

# (Luke) 46 - Trinity-Zacchaeus

by Ed Miller

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*God's Wonderful Salvation is a miracle of sight and eyesight, and it means a radical transformation in a person's life when they surrender to God.*

**Duration:** 40:54

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:49, Luke 18:1-19, Ephesians 4:28

**Topics:** "Zacchaeus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of salvation as a miracle of sight. He emphasizes that when we trust in the Lord, we receive everything we need, including the gift of Jesus and the promise of heaven. The speaker highlights the story of Zacchaeus as an illustration of God seeking out and saving lost souls. He explains that salvation is a radical and instantaneous transformation that leads to intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Well, let's commit our time unto the Lord. Our Heavenly Father, again, we pause and we ask you to visit us and minister your heart to our hearts. We thank you for every part of the Bible, and in a special way, this morning, we thank you for these chapters in Luke, and we ask you to focus our hearts in a vital way on our Lord Jesus Christ.

We praise you, Lord, for your word and the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts, whoever turns us to the Lord. And so we commit our meditation unto you, and we thank you in advance that you're going to meet with us. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Okay, if you'll turn, please, to the end of Luke, chapter 18. We're continuing our little look at a great Savior in the gospel of Luke.

In our discussion, we've come to chapters 18 and 19, and we're summarizing the teaching ministry of our Lord Jesus. I'm just making sure this tape is on. Okay.

For the past few sessions, we've been summarizing his wonderful salvation. I won't go into all of that review, but in the summary, he shows how his salvation is for children. In the summary, he shows that his salvation is a mighty miracle, and every time he's saved, the camel passes through the eye of the needle.

And when we left off, we were discussing the healing of blind Bartimaeus, and the principle, of course, is that salvation is a miracle of sight. God gives sight, and he illustrates it there. I told you last time that when you trusted the Lord, and when I trusted the Lord, no matter how long ago that was, God gave you everything in that moment, because he gave his son.

I say everything except one thing. You say, well, it's heaven. Well, you even have heaven in the bud, and heaven is no more than what we have now in fully developed form.

But what he gave you was, he gave you Jesus when you trusted him, and what he gives you now is eyesight. That's all he gives. In other words, you have everything except eyes to see it.

And so the only thing you'll get from now until the time you step into heaven is eyesight. And that's why Paul constantly prayed that the eyes of their heart, their understanding, would be open. So we need to ask the Lord to keep showing us what we already have.

We're not going to get anything new. We have it all, but we need to see what we have. We were in chapter 18, verses 35 to 43, and we emphasized these three truths.

If you missed it, Lillian has the tape, and she'll be glad to give it to you. We discussed perseverance in prayer, specificity in prayer, and the place of faith in prayer and in salvation. So I won't discuss that again.

Now before we leave the story of blind Bartimaeus, I want to make two more points out of the facts of this story. Glance, if you would, at Luke 18:35. Luke 18:35, as Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging.

If all you had was Luke's account, you would think that there was only one blind man that Jesus healed in Jericho. But Matthew chapter 9, verse 27, tells us that there were two blind men that cried out for mercy. And so Jesus healed the two blind men.

Now the point I want to make is this. When you come to any truth in the Bible, doesn't matter what that truth is, it can be applied individually, and it can be applied corporately. Now what I mean by that is if you're going through the Bible and you find a promise, and you say, Wow, that really applies to me, singularly.

It also applies to the church, plural. Every truth applies individually and corporately. If you see a promise to the church, you can take that for your own heart.

I can take it for my own heart. So here we have one blind man, but then in the record there's more than one. It's the group.

I call attention to this because of the importance of eyesight. I hope that one thing God does through the story of Bartimaeus is makes me and you more earnest in our prayer for spiritual eyesight. Ask God to give you vision of Christ.

To open your eyes to Him. But then when you're done, then ask God to open the eyes of the church as well. Pray for eyesight for yourself, but then apply it corporately and pray it for the body of Christ as well.

God gives mercy to the individual, but He also gives it to the group. Now more and more as I go on in the Lord, God is teaching me the importance of the body of Christ. Praying corporately and for the whole church of God.

And then in chapter 18, verse 38 and 39, He called out saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Those who led the way were sternly telling Him to be quiet, but He kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. We talked last time the difference between repetition and vain repetition.

This man did not have vain repetition. Every time he cried out for mercy, he meant it. His heart was in that.

It wasn't vain at all. Luke doesn't tell us this, but Mark does. Listen as I quote Mark.

Mark 10, 49. And Jesus stood still and said, Call him. And they called the blind man saying, Be of good cheer.

