

When Grace Pushes In

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 18:35-19:10



Big Idea

God can break the attachments our hearts have made with money and wealth. God can lift Satan's spell that has had us so enchanted with the things of this world. God can get the camel through the eye of the needle. God can do the impossible. And He's about to do it with this man Zacchaeus. Has He done it for you?

It seems to me that the two preceding and contrasting stories of the rich ruler (Luke 18:18-30) and the blind beggar (Luke 18:35-43) are here colliding and blending in this one story about a man named Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). For in Zacchaeus we have a rich man—a prominent, self-made man. But, as we read, what we come to find is that he is actually starting to take on the attributes of the blind beggar as well. He is starting to feel the insufficiency of his wealth, the corruption of his own heart, the desperation he has for mercy. And he too will, in the end, find joy, not in his stuff, but in Jesus.

(1) From Corruption to Curiosity (vv. 1-4)

Something has been shifting in Zacchaeus' heart. The corruption he's long embraced is starting to give way to a curiosity concerning this Man from Nazareth. I imagine that somewhere along the way he has begun to experience something of a haunting emptiness. In one sense, he has all he ever wanted, yet, in another sense, he's still come up short. So he's begun to open to the idea of alternate options. Maybe money isn't it. Maybe there is something more. Maybe there is something to this Jesus.

(2) From Stranger to Son (vv. 5-10)

Observation #1: Jesus Sees and Knows—Interestingly, though we thought all of this was about Zacchaeus getting a chance to see Jesus, truly what is far more important here is the reality that Jesus sees him . . . and He knows him . . . by name.

Observation #2: Jesus Must Stay—It seems to me that the grace of God, initially at least, has two obstacles to overcome before it can really bring transformation to a person. The first is to convince you that you truly need it. The second is to convince you that you can truly have it.

Observation #3: Zacchaeus Is Transformed—The love, the welcome, of Jesus satisfies Zacchaeus in a way that his stuff never could—and it changes him from the inside out. Suddenly, what he has fought tooth and nail for, what he had cut everyone in his life off for, he willingly, even joyfully releases.

Observation #4: Salvation Has Come—Zacchaeus had estranged himself. He had collaborated with the enemy, rubbed shoulders with the unclean Gentiles, forsaken the Torah. His family may well have disowned him. Certainly his country despised him—that's why they're outside grumbling even now (v. 7). But, meanwhile, inside the house, Jesus speaks over him words of such life: "Who cares what the crowds are saying about you. You, my friend, are truly a "son of Abraham."

(3) From Jericho to Jerusalem

Jesus offers salvation freely to a sinner like Zacchaeus here in Jericho knowing full well that the only way He can make good on that is if He soon picks up the tab Himself there on the cross in Jerusalem.

Reflection Questions



- Are you still chasing the stuff of this world? Or are you, with Zacchaeus, saying: "I think I've seen all that the world has to offer—now I'm ready to see Jesus"?! Explain.
- In what ways have you been spending much of your energy trying to be seen, known, and valued by others? How does Jesus seeing you, knowing you, and valuing you change things for you?
- Have you ever bought into the idea that you must clean up before you come to God? How does this story of Zacchaeus teach us otherwise?