

HELPING OTHERS SEE JESUS

Text: Luke 19:1-10

In the text we just read, we see a man of reputation and position, trying to see Jesus as he is passing through Jericho...but he can't because he is disadvantaged. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He was despised by his own people because he worked for Rome, and he took advantage of his own countrymen by stealing off them while collecting taxes for the empire. The fact that he was called "chief among the publicans" means that he had climbed the ladder and had people working under him. The Bible records that he sought to see Jesus who he was...I'm led to believe that something was working on Zacchaeus, possibly his conscience was troubling him about how he made a living, or the deceitfulness and covetousness of his heart was bothering him. Here's why I'm led to believe that because when Jesus approached him, he didn't preach a message or point out his sin...he simply told him to come down because he was going home with him.

Zacchaeus immediately obeyed, came down, received him joyfully and repented - **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.

In his quest to see Jesus, he was at a disadvantage because he was short and couldn't see over the crowd. He runs ahead and fortuitously climbs a sycamore tree and when Jesus gets to the tree, they have an encounter that changed Zacchaeus forever. I would like to submit to you that the sycamore tree in the story is a type of a Christian. All through scripture men are compared to trees. In this story there's a concerned man trying to get to Jesus but can't because he's disadvantaged...around us there are people who need to get to Jesus but they don't know how because they are lost and in darkness. When people around us who are lost start getting concerned about their condition or suddenly interested in Christ, that's not a coincidence...that's the Holy Spirit turning the light on their consciences. It's God's intention to use us to bring more people to Himself. The tree did not save Zacchaeus, but it did help him at a crucial time to get in the right position to get saved. The tree helped him to see Jesus when he couldn't see him before. This tree is a sycamore fig tree which is known for its fruit and large branches. The tree was:

- **Available** – present and ready for immediate use; willing and capable to take on responsibility. When Saul of Tarsus lay blind and under conviction, the Lord called Ananias to go lay hands on him and baptize him because Ananias was present,

ready, capable and immediately obeyed the Lord's command even though he was a little fearful. He went to Saul, laid hands on him and told him what Jesus had told him to say. Saul received his sight and immediately was baptized. If there were lost and concerned people in your sphere, are you available for the Lord to use you.

- **Accessible** – easily used or accessed by people with disabilities; easy to speak to or deal with; capable of being understood. The sycamore fig tree has large low hanging limbs, so it was easy for a short man like Zacchaeus to climb up and position himself to see Jesus. If someone asked you if you are saved or what's it means to be saved, could you easily tell them what Jesus did for you, or could you help counsel them if they were under conviction. When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas "What must I do to be saved?" **Acts 16:31-32** And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
- **Of Age** – it was a mature tree, rooted, grounded and grown up. Zacchaeus couldn't have climbed a sapling; it wouldn't have supported him. **Ephesians 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Read Luke 19:29-38 The donkey in this text is also a type of a Christian because the donkey was:

- **Set free** – Jesus told the disciples that they would find the colt tied up but he commanded them to loose it and bring it to him.
- **Set apart** – Never had a man rode it or used it for anything. Christ won't share anything with the world. The colt was set apart completely for serving Jesus.
- **Submitted** – They sat Jesus upon it. The placement is Jesus above and the colt directly underneath him. This is a picture of being submitted to his authority. Jesus took the reins and the colt walked where he was directed.

Both stories are connected...the tree helped the sinner see the Savior, and the donkey lifted Jesus up so he could be seen by Israel as their King. Both the tree and the donkey were integral to the accounts even though they were both ordinary. The focus of the occurrences is Jesus Christ. He is the Savior, the Messiah, and the King. But it pleases him to use us in his work of redemption. Are you saved, set apart, and submitted? Are you available, accessible, and mature? There are people all around us that are lost, will we let the Lord use us to help them see Him?