Lie, for he calls for you. Sometimes we read these things la, la, la, and we don't enter in. Now picture the blind man sitting on the side of the road begging and crying out for mercy.

And then somebody comes over and says, Be of good cheer. Arise, he is calling for you. It's hard to imagine the joy, but Mark says, Mark 10, 50.

And he, casting away his garment, sprang to his feet and came to Jesus. Now what excitement that is, just jumping up and running to the Lord. You see, he'd been calling out to Jesus.

Mercy, mercy, have mercy on me. And all of a sudden he turned around and Jesus was calling for him. It's a wonderful thing when the cry of mercy reaches the heart of mercy, the compassion that the Lord has.

The reason I'm calling attention to this is not only because the last begging this man ever did was here at the door of mercy, but I don't want to leave this story without emphasizing this is one of the two prayers that God always answers. The prayer for eyesight. The other prayer that God always answers, first one he answers without fail and without delay, and that's the prayer to be forgiven.

God promises he will never delay the answer to that prayer. Sometimes you pray, you have to wait a long time, and you don't know what God is doing, and sometimes even years people have prayed for something. But anytime anyone asks for forgiveness, they have it on the spot, automatically, immediately.

The other prayer that God may delay but he'll never deny is the prayer for eyesight. When you cry out for mercy, for eyes to see, to enter into all that you have, God will never deny that prayer. And that's wonderfully illustrated here.

I'm sure there's more things to say about Bartimaeus, but we'll leave it there. That brings us to chapter 19, verses 1 to 10. This is sort of the picture summary of God's wonderful salvation.

After he shows us that it's for children, and that it's a mighty miracle, and that it's a miracle of eyesight, he gives us an object lesson story to wrap it all up and to clinch it. And it's that wonderful story of Zacchaeus climbing up in the tree. Follow along, we'll read from verse 1. And he entered and was passing through Jericho, and behold a man named Zacchaeus.

And he was a chief publican and was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, who he was. He could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature.

And he ran on before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, he's gone to lodge with a man that's a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.

Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost. Before I show you how this is a summary of God's wonderful salvation, let me say a few things about Zacchaeus.

Some people think that he might have been a Gentile, but I think the record is clear. He was a Jew. He has a Jewish name, and he's called the Son of Abraham.

Now there's another way to take that, and we'll look at that at the end. In chapter 19-2, Behold, a man called by the name Zacchaeus, he was a chief publican, and he was wealthy. He was rich.

Again, we sort of read that la-la-la, but when God wrote the Bible, he put it in the order. It's not in chronological order. It's in logical order, because he's telling the story of redemption.

And we just studied in chapter 18 about a rich man. We had a different ending to that story. In chapter 18-23, that rich man became very sad.

He was extremely rich. He walked away from Jesus. He missed God's salvation.

But this is the story of another rich man, Zacchaeus. This is the man like the camel who passed through the needle's eye. Salvation's a miracle for everyone, for the poor and the rich alike.

Now listen to 1 Corinthians 1-25. As he describes those who come to the Lord, he says, Not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty. But he doesn't say not any.

He says not many. And that M has opened the door of heaven for many, many people. And Zacchaeus is one of those rich people.

A rich young ruler missed salvation, but Zacchaeus is the story of a rich man who found God's salvation. In verse 2, he's not only called a rich man, but he's called a chief tax collector, or publican. When we studied the story of the proud Pharisee and the humble publican, I told you why those tax collectors were so despised.

They were really extortioners. And they had to buy their job. And they paid big money.

They were thieves. And of course, if this was a Jew working for the Roman government, you can see why the Jews hated him. Because they were like traitors.

Usually people try to get close to rich people. I'm not saying that's good. I'm just saying that's fat.

People try to warm up to the fat wallet. But this publican was rich, but nobody tried to get near him. He was hated.

Nobody liked the tax collector. And even though he was rich, the Jews were sort of shocked when Jesus started hobnobbing with the publicans and the sinners. And they got all upset about that.

It was shocking to the Pharisees because these publicans were untouchable. You see, Zacchaeus was not only very rich and a tax collector, but verse 2 says he was the chief tax collector. In other words, he

was a little man, but he was a big shot.

He was top brass. We read about Matthew, who was a tax collector, in the same area. You see, Matthew worked for Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was his boss. He was the chief tax collector. It's interesting, nobody else in the New Testament is called chief tax collector.

Only Zacchaeus. And this little guy was heading it all up. He was the boss of everybody.

