

I Want to See Jesus

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into the story of Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19, emphasizing the transformation that occurs when one encounters Jesus. Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, seeks to see Jesus and is radically changed, demonstrating genuine repentance through restitution and a heart turned towards God. The sermon challenges listeners to seek Jesus earnestly, highlighting the importance of genuine faith and a transformed life, rather than mere external actions.

Scripture: Luke 19:1, Hebrews 12:2, James 2:17, Revelation 3:20, Matthew 19:24, Isaiah 55:6, Hebrews 4:13, James 5:16, Ephesians 2:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17

Topics: "Transformation through Encountering Jesus", "Genuine Repentance and Faith"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of Zacchaeus in Luke chapter 19, emphasizing the transformation that occurs when one encounters Jesus. Zacchaeus, a despised tax collector, seeks to see Jesus and is radically changed, demonstrating genuine repentance through restitution and a heart turned towards God. The sermon challenges listeners to seek Jesus earnestly, highlighting the importance of genuine faith and a transformed life, rather than mere external actions.

Transcript

Luke chapter 19. We're making progress slowly through Luke and we're beginning chapter 19 and I'm going to read verses 1 through 10 this morning. Luke chapter 19 reading 1 through 10.

Luke chapter 19 verse 1. Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was but could not because of the crowd for he was of short stature.

So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for he was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place he looked up and saw him and said to him Zacchaeus make haste and come down for today I must stay at your house. And so he made haste and came down and received him joyfully.

But when they saw it they all complained saying he has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord look Lord I give half of my goods to the poor and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation I restore fourfold. And Jesus said to him today salvation has come to this house because he also is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. Now the story of Zacchaeus is well known and I guess it's probably in every Sunday school curriculum. So children get to hear about Zacchaeus and obviously it's a graphic story which kids can relate to in terms of the short guy getting up in the tree so that he can see Jesus.

The problem is that again familiarity breeds contempt. So we read the passage we say oh yeah I've got that I understand that. And so again we were challenged to look a bit deeper than just the surface and to understand the message that is coming through.

And of course there's a very specific message which sometimes we can easily miss again because we don't read things in context. You are probably tired of hearing that word and yet it's probably the most important word when it comes to understanding the Scriptures is context. And so I want us to have a very quick look at the context in which this happens again and then we'll look at how the story happens.

So if you have your Bible, and I trust you do, unfortunately one of the things that happens is because we have the Scriptures up on the screen people say well you know I don't have to have my Bible. But here's exactly the problem. The verse that you see on the screen is not in context.

It's simply a verse on its own. And if I was to take it out of context you wouldn't know because you don't have the Scriptures in front of you to see whether in fact I have read it or explained it in its proper context. So if you have your Bible let's go back to chapter 18.

And chapter 18 begins with the persistent widow. And what she is doing is she is seeking God or the lesson teaches us to seek God. She is seeking justice or vengeance or to be to be given justice of the of the judge.

And so the idea of seeking faithfully and God answers. In verse 9 through 14 we have the story of the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Now both are seeming to seek for God, want to know God, but they come with different attitudes.

The Pharisee goes away and he does not meet with God and God does not meet with him. The sinner, tax collector actually, interesting Zacchaeus was a tax collector. And so he meets with God.

God meets with him because he comes with the right attitude. He comes not filled with his own righteousness and his own achievements but he comes as a poor sinner. As we sang that hymn this morning, just as I am without one plea but that by blood was shed for me, O Lamb of God I come.

And that while he may not have understood that aspect of the gospel he understood that he had nothing to offer and that he had to come only on the merits of what God and God's grace. Then we have the story verse 15 through 17 of Jesus blessing the little children. And again the lesson is if you want to come to him you have to come as a little child.

You cannot come as a rich man, you cannot come as a Pharisee, you cannot come as a theologian, you have to come as a little child. And then verse 24 through 30 he says that it is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom. Remember we dealt with that.

It's easier for a camel to go through the literal eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. But, there's that great word but, with God all things are possible. So God can even save the rich.

