

ZACHI

Jericho Pg 76

Luke 18:35-43

Where is Jesus headed?

What time of year?

Why is he going to Jerusalem?

If he is coming through Jericho that means he avoided Samaria and come down the Jordan rift valley.

Why is the beggar outside of the city?

- getting people to give alms before they come into the city? Highly visible and he is a stand alone

- the poor served a function in the community because people are required as an act of spiritual worship to give alms to the poor.

- this is a high traffic season

Remember how I said that when someone of importance and prominence would come to your town, you would meet them outside of the city, greet them and walk back with them to the city. This is what is happening with Jesus.

- keep in mind that Jesus (rabbis) are rock stars - think about the miracles that Jesus has done

The blind man by the side of the road - finds out it is Jesus - and cries out 'Son of David' - messianic title - and he keeps shouting

- he asks for mercy (hesed) kindness/loving kindness - it is a word that sometimes translates as grace.

The crowd wants him to be quiet

Jesus makes the crowd bring him to himself (Mordecai and Haman)

Jesus ask him what he would like him to do....why....if he is healed, his life is going to change...new expectations are going to be placed upon him....no more begging

What is the guys name? Mark tells us...Bar Timaeus (son of filth)

- he is the first none demon possessed person to call Jesus the messiah in the book of Luke

- you've got a blind guy, whose name is the son of filth who can see Jesus for who he is

- I can relate to that

Now your bible has a chapter break, but really these stories are all interwoven and need to be read as one story.

Luke 19

Entering Jericho...

- what is significant about Jericho

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- Jericho - is the city of Palms - also the city of the moon - same word in Arabic and Hebrew
- wealthy, can grow anything, produce balsam from the dead sea - the cost goes up 10 times when it reaches Jerusalem and Rome.
- We just walked past Herod's palace, who had to rent it from Cleopatra who received the city as a gift from Mark Antony
- This place gives Herod some privacy from the religious constriction of Jerusalem
- huge cross roads of people, culture and a gate way into the country from the east.
- 3100 feet elevation change between Jerusalem and Jericho – an Oasis
- NT times, wealthy people would have a second home in Jericho

Was a largely Sadducee/priestly community

- a tax collection place because the road went right by there. Roman money, Greek money had images on them.
- The tax rate was 50%-80% - people barely surviving...why?
- Have no time or energy to revolt if you are fighting for survival.
- And Herod is building 7 amazing palaces with your money.
- Hebrews money did not have.
- The Priests – hired people to touch the money that would make them unclean. Some were dishonest and others just wanted to make a living.
- Considered by the religious class to be sinners because they touched money. Even though they were doing it for the priests.
- Now they could not go to temple, do sacrifices, read the torah in public. I'm unclean – but you hired me?
- Mentioned in the Talmud as a priestly community
 - Joshua Shwartz, 'On the Priests and Jericho in Second Temple Period', Jewish Quarterly Review, LXXIX No. 1 (July, 1998 – pg. 23-48)

So you have a town full of people who represent God on earth - His priests - keep this in mind. If they have been faithful to represent God, do you think Bar Timaeus would be begging by the side of the road?

'Passing through'

- remember about how to greet a person of prominence? You would have a banquet in honor of that person. So if this was set to happen, then Jesus is going to refuse their hospitality...a big cultural no/no and shameful

Zachi – chief tax collector (only time this title is used in the Text) - in a town of people who are making money off of God's people in the temple. You can imagine that he is just as excluded and ignored as Bar Timaeus.

- He is utterly hated – the Mishnah says you can lie to a tax collector
- Short in stature – can be height - Helikia – stature, age or height – short in social status
- He was really wealthy – something they would have already known by his title – but Luke wants you to know.
 - Probably is responsible to the wealthy area of Judea

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How you collect taxes is by paying people off along the way. Caesar says I want 100 talents...everyone administrator between here and Rome are going to get their cut. You buy positions within a government because they are like a franchise in which you can recoup your money and make money. **Tax farming**

- So there is a huge mark up by the time Zacchaeus is collecting the money...and he has people under him actually doing the collecting as well.
- Crops, people, transportation of goods, sales tax and inheritance tax, business license fee are taxable things.

He is potentially being blocked out by his neighbors, priests, from seeing Jesus...so he runs ahead to a sycamore tree.

