a man is **lost** he cannot be **found!**
- 2.36.2. Take your place as **a sinner** this morning, & trust Christ to **save you & give you** an abundant life. [Until a man is **lost** he cannot be **found!**]