Alright, can you begin to see a picture? The picture is of how do we get to meet with God? How does God meet with us? And so it's dealing with different kinds of people and it's dealing with different kinds of attitudes in order for us to meet with God. And so with God all things are possible verses 24 through 30. Then verse 31 Jesus speaks about the cross and that is sort of out of context in the sense that while that's important it's not part of this of the flow here.

And then verse 35 through the end of chapter 18 we dealt with that last week where Jesus heals the blind man. And so the Pharisees could not see but the blind man could see even though he was blind. And so now we come to Zacchaeus and you can see that the same the same theme flows through to the story of Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus wants to meet with Jesus. He wants to meet with Jesus and Jesus meets with him. And so the conditions that we have seen he cannot come on the basis of his riches.

He cannot come on the basis of his achievements. He can only come on the merits of God's grace. And so let's go to the text in verse 1. Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Remember the blind man Jesus is coming into Jericho and he heals the blind man. We don't know whether he had spent a day or two in Jericho but he is now moving on in his journey and he's passing through Jericho and this is literally a few days away from Jerusalem. In the next few days probably in the next week would have been the triumphal entry in Jerusalem or what we call Palm Sunday and then a week later his crucifixion.

So he's now two and a half weeks let's say away from the cross. And so he enters and he passes through Jericho. Verse 2. Now behold there was a man named Zacchaeus.

And I'm not even sure about his pronunciation because I get confused between English and American. Sometimes I say Zacchaeus but I think in America you say Zacchaeus. Doesn't matter, same guy.

He was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Now we've spoken a lot about these tax collectors about how terrible they were so I'm not going to go through all of that again just to remind you that they were the worst of the worst. They were traitors to the nation of Israel.

They were sellouts to the Roman government. They cheated their own people in order to enrich themselves and to collect taxes for the Roman government. They were not allowed to testify in court because their word was by definition unreliable.

And so he is not just a tax collector but he is a chief tax collector. Now Paul says I am the chief of sinners. So this may be a statement as to his sinful condition.

The tax collector that Jesus met with earlier, he was just a low-ranking tax collector. Who else was a tax collector? Matthew. Matthew was also a tax collector and he was also the low level.

What the in the Greek the amokes. So he was the guy, these were the guys who would sit at the toll table or the toll gate and they would levy the taxes and then they would pay it over to the franchise holder. So remember there was the system.

The Romans would sell the rights to collect taxes to franchise holders and then they would employ, they would farm out the collection of taxes to the lesser tax collectors like Matthew and the guy in chapter 18.

Zacchaeus was at the higher level, at the highest level. So he dealt directly with the Roman authorities and these minor guys, these lesser guys would collect the taxes, take their share off, their cut off it, hand the rest over to him and obviously this is a pyramid scheme of course and he would take his share and he would then hand that over to the rest over to the Roman government.

So this is who Zacchaeus is and in the process he had become rich. Again these words are important because remember that in the previous chapter there was a young man who came to Jesus and he was rich. So we have to put these things together.

Remember the problem of reading chapters. You read chapter 18 and you forget about chapter 18. Now you read chapter 19 and you forget but here's a tax collector and there was another tax collector in chapter 18.

Here is a rich man, there was another rich man in chapter 18 and we need to see the contrast between them. So this guy is really the worst of the worst but he sought and he sought to see Jesus or to see who Jesus was but could not because of the crowd for he was of short stature. So he was a short guy, whatever that meant.

I'm not even sure how tall these guys were. We see pictures of the Lord Jesus drawn and obviously they're very, very misleading. We really shouldn't have them but in fact I saw just one came across my desk this last week of Jesus standing at the door knocking and just a modern version of the old picture by Rice and Jesus is over seven foot tall because he's higher than the lintel of the door.

So again just trying to make... we don't know but Zacchaeus is short. So there's a crowd and again these crowds were possibly thousands of people because we know the numbers that were given to us when Jesus feeds the crowds we're talking about thousands and there is no way he can get anywhere near Jesus. Not only is he short but he is also despised.

So nobody's going to give him a gap to get closer. They're going to elbow him out of the way because he's an enemy of the people. So he doesn't get to see Jesus.