- He demonstrates his desire to see Jesus and be changed
 - He wants to see Jesus (keep blind beggar in mind from Lk. 18)
 - He runs
 - He climbs a tree
- He runs and climbs a tree - two shameful things! Men don't do either of these two things
- There is a quote from an ancient source that says that sycamore trees could not be planted within 25 cubits from a town.
- Sycamore-fig (hybrid) trees – low hanging branches - were planted outside of town because they were considered a tent and if anything unclean happened underneath them, it would be transferred to the person.
- the point being is that we know that Jesus was met by the crowd outside of town if all this is true and that Zacchaeus meets Jesus outside of Jericho as well
- This shows us his heart and how badly he wants to see Jesus

Imagery of Sycamore-fig

- 7 times in the Text
- Amos 7:14
- 760-750 BC – prophet to Israel – Jeroboam II
 - Not maintaining righteousness and justice – almost all prophets speak against this
 - Gen. 18 – God chose Abraham because he would keep both

Justice and Righteous are two words of the same concept

Justice (mishpat) – retributive justice or legal justice

- Concrete actions you take to correct injustice and create righteousness

Righteousness (tzedakah) – distributive justice or social justice (having basic needs met)

- A standard of right, equitable relationships between people no matter their social differences

How we relate to people – is how we relate to God (made in him image) Ps. 89:14a

Unique fruit – looks like fig, not as good, it was fruit that the poor eat

The word cheated – means to cheat, to extort or defraud (sukophanteo)

Sycamore fig-tree (sukamoreia) Play on words - If you heard this in Greek – you would easily to hear

‘The point is not where Zacchaeus was but what he was and what he was highlighted by where he was.’ (J. Lee Magness)

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- He climbs up a tree that shares the same root as defrauder – he is climbing on top of the poor
- Bringing people back into the fold

God brought them out of Israel – to be about justice and righteousness – to be a kingdom of priests

- Tax collectors don't live into this
- John the Baptist tells tax collectors – don't defraud anymore
- Jesus – deal with people living into their identity
- Child of Abraham – Zacchaeus' true identity – calling him back

How does Jesus know his name?

- People see him in it and tease/taunt him?
- call him names as he is in the tree

Just like with Bar Timaeus...Jesus enters in to do the reverse and to restore value/honor

Zacchaeus' Response to Jesus

- ½ of my possession to the poor (act of righteousness)
- Pay back 4 times (act of justice)
- If (since) I have done this...(shame based culture – way of saving face)
- Lev. 6:5 - Financial fraud – original amount returned plus 20%
- Ex. 22:1 –outright theft of an animal – restitution at 4x or 5x the value of the animal
This is an extravagant response
- 2 Samuel 12:5-6 – Nathan the prophet tells them a parable – David says he must pay back four times – shows no pity (David Stern, Jewish NT, pg 138)
- Gives half of what he has to the poor (more than was required - you could only give up to a fifth of what you had to the poor - if you had the means of taking care of yourself)
- A holistic response

Amos 7 – Jacob is so small – God is going to take care of Jacob

- A wall built to plumb line
- I have to straighten them out – because they are not living out justice and righteousness
- V. 14 – I will bring my people back from exile

Three-fold response by Zacchaeus

- There is **repentance** (doing a 180 degree turn – return to the path)
 - Not walking the path that you are supposed to be on, you get back on the path
- **Reconciliation** – with the poor – when he was off the path, he did damage to other people
- **Impact** – now he has this ability for impact – Jesus does not tell him to leave his life as a chief tax collector
 - **John the Baptist** – those tax collectors who are baptized by John – don't collect more than you should.
- He has the ability to tell his story – when he goes to restore relationships – they will know he is paying more than he should

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- He can tell them about his encounter with Jesus and how it changed his life.

Where have we gotten off the path, where do we need to repent?

There is redemption in all this...transformational power in our lives

Stay at his house!

- to go into a home of known sinner would be tantamount to becoming unclean. It would be assumed that he does not keep kosher.

