

Making Changes

Luke 19:1-27

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Today we will see another man who sought out Jesus, and when he encountered the Messiah, not only did he find justification by his faith in Jesus, but he immediately embraced the truth that the rich young ruler found impossible to follow.

Zacchaeus willingly gave up the pursuit of power and possessions for the sake of Jesus' kingdom, and found great joy and purpose in his life, and will be rewarded with power and possessions in Jesus' coming Kingdom.

Big Changes By a Small Man (19:1-10)

The stories of Zacchaeus and the rich young ruler have some unique similarities but very different outcomes. Both these men were powerful and had great wealth, yet they both came earnestly and humbly to Jesus. The rich young ruler seems to have been respected and an ardent adherent to the Law of Moses, while Zacchaeus had acquired his wealth through dishonest means, betraying and robbing his Jewish brethren as a tax collector, and he did this so well, that the Roman officials had placed him in authority over other tax collectors. He was an outcast, a "sinner" (vs 7). Yet, despite his years of defrauding his own people, it was Zacchaeus who was willing to fully embrace the kingdom life, not the rich young ruler. Zacchaeus committed to giving half of his wealth to the poor, and to use the remainder of his fortune to pay back all those he has stolen from, fourfold! This is no small act of faith and Jesus celebrated it by declaring, "today salvation has come to this house".

Kingdom Changes (19:11-27)

Those who were following Jesus at this time had just heard very messianic terminology in Jesus' declarations of "salvation... son of Abraham... and the Son of Man coming to seek and save the lost". These things, coupled with Jesus' approach toward Jerusalem, gave his followers the impression that "the kingdom of God was to appear immediately". Knowing this, Jesus told them a parable ***to correct their misunderstanding, and to convince them of the importance of being about His business until His kingdom arrives.*** There are three main ideas in this parable:

1. Jesus is leaving, but He will return and establish His kingdom
2. Jesus' followers have been given resources to use for His business until he returns
3. When Jesus returns with His kingdom he will reward the faithful servants, rebuke the carnal servants, and destroy His enemies.

Much of this parable is clearly exemplified in the contrasting responses of the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus. As far as we know, the rich young ruler was not willing to give up the pursuit of power and possessions in this life for the sake of Jesus' kingdom, whereas Zacchaeus was so eager to do so, that he jumped up and declared how he was going to do it! Zacchaeus exemplified the faithful servant and will be rewarded for his sacrifices in the Messianic kingdom. If indeed the rich young ruler was unwilling to

give up the pursuit of power and possessions, then he exemplifies the carnal servant. He held on to his power and possessions in this life, and so he forfeited the rewards he could have had in Christ's coming kingdom.

Changes For Us

The application is pretty straightforward to us today, though I would be a fool to say it is easy. We see the story of these two men and the subsequent parable, and we are left to prayerfully seek our hearts as to what kind of servants are we? Are we willingly giving up the pursuit of power and possessions in this life, for the sake of Jesus' kingdom? I know that there are some of you who are willing to sit by and coast through this life. I do not question the sincerity of your faith in our savior Jesus Christ. But you are trapped in worldly patterns of thinking and behaving. You are not pouring your energy and resources into Jesus' business. God is so patient with us, and now is the perfect time to commit to pursuing Jesus' business. Let me mention just a couple of ways to do so. First, be rich toward God with your wealth. There isn't any certain law or amount to give, (Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8) but the principle we see is to "sow generously". Second, Jesus, by the Holy Spirit of God, has equipped AND expects all his children to minister to one another in the local church. There are countless ways here at Grace to minister to one another, in both formal and informal ministries. If you can't identify where and when you are ministering here, then you aren't. Thirdly, we are to be making disciples. I'll define that as "encouraging others in Christlikeness". This applies to those who are dear brothers and sisters in the lord, as well as those who are not yet justified. Are we praying for those in our sphere of influence? Are we using our homes and families in ministry toward others? Let us all take account of our resources and humbly seek to use them for Jesus' kingdom, and prove to be His faithful servants, worthy of His rewards.

Grace Family Needs, News and Notes

Trail Life USA BBQ & Open House: Sept 17th @ 5:30 here at Grace.

For more information email: TrailLife@gccramona.com

Parents Round table: Sept. 17th 7-8pm in Modular

Dessert fellowship of parents with members of staff. This will be a chance to talk about raising children and explore ways Grace Church can better support you as parents. Childcare provided.

For more information: Paul Nelson – paul@gccramona.com