So he ran ahead and he climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for he was going to pass that way. I think the thing about Zacchaeus is his persistence. Remember where we began in chapter 18, the persistent widow.

Now while she wanted justice for her case he is wanting to see Jesus but the principle of persistence is there. Obviously God is looking for sincerity. God doesn't reward us because we are persistent but at the same time God is looking for those who are really wanting him.

God doesn't force himself upon us. He doesn't shove Christianity down our throats but he's looking for those who are seeking him with all of our hearts. You will find me if you seek for me with all of your heart.

And here's this man who is a religious outcast, an outcast of his community but he wants to see Jesus and he's going to do what he can to meet with Jesus. And folks the problem is that we're so easily put off from trying to meet with God. It doesn't matter the things that get in our way.

Sometimes people go to church once and oh nobody greeted me and they go and they never look for God again even though God had clearly drawn them at that time but there was just no desire to persist. The people were going to try and keep this guy away from Jesus as best as they can. Nobody wanted him to

be saved.

You say well where did you get that? Well when Jesus went to meet with him they all complained. So they didn't want him to be saved. Look I think we need to be careful sometimes because sometimes there are people that in our estimation of where they fit into society we we don't want them to be saved.

We say well you know that guy he needs to go to hell. Now we never say that but that's really in our heart sometimes. Oh here's a respectable man.

Yeah we want him to be saved because he'll be an asset to the church. He'll be a good guy to have around. No God is no respecter of persons and this is the point of this story and this is the point that Luke brings out over and over and over and over is as we've as we've seen in these passages that Jesus reaches out to the blind man.

Jesus reaches to the poor, to those who are tax collectors, to those who are sinners, to the prostitutes. Those are the ones that he is seeking and those are the ones that are that in the end get saved. And of course it's not because he is partial to those who are disadvantaged.

Because I know some people get a whole social gospel out of this thing and say well you know God's not for the rich he's for the poor. No God is for everyone. But why then is it hard for the rich to be saved? Because they don't want to be saved.

It's as simple as that. Why do more poor people get saved? Because they have nothing else and they turn to God with all of their all of their hearts. That's the that's the whole point.

It's it's not whether God chooses one above the other. It's a matter of whether we desire him. And when we are comfortable we have no desire for him.

Even as Christians when things go well in our lives we have no need for God. And our prayer life goes down. And you know there's a there's an immediate a direct connection in the graph of our of our prosperity.

And when I mean prosperity I don't mean just financial but emotional well-being relationships. Everything's going well. The better things go in our lives the worse our prayer lives.

That's just the way it is. The harder things get in our in our lives the better our prayer life. That's just and so Paul says I'm I'm glad for my weaknesses because it drives me to Christ.

And so here's this man and he he wants to see Jesus. He wants to see Jesus. And so there's a desperate need for us today to want to see Jesus.

It's interesting that he's not wanting to see the miracles. Remember the majority of the crowd that were following him were following him for the miracles. In fact later on we'll see in a couple of chapters time that Jesus comes to or was brought Herod.

And it says Herod wanted to see Jesus for a long time. Now that's interesting. Here's here's this man he wants to see Jesus and Herod wants to see Jesus.

So he said well that's that's great. He got saved so Herod must have must get saved. But it tells us why Herod wanted to see Jesus.

He was hoping Jesus would perform some kind of miracle for him. Not because he needed a miracle but because he wanted the spectacle of a miracle. You see many people were following Jesus thousands probably on that day.

But what they wanted was not Jesus. They wanted what he had to offer in terms of being the king, being the miracle worker, being the one who could feed them. But they didn't want him for who he was.

Here's this man. He doesn't need Jesus to feed him. He's got his food.

He's got his money. He's got the things that he needs. But he knows there's one thing he doesn't have.

And there's only one thing that Jesus can give and that is eternal life. And even though he is this hard man, a man of the world, probably become hardened to and resistant to the to the insults of his people. He's a Jew obviously.

Jesus says he's a son of Abraham. But in spite of all of that, there was an emptiness that he understood that only Jesus could fill. And he says, I want to see Jesus.

I want to see Jesus. Remember there were some Greek men who came to the disciples and they said, we want to see Jesus. And there's a need for us today to want to see Jesus.