Now this is such a graphic story. You know, every Sunday school child loves this story of Zacchaeus and all the songs that are written about this little man in the tree. And one reason it's so wonderful is because it's a summary of God's wonderful salvation.

I want to go through and point out several principles how the conversion of Zacchaeus, this chief tax collector, illustrates the truth of God's salvation. I want to point out three wonderful truths that are illustrated by this story. The first truth can be summarized in these words.

Salvation is God seeking man. Not man seeking God. See, when you read the first nine verses, you get the idea Zacchaeus is the seeker.

He's the one that's come out to seek Jesus. Verse 3. He sought to see Jesus. He could not for the crowd because he was little.

He ran on before, climbed into a sycamore tree to see Him. So he's trying to seek Jesus. But notice how Luke ends the story in verse 10.

For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. You say, how in the world does that fit in? It looks like Zacchaeus is the seeker, but when it's all over, he says, For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save. If you can recall way back, 19 chapters ago, when we introduced the book, we chose verse 10 as the key verse for the entire book of Luke.

This simple truth. This verse is made up of all monosyllables. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.

How simple can you get? And that's the summary of the whole book of Luke. Now let me show you how the story illustrates God as the seeker rather than man. Now try to enter into my imagination with me.

Picture Zacchaeus waking up one morning saying, ah, this is a nice day. I think I'll seek the Lord today. And his wife says, how are you going to do that? He said, I'll just go climb a tree.

It wouldn't work because how would he know what tree to climb? You can climb trees all day long and not see the Lord. Verse 4 is the key. He ran on before and climbed into a sycamore tree for he was to pass that way.

Underscore that last part. He was to pass that way. How did he know what tree to climb? And the answer is somehow he got the itinerary of Jesus.

Zacchaeus received the intelligence that Jesus was going to come down his road. That's how he knew what tree to climb. Because he knew what road it was.

He didn't climb any tree. He climbed the tree that was on the route that Jesus was taking. If Jesus wasn't coming down that road, it would have been futile to climb any tree.

You see, it sheds light on the meaning of what it means to seek the Lord. What does it mean to seek the Lord? It means to respond to Him seeking you. God is always previous.

He's always first. In the beginning God. Whether it's nature or grace, in the beginning God.

After Adam sinned, he wasn't seeking the Lord. He was hiding behind the fig tree in the bushes. And it was God who came saying, Adam where are you? God is the seeker.

And when He seeks us, we respond to Him. Let me tie it into the facts of the story. When we learn it's God coming down our street.

Then sometime we respond and begin to seek Him. I've seen it over and over in the lives of men and women. They live selfishly from day to day.

Never have a thought about the Lord. Never think about God. And then all of a sudden something happens in their life.

Maybe they lose a job or maybe they get a scary doctor's report or maybe the kids act up or something goes wrong. And all of a sudden they say, I think I'll seek the Lord. You know why they decide to seek the Lord? Because they saw God coming down their street.

That's why. When you know He's coming down the street, then you begin to climb the tree. You don't seek first.

God always comes first. He always initiates. Now we don't always see it.

He's always coming down our street. He's always passing by but sometimes we don't see it. But when we do recognize His hand, His steps, then we respond.

That's what it means to seek. It means to respond. So Jesus first came down His street and then He responded to that and began to seek.

Look at verse 3 and 4 please. It says that Zacchaeus, because he was short, climbs up into the tree. He couldn't see over the heads of the crowd.

No doubt that's true. I think that's why he climbed the tree. He was a little man.

But I see more in it than that. Don't forget, he was a chief tax collector and very rich. I think it was more than curiosity that sent him up the tree.

I think it was also hunger of heart. I have six children. When they were young and growing up, there was something in common with all of them.

They loved to run and they loved to climb trees. I think all kids do that. They just like to run and like to climb trees.

You know, when I see this, here's this little man. Don't forget, in society, even though he wasn't well liked by the Jews, he was a big one. He was a rich tax collector.

He was the chief. And to picture this man running down the street and climbing up a tree in my mind is a very childlike thing to do. And I think it was an indication of something deeper in his heart.

That he was willing to do that unsophisticated thing. Run down the road and climb up a tree after the Lord stopped at his tree. How precious is that? The Lord stopped at our tree and then called him by name.

That must have surprised him. That kid come down from the tree and then invite himself to his home. That's the only time in the whole gospel record, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, that Jesus ever invited himself to anybody's home.

He never refused an invitation, but he never invited himself. But this time he did. What a privilege he gave to this man.

And Zacchaeus is still responding. In verse 6, he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. Jesus is still initiating and he's still responding.