- right before the Passover? Jesus is risking missing the Passover to become unclean

- Jesus gives him the honor of receiving a meal from him instead of the town's better known folks

Jesus sees him and pursues him – he does not care about his reputation or becoming unclean

Salvation = Jesus' name (Yeshua) - It is a play on words

'Seek and save the lost' - a remez from Ezekiel 34 (like quoting a movie line)

- shepherd image
- When was he last time Zacchaeus was called a Jew? Seen as a person of value by his fellow Jews let alone God's priests?
- Jess makes a messianic claim and a God claim - for Ezek 34 states that God will come down from heaven and regather his people Himself!
- Jesus just called Himself God without stating it directly, but in the Jewish way
- clearly a incarnation passage
- Sadducees heard. He is calling us the one who muddied the water, trampled the flock – kill him.
- Ezek 34 calls out the leaders of God's people
- Son of Abraham – beyond just Jewishness – but Jesus restores Zacchaeus to community, identity and calling
 - Restore his calling that Israel was given in the desert after Egypt
 - Israel enters the promise land here, where John the Baptist is calling people back onto the path, where Jesus was baptized to begin his ministry
- Luke almost never gives someone's proper name, yet we have Zacchaeus. What does Zachi's name mean? Innocent, clean or righteous

People began to **'mutter'** – just like in Luke 15 when the Pharisees **mutter** that Jesus eats with sinners

- Other time in the Luke that mentions a man running.
- Sadducees/Pharisees don't think that people are deserving of the love of God

The parable of the ten Minas

- the very next story is connected with the first two
- Who is Jesus' main audience here...the Sadducees
- the people who represent God on Earth
- What do priests do? They help people understand and relate to God. They show people who He is
- So this is going to be a parable aimed at them

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- a parable again has one main point in which at the conclusion you have to choose which way of two paths you are going to take

A nobleman went to a far country to receive his kingdom

- that just happened 30 years ago. Herod the Great dies and his three sons all contest the will wanting all the power for themselves
- also a boat of Jewish leaders go to Caesar to say we don't want any of these knuckleheads to rule over us.
- Caesar keeps the will that Herod wrote it - dividing his kingdom among his three sons
- now while everyone is away - no one knows what Caesar will decide. So you have to bet on the right horse or you could be in trouble if the wrong person gets in power
- When Herod Antipas comes back, he has 6,000 Pharisees crucified as punishment for trying to oppose him.
- So Jesus is playing into a story they very familiar with

He calls 10 servants to him - why 10?

- 10 men changed the course of a nation (entering the promise land)
- it takes a quorum of 10 men to pray for the nation or have a synagogue service.

Engage in business? Whose business? Who are you going to choose to do business for?

The citizens hate him and sent a delegation (which happened in the past)

- they don't want him (God) to reign over them

He calls three servants upon his return and beginning to rule his kingdom

- why only three? Where are the other 7?

How much business was transacted? - not how much money you made on your investments - but how much do you publically acknowledge the nobleman.

How do you typically understand the parable of the talents? You have been given much - so multiply it.

- but that is not what the text says

The servants are commended for being faithful! Not productive.

The nobleman wants to know who will publically risk and openly declare their loyalties to him while he is away and you don't know when he is coming back.

- there will be a cost to doing so
- the master challenges his servants to live boldly and publically as his servants, using his resources, unafraid of his enemies, confident in the future of his return.

We read the story from a western mindset of productivity and pragmatism as being highest values of our society.

The last one was actually the smartest - he does not want to pick anyone so he buries his talent and just waits things out.

- he deliberately insults the same master - calls him a thief

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- which is a compliment in Bedouin culture - to raid and steal from others
- he thinks he is offering a compliment
- but in a settled agricultural society - this is an insult - the values are different.

The Nobleman meets the man where he is:

- you experienced me as a hard man
- you have seen me incorrectly - you don't know me for who I am
- if he had gone to a bank, he would have to make a public declaration about whose money it is - he did not even want to do that.
- In torah it is forbidden to take interest from another jew

The parable ends with stating what the enemy deserves but it does not record that they received it.

This harsh statement is the beginning of negotiations in the middle east.

- example of our rules for the basketball tournament that never get followed
- relationship trumps rules

The story begins with the master giving gifts to his servants they did not earn nor deserve.

Who is his main audience? Sadducees - people born into this privilege role - given the responsibility to represent the Master while He is away.

They failed miserably - so much so that God is coming down Himself to regather his sheep.

- if they were faithful, Bar Timaeus would not be begging and Zacchaeus would not be excluded from the community.

It is a call to repentance for even the Sadducees who are often seen in a horrible light in Scripture.

Each of us has been given a measure of faith to live out. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to be faithful.