We want to see the latest events in politics. We want to see what's happening in sport. We want to see what's happening over here and over there.

There's all sorts of stuff we want to see. And you know, when you speak to people about, well, I don't speak to people about when people speak about their bucket list. I've seen all sorts of stuff on those bucket lists.

I trust you understand what we mean by a bucket list. But you know, there's one thing I've never seen on those bucket lists. I want to see Jesus.

I want to see Jesus. Oh, I want to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I want to see the Houses of Parliament in London.

I want to see the Grand Canyon. I want to see this. I want to do this.

I want to go over there. I want to jump out of an airplane, whatever. But I've never seen someone say, I want to see Jesus.

And yet there's nothing more important than seeing Jesus. And for Christians read their Bible not to see Jesus, but to get some kind of comfort, some kind of help. And while the scriptures are good and do those kinds of things, at the end of the day, we missed the point because the point, the scriptures are about Jesus.

I've reminded you over and over that the Pharisees knew the scriptures off by heart. And Jesus says, you search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life. But it is they that speak of me.

From the very beginning to the very end of the scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi and from Matthew to Revelation, it speaks of Jesus. People read the book of Revelation to find out what's going to happen at the end of the world. And Christians divide and argue and write books about whether it's pre-trip or mid-trip

or post-trip or whether it's this or that or the other thing.

And they miss the point because it's about Jesus. The book begins by saying the revelation of Jesus Christ, God revealing himself, revealing Jesus to us. And you say, well, I don't need the book of Revelation because I can see Jesus in the Gospels.

But the Jesus in the Gospels is not the Jesus that is there today, that is in heaven today. The Jesus in the Gospels is Jesus the man, Jesus in his humiliation. But the one who he is now is the lamb that has horns, has power and authority.

He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is waiting that his enemies be made his footstool and he's coming to conquer and to set up his kingdom forever. That is the one that we serve.

And yes, while it's important to understand Jesus in the Gospels, if you don't understand Jesus in Revelation, you have the wrong Jesus because you only have half of him. But the scriptures reveal Jesus. And yet when we read the scriptures, what do we read? And when I listen to preachers preaching, they're looking for all sorts of stuff, but they're not looking for Jesus.

Remember that at the beginning of last year already, we spoke about the importance of us during these times of stress and trial, as we go through these difficult times in the world today, is the need for us to have our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. How many times have I used and quoted that verse over these last two years? If we don't have, if you have your eyes fixed on the White House, you're going to have problems. And that's why so many Christians are filled with anger and hate and frustration and bitterness and despair, because they had their eyes on Washington and not on Jesus.

And Christians get angry with me when I speak about that, because it's true. But we need to get our eyes off Washington, we need to get our eyes off the television, we need to get our eyes on Jesus. We need to be like Zacchaeus and say, Lord, I want to see you.

And Lord, if I have to climb a tree to get up there to see you, then I'm going to climb that tree, but I want to see you. And of course, we don't have to climb a tree, we just have to get on our knees and open the Word of God, and he reveals himself to us. And so he ran ahead and he climbed up into a sycamore tree, very undignified for a rich man.

But you see, he was past being dignified. He was past being respectable, trying to appear to be respectable. There was just one thing that mattered, and that was to know the Lord Jesus Christ, to see him and to see him for who he really was.

Because remember the previous verse said he wanted to see who he was. Because Jesus was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.

I suspect that he probably tried to hide in the tree to pull the leaves over him so that nobody could see him up there. And remember, Jesus is being pressed. And we just saw last night what a crowd does when I don't know how many people died in that crush.

There's a crush. There's people everywhere. Remember when that woman with an issue of blood touched Jesus' garment? They said, well, you know, stupid question, Lord, asking who touched me? People are pressing on us from every side.

And in spite of people pressing, and there's people talking, and there's people shouting, and all sorts of stuff going on, just like Jesus heard the voice of the blind beggar, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus sees Lazarus, Zacchaeus, up in the tree. If our hearts are tuned to know him and to see him, he will see us.