And he comes down in response to the invitation. So that's the first truth that I see in this story. Salvation is God speaking of.

And then we seek him in response. He comes down our road and we recognize that it's him. And when we recognize that it's him, then we start to seek him.

And then he keeps initiating and we keep responding. And that's what the Christian life is. God comes down our road and we respond.

And then he comes to our house. It's just a wonderful picture. There's a second principle of salvation illustrated in the conversion of Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector.

And it can be summarized in these words. Salvation means a radical transformation. A radical change.

One man climbed up the tree. A different man came down. What a change in his life.

He didn't expect it. That's another illustration of what can a day bring forth. When he woke up in the morning, he never believed what would have happened to him on that day.

It's startling to read verse 2 which says he was a rich man. And then verse 8. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, the old Lord, half my goods I give to the poor. And if I have wrongfully exacted all of any man, I restore it fourfold.

Once again, get the impact of it. We don't know how rich he was. But in a moment of time, he was half that rich.

I'm going to give half of everything I have to the poor. And then out of the other half, if I've stolen anything from anybody, I'm going to pay back four times as much. It's a wonderful illustration, I think, of how much greater the law is than grace.

Or rather the other way around. How much greater, boy, check me on that. Call me heretic when I do that.

How much greater the grace is than the law. Listen to the law. This is Leviticus 6, 5. If in anything he has sworn falsely, he shall restore it in full, and shall add a fifth part unto it.

The law says if you stole something, you've got to return it plus one-fifth. In other words, twenty percent. If I stole a thousand dollars from you, then I'd have to return the thousand dollars plus two hundred dollars.

Because that's what the law says. And I'll say on the level of earth, that was tough to do. Just to keep the legal side.

But look at this man. Look at grace. He said if I've taken anything from anybody, I'm going to restore it three hundred percent.

In other words, I'll return what I took. A thousand dollars, and I'll give him another three thousand dollars. That's the change that took place in this man's life.

Sometimes I have to smile when Christians get hung up on tithing. And they'll ask the question, you know, ten percent, that's what the law requires. When a person surrenders to the Lord, the tithe is a joke.

And you know what I mean by that. When you've given yourself to the Lord, everything belongs to Him. And it just comes out automatically.

And it's so much greater than the ten percent. Before the conversion of Zacchaeus, we read he was a rich man. I wonder how rich he was that night when he went to bed after this marvelous experience.

Half of my goods I give to the poor, and I'm going to pay four times as much to anybody that I've cheated along the way. Well, you see how it illustrates the radical transformation. He went up to the tree worldly rich, and he came down heavenly rich.

He came down with heavenly treasure. Now don't forget the crowd is enormous. That's why he climbed the tree in the first place.

He can't see. There's a parade of people. And he's trying to see.

And as he comes down, they're walking towards Zacchaeus' house. And the people are grumbling. Jericho, by the way, in the Old Testament, Jericho was set aside as one of the cities of the priests.

There were six cities belonging to the priests. And so they were full of priests. And when Jesus said, I'm going to come to your house, it's not like he didn't have anywhere else to go.

And they were offended by that because there were so many places he could have gone. I wonder how the crowd felt when he made his confession. Now I know he was talking to the Lord.

Lord, if I've wronged anybody, I'll be paid fourfold. But you better believe they were listening. And they were all ears when he made that comment.

Four times as much. Now he really put himself on the spot with his mouth and that public confession. Because that public confession made it next to impossible for him to back out because he had said it and everybody heard that he was going to do it.

And I'll bet you there was a bunch of people giving him a list of names and addresses and phone numbers. And the thing that makes this so wonderful is Jesus never commanded him to give a penny. He just met the Lord and did it automatically.

It was the overflowing by the way in verse 10. I've come to seek and save the law. He was lost.

And like the prodigal, now he's found. One other observation about this. The change was not only radical. It was instantaneous. It happened all at once. Sometime I chat with folks who are involved in habits in their life.

And they're just wanting God to break the habit you know and gradually be cleansed. And there is a gradual aspect. Sometimes things take time.

But not when it's something that there is an objective truth. Stealing is objectively wrong. Imagine if he said, here's my testimony.

I want to praise God. I used to steal a thousand dollars a week. And now I'm down to five hundred.

And I want you to praise God with me. And by next month I hope I'm only stealing. Ephesians 4.28 says let him that stole steal no more.

It's over. It's done when you meet the Lord. And that would apply to many other things.

Let him that swore swear no more. It changes the life radically. So salvation is God seeking man.

