

Remnant Life Church
March 8, 2015

**Encounters on The Way to the Cross -
Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1-10**

- We are entering tax season
 - People handle this in different ways
 - Some do it immediately upon receiving their statements while others wait until the last possible moment (SC mtg)
 - Many find it hard to be honest
 - Contents of an actual letter sent to the IRS
 - “Dear Sir – enclosed please find a check in the amount of \$150. I cheated on my income taxes last year and have not been able to rest ever since. If I find myself still having trouble sleeping I will send you the rest.”
- Today we are going to look at a man of high-standing within the IRS of Jericho
 - He too cheated on the tax returns – but not his, everyone else’s
 - He had an encounter that changed his life and made him into a very different person
- Setting:
 - This is Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover
 - Earlier on his way to Jericho he met a blind man by the name of Bartimaeus (Luke 18; Mark 10)
 - That encounter changed everything about the blind man including receiving his sight
 - Now Jesus is passing through Jericho and it is here that we meet the man from the JIRS
 - This was wealthy man who had made his money through dishonest means and was hated for it
- 1. **The Searching Sinner (19:2-4)**
 - a. His name in Hebrew means “pure and righteous” but he was anything but that
 - b. He worked for Rome – was considered a traitor by his people
 - c. He was a Chief Tax Collector (v 2)
 - i. He not only collected taxes himself
 - ii. But oversaw the other collectors who reported to him
 - iii. Tax collectors cheated the people and kept the extra for themselves
 - iv. Zacchaeus would have also collected his cut from the ones under him
 - d. Jericho was a busy town especially at Passover
 - i. It was the tax capital of Palestine
 - ii. A center and hub of the trade routes
 - iii. Zacchaeus ran one of only 3 tax centers in the entire country
 - e. Zacchaeus had everything he could have wanted except for two things

- i. The acceptance of his people
 - ii. Height enough to see over the crowded streets
- f. Word of what happened to Bartimaeus would have reached the city
- g. Zacchaeus wanted to see for himself who this man Jesus was
 - i. Not only a man of means but a man of resourcefulness
 - ii. A sycamore tree has thick branches that spread out horizontally
 - iii. He was not about to let anything stand in the way of what he wanted and, as it turned out unbeknownst to him, what he desperately needed

2. The Seeking Savior (19:5)

- a. Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus, but it turned out the Jesus was actually seeking him
- b. That is still true for each of us today
- c. The Bible does not say why Jesus stopped at that spot to speak with him
 - i. There would have been many people along the way
 - ii. Personal space was non-existent (woman in [Luke 8](#))
 - iii. Even while Jesus was headed to the cross he was still ministering to others
- d. Jesus made two statements in verse 5
 - i. "Zacchaeus, come down immediately"
 - 1. The people around would have been asking how did He know his name?!?
 - ii. "I must stay at your house today"
 - 1. This was a Big Deal
 - 2. The Pharisees and religious leaders considered tax collectors to be "sinners" on the same level as thieves and murderers
 - 3. But Jesus was never concerned about what others thought when He was doing His Father's will
 - iii. This is the only time Jesus invites himself to someone's house
 - iv. It demonstrates the very purpose of His ministry – to save the lost from their sins

3. The Spectacular Salvation (19:6-10)

- a. Zacchaeus immediately obeyed Jesus – an important first step
- b. He was thrilled at what Jesus was going to do (Billy Graham & me)
 - i. Zacchaeus got much more than what he was after
 - ii. God always desires to bless us more than what we ask for
 - iii. He "welcomed Him gladly" – without reservation or suspicion
- c. The rest of the people began to mutter (v 7)
 - i. "All the people" – that would have included His disciples
 - ii. The root of this word is "to grumble"
 - iii. Exactly the same word for what the Israelites did in the desert
 - 1. What was God's response to them?
 - 2. What do you think His response is to us when we do it?
- d. There is a period of time between verses 7 and 8
 - i. During that time a change comes over Zacchaeus
 - ii. "Here and now" – no hesitation, no thinking about it, no weighing the results

- iii. With a change of heart comes a change of actions!
- e. The power of his giving according to the law and culture of that day
 - i. Giving 20% of anything you had was considered a mark of extreme generosity - He gave 50%!
 - ii. **Ex 22:1** – Jewish law of restitution for a stolen sheep was 4 times what had been stolen if found guilty at trial
 - iii. **Num 5:6-7** – Jewish law also said that if the theft was confessed freely it only required a return of the property and a 20% penalty
 - iv. Zacchaeus freely gave the full penalty after having the sin of his life exposed and forgiven
- f. This was the whole purpose of Jesus' ministry on earth
- g. **Rev. 3:20** - *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

- **What would be your response to an invitation to eat with Jesus?**
- **Would you be excited or a little concerned about what might be revealed?**
- **As we approach the time of remembering Jesus fulfilling His mission and giving His life so that we would be saved, what are you doing with that gift of life?**