He said, well, there's many other people, and there are many other needs, and there's many other issues. No, he's looking for those who have a heart after him. And when our hearts are searching for him, he sees, and he acknowledges us.

And so Jesus stops again. You remember he stopped for the blind man. He stops again.

He's on his final march to Jerusalem. As the prophet said, he has set his face as a flint towards Jerusalem. He was resolute to now go to the cross.

But he still stops whenever he meets a need. And God is never too busy to hear our cry. And he's never too busy to not see us in the times when we are seeking for him.

And so he looks up and he sees Zacchaeus. And he says to Zacchaeus, hurry up. I must stay at your house.

What a statement. Not Zacchaeus, well, you know, what you want. No, Zacchaeus, I knew you were up there.

And the father had a plan. And the father's plan was for me to stay at your house tonight. You say, well, how do you know that? Jesus says, doesn't say, I want to stay at your house.

I must stay at your house. God's plan was for Zacchaeus. Because God knew Zacchaeus' heart.

God knew what would happen. And so part of the, because remember, every day as we get closer to the cross, we're going to see that every day matters. Every day is prescribed.

Every day is important, as particularly the last seven days that Jesus goes between the Palm Sunday and the crucifixion. And part of the plan of God in these last few days was for Jesus to spend that night at Lazarus' house, Zacchaeus' house. I think that if you asked Zacchaeus, and if you asked anyone else in Israel, would Jesus stay in his house that night? Everyone would say, you're crazy.

There is no way Jesus will stay in this man's house. And of course, that's the point that I'd raised earlier, that Jesus is no respecter of persons. And so he may have been the lowest of the low, but Jesus was going to spend time with him.

And folk, again, he is knocking at the door. Remember the Revelation chapter 3. Behold, I stand at the door and I knock. If any man hear my voice and open to me, I will come into him and dine with him.

And so Jesus was going to dine with Zacchaeus and he was going to stay there. And today he is still knocking at the door of men and women's hearts. He is still knocking at the door of the church and he's saying, please let me in.

Please give me space. Give me time. Spend time with me.

And so I must stay at your house. And so he made haste and he came down and he received him joyfully. He received him joyfully.

Now the theologians like to argue about stuff because they don't get the point mostly. And one of the things they argue about in this passage is that at no stage did Zacchaeus express faith. Because the only basis on which we can be saved is by faith.

And so because he never expressed faith, he never said, I believe on Jesus. He never prayed the sinner's prayer. Well, maybe he was never saved.

Obviously that's absolute nonsense. Because faith without works is dead. Remember that John the Baptist speaks to Israel and he says, bring forth fruit, meat for repentance.

Show your repentance. Show your faith by your works. Now remember, works don't save us.

But you can look at the works and you can say, well, he has evidence of saving faith. And clearly here you see evidence of saving faith as we see he's going to make restitution. He receives Jesus with joy because something is happening.

I'm not going to nitpick at what point was he saved. Was it the point when Jesus looked up? Was it the point when he started coming down? But he's in this crucial hour where Jesus is—crucial minutes really—where he's meeting with Jesus and his unbelief is turning to faith. But when they saw it—and you see this contrast over and over and over—when they saw it, they all complained, saying, he has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.

But the selfishness of people knows no bounds. And in our modern age, we are probably more selfish than ever before. People love to talk about their own stuff.

Having a conversation these days is very hard because it's always one, oh, you want to talk, but what about me talking? You want to tell me about your kids, but what about my kids? You want to tell me about what you've done, but what about what I've done? You see, because we don't care about anyone else. It's just me. And for these guys, for this guy to get saved and now become part of the community of faith, how's that going to make us look? We don't care about anyone else.

That's why we don't preach the gospel anymore. But Jesus has a different attitude. He is looking for those who want him, who need him.

And so they're complaining. He's gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. I haven't counted, but this must be the third or fourth time that we've had this conversation between Jesus and the people, that they complain and say, well, you know, he's eating with publicans and sinners.

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, now, I don't know where this is. Is this still on the road? Is this back in the house now? It doesn't matter. Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Lord, look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor.

And if I've taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore it fourfold. Remember the context. And obviously we must compare Zacchaeus with a rich young ruler.