It's also a wonderful radical instantaneous transformation. And the third observation is this. That real salvation is intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you notice verse 5 and 6? Jesus came to the place and looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus make haste. Come down. Today I must abide at thy house.

He made haste and came down and received him joyfully. And when the crowd saw it, verse 7, they grumbled. They said, he's gone to be the guest of a man who's a sinner.

By the way, it must have meant a lot to this man. Don't forget, he's hated. He's friendless.

And Jesus becomes his friend. And publicly and stands within when everyone else is rejected. But the crowd was wrong.

The crowd said in verse 7, he's gone to be the guest of a man who's a sinner. The reality is he went to be the host of the man who's a sinner. He doesn't come in as guest.

He comes in as host. He's always washing man's feet. He's always preparing before us a table in the presence of our enemies.

This idea of eating in the Bible, sitting down at the table and eating is God's divine illustration of fellowship with God. And when you read the Old Testament, you see a place where they had to burn the sacrifice. Well, why did they burn it? What does that mean? Well, in the book of Leviticus, it explains it.

When you burn it, now don't forget God's a spirit. When you burn it, the Bible says that's God eating it. God is eating it.

That's the part that's burned. And so in some of the sacrifices, the priests would feed some, and then they'd give some to the people to eat, and then they'd burn some. And it's a picture of everybody sitting at the table feasting together.

It's just eating with the Lord and sitting down. In Revelation 3.20, we have this wonderful verse, and I'm sure you've heard it before. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, sup with him, and he with me. Over and over in the Bible, this idea of sitting around the table is a picture of intimate fellowship. And so when Zacchaeus met the Lord and Jesus stopped at his tree, he said, I want to come down, I want to go to your house, and I want to fellowship with you.

Now notice verse 9. Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house. Well, what house are they talking about? You see, try to picture it. They're on their way to his domicile.

They're on their way to his house, but they didn't arrive yet. And on the way, they stop. And Zacchaeus gives his great public confession, I'll give four times as much if I've wronged anybody.

And it was at that point that Jesus said, today salvation has come to this house. This house? They weren't at the house yet. They were just a little bit past the tree.

They were still walking. What house is it? And the answer is this house. He looked at Zacchaeus and he said, salvation has come to this house.

And it was Zacchaeus himself. Now they're going to go to his house in order to illustrate it. But that's just the picture.

The reality is the Lord comes into this house, Zacchaeus himself. Verse 9 calls him a son of Abraham. I'm not sure, as I said, whether or not he was Jewish.

I think he was because his name is a Jewish name. Whether he was a blood son of Abraham is not crystal clear. Let's assume he was.

When he climbed the tree, he was a fleshly Jew. But listen to Romans 9.6. Romans 9.6 says, they are not all Israel who are of Israel. Just because you're a Jew doesn't mean you're a heart Jew.

Who's a heart Jew? Listen to Galatians 3.29 and we'll close with it. Galatians 3.29. If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's. See, that's one of the things that bothered the Jews so much.

See, they hated the Gentiles. Oh, how they hated the Gentiles. They called the Gentiles dogs.

They just hated the Gentiles. And Jesus constantly said this, that the Gentile who believes in Christ is a spiritual Jew. And the Jew who doesn't believe in Christ is a spiritual Gentile.

And they hated it when Jesus called them Gentiles and called the Gentiles Jew. The same thing was true. Remember that Seraphimician woman? The only time Jesus crossed the line and went over into Gentile territory.

And this is the woman, remember, with the crumbs from the master's table. Do you remember her? And the disciples scratched their heads. And they said, why are you going to the Gentiles? I thought you were to go to the Jews.

And he said, I do. I only go to the Jews. And since I came to her, she must be a Jew.

A spiritual Jew. And so anybody who trusts in the Lord are spiritual Jews. And anyone who doesn't are Gentiles.

Anyway, let me just summarize. Zacchaeus illustrates God's wonderful salvation in at least these three ways. God is the seeker.

We're responders. Salvation means a transformation in my life. And finally, salvation is intimate fellowship with Christ himself.

It's sitting at the table with God. God coming. Well, we've closed there.

Comments or questions? Yeah? That's why we need eyesight. Well, let's bow. Father, we thank you for your wonderful salvation.

Thank you for coming down our road. For enabling us to respond to you. Thank you for stopping at our tree.

Thank you for calling our name. Thank you for changing our life. Thank you for coming to our house.

Sitting at our table. Lord, we adore you for your wonderful salvation. Bring us back again, we pray, that we might see you again in your precious Word.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, even though these calendars don't have marks, we will meet next week.

That's on the other calendar.

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