

Call to Obedience #335  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
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## Salvation for Zacchaeus

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

***“Jesus said to Zacchaeus, today I must abide at thy house...”—Luke 19:5***

Two kinds of people you will seldom see in heaven are the intelligent and the rich. These are also two kinds of people you will seldom see at church prayer meetings, prevailing with God for the salvation of souls. This is not to say that Jesus is against intelligence or wealth; it is simply that as intelligence and wealth are associated with great opportunities, so they are also linked with great danger. Jesus said, *“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes”* (Luke 10:21).

Jesus meant that the wise of this world, the educated, the sophisticated, the know-it-alls, can rarely be trusted with divine revelations. They tend to abuse, ridicule or destroy these revelations because they apply reason rather than faith to them. All the men who engineered Jesus' death were “college graduates”: the Pharisees, the scribes, the lawyers, and the Sadducees. Although Jesus gave them opportunities to be healed (such as in Luke 5:17-25) there is no record of one of them ever being healed. Faith and reason have been battling each other from man's first encounter with the devil and will continue to do so in every man's mind till the end of time. Again, Jesus is not a foe of education but He knew that if learned men do not live on bended knee, as Moses and Paul did, they become enemies of Christ. Few of the earthly wise and educated will be found in heaven.

As intelligence can keep you out of heaven, so can wealth. Perhaps the greatest barrier between people and Jesus is money. In Luke 18:18-24 is the story of the rich man who came to Jesus for salvation. Jesus asked him to give his money to the poor, but he found that his love of money was greater than his love for the One who could give him eternal life. Jesus said, *“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”* (v.24) Here “hardly” means “with great difficulty.” Jesus follows it with these words, *“For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God”* (v.25). Some scholars translate “camel” as “rope.” I believe Jesus meant “camel,” because it is possible by human effort to get a rope, strand by strand, through the eye of a needle. But to get a camel through such a tiny hole you need a miracle! That is why Jesus said, *“The things which are impossible with man, (forcing a camel through the eye of a needle) are possible with God.”* Rich man, it will take a miracle to get you to heaven. You are doomed for hell unless you experience the miracle that detaches your heart from your money and places it under the Lordship of Christ and His Body, the Church.

With God all things are possible, so let's look at such a miracle: Jesus is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). This gets us to Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a Jew. His name is Jewish. Many tax collectors (publicans) were non-Jews because Jewish publicans experienced severe abuse from the people. They were despised for serving Israel's oppressor: Rome. Both Matthew and Zacchaeus were Jewish tax collectors, but Zacchaeus was even more hated because, besides being a Jew, he was a chief collector. He was in charge of other tax collectors. He became rich by taking money from his brothers and sending it to Rome. So the first way the Bible identifies Zaccheus is by his wealth. The lesson: Jesus sees all of you, including your bank account. Your bank account, your checkbook, can tell Jesus more about who you are than anything else you say or do. Your checkbook, more than your testimony, will tell Him whether you'll make it through the eye of the needle or not.

Now, Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus the miracle worker, and that He was coming through town. He wanted to see Him. But, as it turned out, there was no one to help him see Jesus. No one! Question: Are you helping anyone to see Jesus?

Zacchaeus had two things against him: he was hated by all, and he was too short to look over the top of the crowd. Yet, he had one thing going for him: he had the kind of heart described by Jeremiah the prophet: *"And you shall seek me and find Me when you shall search for Me with all your heart"* (Jer. 29:13). Zacchaeus was a man of no excuses. If you make excuses for yourself, you're likely to stay close to the bottom all of your life. If you're a man without excuses, you will likely rise to the top. It is true in both the secular and spiritual worlds. You will never live a consistent, victorious Christian life until you stop making excuses. Every time you make an excuse, you put something between yourself and Jesus. Oh, all the prayer meeting excuses, the church attendance excuses, the not-giving-cheerfully excuses.... Excuses kill everything that is of the Spirit of God.

Zacchaeus did not use his shortness as an excuse. He did not blame people for blocking him out, nor did he blame God for his short stature. He wanted to see Jesus. I can tell you that everyone who has kissed excuses good-bye and wants to see Jesus will find remarkable assistance from heaven. God showed him a plan, when there was no plan! Hallelujah! The plan was for him to make a fool out of himself. Lesson: No man has ever entered the kingdom of God without making a fool out of himself. Now, the worldly wise will never accept such a plan. They will not give up their pride, their dignity, their respectability, and their refined behavior. They will not take up the cross because it is foolishness to them.

Zacchaeus conceived, no, *received* a plan. He knew that if he were willing to be the laughing stock of Jericho, he would see Jesus. Thus Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a tree. Question: Was it worth it? I don't think he planned to climb a tree when he left home or he would have dressed accordingly. Here was a "millionaire" in his fine garments and fancy shoes, running ahead of a crowd that hated him. He climbed a tree at the risk of losing his shoes or tearing his garments. I am sure the reporters ran after him to sell the story in the "Jericho Times" the next morning. I must tell

you friend, you can't get to Jesus any cheaper or any other way but by running to a tree and by getting on it. Jesus had to get on a tree to save you and you have to get on your tree to follow Him. The spiritual meaning of this passage is that, what Calvary was to Jesus, the sycamore tree was to Zacchaeus. The Calvary tree put Jesus to open shame, causing Him to lose all, to lose His reputation. The sycamore tree did the same for Zacchaeus. It put him to open shame.

Friend, have you climbed your sycamore tree yet? Well, I'll tell you, once you are on that tree, Jesus will find you. Jesus sees everyone who is on his tree. And everyone on his tree will see Jesus. The tree offered the best sight, the best seat. The cross offers the best seat for us to see Jesus.

Oh, I like this! I like this! *"When Jesus came to the place he saw him (v.5)"*. Zacchaeus would never have seen Jesus had he not been on the tree. When Jesus saw Zaccheus, He called him by name. How did Jesus know his name? Well, Jesus knows everyone's name. Now here is the crescendo of the whole symphony: Jesus said, *"Make haste and come down, today I must abide in thy house"*. Make haste, hurry up. How often did Jesus say to anyone, "Hurry up?" A normal pace climbing down was too slow for Jesus. Two minutes was too long, He wanted Zaccheus to shave every possible second off his climb. Jesus had a compelling desire to embrace this man, for this man in the tree had forsaken all to see Him. Oh, what a story. How many rich men have ever done this?

Have you ever heard of anyone Jesus wanted to see so badly as Zacchaeus? How excited is Jesus about you? Jesus was drawn to Zacchaeus like a magnet to a piece of iron. Then He said, *"Today I must abide at thy house"*. I "must," not "I want to," not "I should," but "I must." And so, here two men met: one who just came off a tree, and One Who was headed for a tree. Man's tree and Christ's tree bring man and God together in Holy Ghost fellowship. Then without prompting, Zacchaeus said: *"Now I shall give one half of my goods to the poor."* He let his checkbook know who was the new boss. Then Jesus said, *"This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham"*.

Can a camel go through the eye of a needle? Can a rich man be saved? With man it is impossible, but *with God all things are possible*.

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