What did Jesus say to the rich young ruler? Go and sell your stuff, give it to the poor. And he was sorrowful because he was rich and he would not let go of his stuff. But here's Zacchaeus, Jesus didn't

even tell him, Zacchaeus, you need to, you need to get rid of this stuff.

But obviously, because he had met with God, he had met with Jesus that day, something had changed in his heart. Not only had something changed in his heart, but his very being changed. Because what drove this man? What made him who he was? His greed, his ambition for money.

I mean, on what basis do you sell your own people? Because you have some ideological plan that maybe the Romans are better than the Jewish government? Clearly not. Did he become a tax collector because he thought he could help his people that way? Obviously not. There was only one reason he had chosen, and this must have been a hard choice, to become an outcast of his community.

And that was money. That is what drove him. And now he says, I will give almost everything away.

Notice what he says, I will give half of my goods to the poor. So there's 50% gone. The law required if you wanted to be generous, 20%.

He says 50% gone. Of that which is left, if I've taken anything from anyone by false accusation, had he done that? You can be sure of that. I will restore fourfold.

Now the law made provision for restitution that if you stole something and you willingly gave it back, you gave back double. But if you didn't give it back and you got caught, you have to give back four times. So he is following the law.

So now we can try and figure out how much of what he had was ill-gotten gains, and probably the most part. So if he's going to give four times back, how much is going to be left? Not very much. But here's the evidence of a changed heart.

The thing that drove him before does not drive him anymore. The thing that his whole life revolved around was of no importance anymore. There was only one thing and that was Jesus.

Remember the book of Hebrews, but we see Jesus. Folks, so many Christians or those who claim to be Christians say, well, you know, I prayed this in his prayer, I believe. But there's no evidence.

You're still driven by ego, by pride, by a lust for influence, money, desire for pleasure. The list goes on and on and on and on. This story really grips my heart because here's a man who doesn't have the New Testament.

He doesn't understand the technicalities of the gospel. He probably doesn't even understand the cross. In fact, I have no doubt he doesn't understand the cross.

He knows nothing about the resurrection. But when he met with Jesus, he was fundamentally changed. He didn't just put a fish on the back on his letterhead or on the back of his car.

He was a different man. It was clear he had met with Jesus. In fact, that is the power of the gospel.

That is the power of meeting with Jesus. And that is what we need today, is we need people who are drastically and dramatically and powerfully transformed through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The churches are filled with people who joined the church because they like the singing or they like the positive messages of the preacher or whatever.

No, we need people who have met with Jesus and who are prepared to put their money where their mouths are. And I'm not talking about money. I'm just talking about showing evidence of a changed life, evidence of a changed life.

And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house because he is also a son of Abraham. Jesus confirms that he is saved. I'm not going to spend time on this idea of his house, that his house is now saved because of him.

We know that that is not true. We know that you are saved by your own faith, that nobody is saved because of someone else's faith. But salvation comes to that house because the head of the house is now saved and he will preach the gospel and he will pray and he will do what he can to lead his servants and his family to Christ.

But they need to come to him on their own basis. So just dealing with that, unfortunately there's a lot of nonsense that comes out of that idea sometimes. Today salvation has come to this house.

Before I draw to a close, I need to just say a few words on restitution. Restitution is the idea that if you have done something wrong, you have to make right. So if you've taken something from someone, as in the case of Zacchaeus, you have to give it back once you get saved.

There are those who teach a doctrine that Jesus says to him, because he confesses and he says, I'm going to give back, Jesus says salvation has come. So he is saved because he made restitution. Folks, that is heresy.

We are not saved because we make restitution, we're saved because of the cross. We're saved because of what Jesus does for us. So to make a doctrine and say, well, you will not be saved until you make restitution.

No, that is not the point here. Did Matthew cheat people? Yes, he cheated people. Did Matthew make restitution? No, he left everything and he just followed Jesus.

So the point is not restitution, the point is faith in the finished work of the cross of Calvary. This is the only case in all of the gospels that I'm aware of that someone made restitution, made right. Is it wrong to make restitution? No, it's not.

