CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER112021

Scripture Story: Luke 19:1-10.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 61.

Jesus and me



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flashlight

"It is when Christ is received as a personal Savior that salvation comes to the soul. Zacchaeus had received Jesus, not merely as a passing guest in his home, but as One to abide in the soul temple. The scribes and Pharisees accused him as a sinner, they murmured against Christ for becoming his guest, but the Lord recognized him as a son of Abraham. For 'they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.' Galatians 3:7" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 556).

keytext

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'

"Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house.' "

(Luke 19:8, 9, NIV)

what do you think?

Make a check mark by the things below that you believe are essential for a person to have salvation.

_____ attending church every Sabbath
_____ confessing sins
_____ getting baptized
_____ repenting of sins
_____ treating others as you wish to be treated
_____ reading the Bible and praying every day
_____ accepting Christ as your personal Savior
_____ participating in Communion
_____ volunteering to help "the least of these"
_____ being a part of a Christian family
_____ witnessing to others about Jesus
_____ dressing like a Christian
_____ living without sin
_____ being born again
_____ giving money to the church
_____ believing in Jesus

did you know?

In Jesus' day the Jews hated tax collectors for the following reasons:

1. Tax collectors overcharged and could keep the extra money. This was how they got paid. Like most tax collectors in his day, Zacchaeus got very rich by ripping off his own people.

2. Taxes were so high that some people were forced to sell their children into slavery just to pay their taxes.

3. Tax collectors worked for the Romans; thus, their money paid for Roman soldiers and Roman governors. Most Jews hated the Romans who occupied their land, and did not appreciate paying taxes to them. They especially despised Jewish tax collectors such as Zacchaeus, who were Jews and who had sold out to the Romans for personal profit.

INTO THE STORY

poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'

"Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'"

(Luke 19:1-10, NIV)

"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

"When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

"All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the



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OUT OF THE STORY

Read verses 1-4. Notice all the details that enrich the setting for this story. For example, note how the text tells us that Zacchaeus was a *short* man; he climbed a *sycamore-fig* tree, etc. List other details that strike you:

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Read verses 5, 6. When Jesus arrived in Jericho, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus. But He saw much more than a man. As Duncan Buchanan puts it, He saw "a human being, unloved, unloving, bruised and hurt by the circumstances of life, unsuited to his wealth, . . . unacceptable to those around him, unacceptable to himself."

Read verse 7. Notice the reputation of Zacchaeus as a known "sinner." How do you feel when you sin? After the initial buzz of the excitement wears off and you're alone in your guilt and shame, how do you really feel? Zacchaeus was a known "sinner." In other words, not only did he have to wrestle privately with his faults, but also publicly he was cursed with a reputation of corruption. Assuming that sin strips a person of a healthy sense of self-esteem, what does this suggest about Zacchaeus's self-esteem?

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Read verse 8. Reflect on this statement: Authentic spiritual transformation occurs only by being in the presence of Christ.

Read verses 9, 10. What insight does this give us into the character of God?

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punch lines

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" **(2 Corinthians 7:1, NIV).**

"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' and you forgave the guilt of my sin" **(Psalm 32:5, NIV).**

"But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; he will surely take me to himself" **(Psalm 49:15, NIV).**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" **(1 John 1:9, NIV).**

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" **(Matthew 9:36, NIV).**

further insight

"The very first response of Zacchaeus to the love of Christ was in manifesting compassion toward the poor and suffering."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 555.

"Holiness is wholeness for God; it is the entire surrender of heart and life to the indwelling of the principles of heaven."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 556.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Psalm 32:5.

Reflect on this statement: "As the floor is swept every day, so is the soul cleansed every day by confession."† Would you agree or disagree? Explain.

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Sunday

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Think about the radical life transformation of Zacchaeus. He was a different man by simply being in the presence of Jesus. Think of the process of transformation like this: if you want to smell like a caribou (then you need counseling, but besides that), there's only one way to do it—you need to get up next to a caribou.

Similarly, if you want to be transformed into the character of Christ, or as the apostle Paul puts it, have the "aroma of Christ" (see 2 Corinthians 2:15, NIV), then there's only one way to do it: get up next to Christ. You can try to be good and emit the fragrance of righteousness—burn your secular CDs, eat tree bark and tofu, never miss church—but your best efforts will still stink like a soiled sock. Remember Isaiah's words? "All our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6, NIV).

If you want to radiate the aroma of Jesus and enjoy victory over sin, you must engage in the activity that will produce that smell. For aroma is the inevitable result of activity. So what activities put you into the presence of Christ so that you can be transformed into His likeness?

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Monday

Read Luke 19:8, 9.

Consider the *Key Text* in the context of Ellen White's commentary:

"Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his newfound Master unseal his lips. He will make public his confession and his repentance.

"In the presence of the multitude, 'Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

" 'And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.'

"When the rich young ruler had turned away from Jesus, the disciples had marveled at their Master's saying, 'How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' They had exclaimed one to another, 'Who then can be saved?' Now they had a demonstration of the truth of Christ's words, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' Mark 10:24, 26; Luke 18:27. They saw how, through the grace of God, a rich man could enter into the kingdom" (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 554, 555).

Tuesday

Read John 14:20.

Read the *Flashlight* section and ask yourself these questions:

- Is Jesus a "passing guest" or a long-term tenant in the residence of my "soul temple"?

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- How is what others think of me different from how God thinks of me? Which opinion (the opinion of others or the opinion of God) is more important to me? Why?

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- What would it mean for me to be considered a part of "they which are of faith"?

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Wednesday

Read some additional *Punch Lines* (in parentheses) and rate yourself on each item with a percentage (0 percent being "None," 100 percent being "Yup, that's me all the time!").

_____ I seek God first in everything I do. (Matthew 6:33)

_____ Following Christ is my highest desire. (Matthew 16:24)

_____ I love the Lord with all my being. (Matthew 22:37)

_____ I love my neighbor as myself. (Matthew 22:39)

_____ I am a living sacrifice to God. (Romans 12:1, 2)

Thursday

Read Psalm 1:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

The story of Zacchaeus reminds us that the best way (and really, the *only* way) to overcome such sins as greed, dishonesty, and so on is to hang out with Jesus. What would hanging out with Jesus look like in my life? How can I continually live in the presence of Jesus?

Friday

Read Psalm 139:23, 24.

In what ways does my story intersect with the story of Zacchaeus?

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this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 61.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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