But each one must be directed by the Holy Spirit. Now, if God has spoken to you about doing something and fixing something that you have broken, you better fix it. But there's no law that says because I stole something from the store when I was an unbeliever, I now have to go and give it back.

If that's what you feel you need to do, then do that. But you say, well, God hasn't forgiven me because 50 years ago I stole a candy bar from the store and I never gave it back and now the store's closed. And there are Christians who get themselves in a terrible mess because I stole a candy bar so many years ago and the store's closed.

So what do I do now? I can't fix it. No, I'm not saved because I fixed it. I'm saved because Jesus fixed it at Calvary.

And so, yes, it's important to fix things when you know you need to fix them. And particularly if it is against a brother or a sister. Sometimes we do terrible things to one another.

Oh, no, not in this church, brother. Yeah, right. A man that I knew once was found guilty of stealing a million rands from his employer.

And this is on the court records. The day he was sentenced, he turned around to his employer and he says, God's forgiven me. You need to forgive me also.

And when the court spoke about restitution, he says, no, I've got nothing. It's all in my wife's name. I'm serious.

This is a man who was an elder in one of my churches. God help us. If you defrauded a brother, you better fix it.

If you've done wrong, you better fix it. We're not talking here. Now I'm not talking about what happened before you got saved.

I'm talking about what's happened since you've been saved. And I'm not talking about what's happening in the world. I'm talking about what happens amongst us.

And you say, like that man said, well, God's forgiven me. You've got to forgive me. Yeah, I'll forgive you.

But God keeps a record. And so, folk, we need to make right. But we need to get this thing right.

And so I don't want to spend too much more time because we're going to get off the point. And I don't want you to go home missing the point again, because it all becomes about restitution. No, it's all about seeking him, wanting to see him, wanting to know him.

What is it that's holding you back? Oh, you say, well, you know, I just have these problems. I was born short. I can't help it.

I don't read too well. I have a short attention span. We have every excuse not to see Jesus.

But, folk, there is no excuse. This man found a way around his problem and he got into a tree. And if you want to see Jesus, you will find a way around your handicaps and around the issues and around the stuff that is preventing you from seeing him, and you will get to see him.

And when you get to see him, he will see you. It doesn't matter how bad we are or how good we are. Folk, again, this is not about being rich or poor.

But remember, Jesus said that the rich cannot enter into heaven. It's impossible. It's as easy for a camel to get through the eye of a needle.

But with God, all things are possible. And here's the beauty of the gospel of Luke and of all of Scripture, because here is the practical application of that statement. With God, all things are possible.

And if you asked anyone in the city of Jericho, who's the last guy in the city who'll get saved, they'll say, it's Lazarus. It's a kiss. I don't know how I get back to Lazarus.

It's a kiss. But with God, all things are possible. The most unlikely people can do get saved.

Now, I don't know. You say, well, you know, we're all part of this church. Well, not everybody that's part of the church is necessarily saved.

If you're not, you need to see Jesus. It's no good seeing me. You need to see him.

And if you're saved, you need to see Jesus. And if you have problems, you need to see Jesus. And if you think things are going well in your life, you need to see Jesus.

Because there's only one thing, but we see Jesus. Father, we pray that you'd help us to see him. Lord, that we may not be those who are so busy with doing life that we just never see you.

We hear about you in the preaching. We hear about you sometimes when someone talks about you, but we don't see you for ourselves. Lord, I pray that you'd help us to see you.

And Lord, not to see through our own preconceptions, but to see you the way you are. The Pharisees and the crowd had their preconceived ideas as to what Jesus was and who he was, but they could not see him for who he really was. And Lord, I thank you for those few who saw you and who recognized the Savior of the world.

And so, Lord, I pray that you would touch our hearts. Lord, that you would bring us to a place where we have no desire to see anything else but Jesus. And Lord, that in seeing him, we may be transformed into that same image from one level of glory to another.

We ask this in Jesus' name. And so, Lord, as we come to your table, we pray for your presence, that you would be present amongst us. Lord, that you would bless the remembrance of Jesus.

And Lord, for those who leave us now, I pray that you would go with them and keep them and protect them, and bring us all together again safely in the week, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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