

Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

SSBC Luke Bible Study #71

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Luke 19:1-10

Sermon Date: Jan 28, 2007

Climbed any Trees Lately?

I used to love to climb the big maple tree in our backyard on Landview Drive. I could disappear into my own world up there. I'd dream of great adventures. In the summer the canopy of maple leaves made it a private haven. In the spring you could see out into the neighborhood or watch the planes create contrail pathways in the sky. But I don't climb trees or do other youthfully adventurous stuff so much anymore. Some of this may be wisdom (I'm not so agile anymore, and I'm a 'little' heavier these days).

Yet God still calls me – and you – to be willing to be a bit radical now and then. Radical ... about turning our lives over to his control. ... about being willing to drop whatever it is we'd rather hold onto in order to follow him. ... about helping him reach out to lost loved ones who haven't yet experienced the joy of knowing Jesus Christ.

Would you like to join Zacchaeus for a childlike climb up a tree to a vantage point where you can see Jesus better and experience his invitation to come be with him? It's rather easy. First, simply ask God for help. Then open your Bible to Luke 19. The view up here is awesome!

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studieditor@southshorebaptist.com

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Bible Study:

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p>¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.</p> <p>⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.</p> <p>⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"</p> <p>⁸ 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."</p> <p>⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."</p>	

2. Compare and contrast Zacchaeus' interaction with Jesus and his commitments in Luke 19:8 with the rich young ruler's interaction with Jesus (Luke 18:18-30) and his response to Jesus' request (Mark 10:22).

- a. What similarities do you see?

- b. What differences do you notice?

- c. What does the principle Jesus explains in Luke 18:24-27 about the improbability of a wealthy man entering God's kingdom tell us about who gets the credit for Zacchaeus' conversion?

3. What parallels do you see between Zacchaeus' sudden generosity in Luke 19:8 and the behavior of the men in Jesus' parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (Matthew 13:44-46). How valuable is a "ticket" to enter God's kingdom, to receive salvation, to gain eternal life?

4. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from page 2 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

5. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

Climb a Little Higher:

6. How would you feel if you were in a crowd through which Jesus was passing, and saw a short, wealthy, allegedly dishonest man who had climbed up a tree to see over a crowd as Jesus passed by? What would you think and feel if you then saw Jesus call up to him and ask to stay in his house?

7. Wealthy men in the first century did not run in public, and certainly wouldn't be seen climbing a tree to see over a crowd.

a. Why do you think Zacchaeus did this?

b. What is the most radical thing you have done to try to get closer to Christ or respond to his invitation?

c. What is Jesus calling you to do these days? Reflect on the nature of Zacchaeus' initiatives and actions, and then consider how you might similarly glorify God by seeking him or responding to him a bit radically.

8.a. What is repentance, and what does God say about it? (explore Jer 15:19-21, Mt 4:17, Lk 5:32, 13:3, Acts 2:38, 17:30, 26:20)

b. Do you see Zacchaeus' commitments in verse 19:8 as acts of repentance? Why do you think he made such radical commitments so quickly? Do you think he was genuine in this? Why?

c. What has been your personal experience with repenting? What next step of repentance do you think you should take? Is there any reason not to take that step right now?

9. Why do you think Jesus says of Zacchaeus that "this man, too, is a son of Abraham"? What does this imply? (consider Gal 3:26-29)

10. What mission did Jesus come to accomplish?
(review Ezk 34:6,11, Luke 15:5, 19:10)

11. What would it look like for you to position yourself to be found by Jesus? Are there any ways in which you are trying to do the opposite – to hide from him? What (perhaps a bit radical) step could you take this week to “run and climb a tree” so you can better see and encounter Jesus?

12. Imagine Jesus calling out to you in a tree, or declaring your salvation (try putting your name in the place of Zacchaeus’ in the two verses below).

“_____, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

“Today salvation has come to this house, because _____, too, is a son (daughter) of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

As you close this time of study and reflection, ask God to help you to seek Christ more radically, to help you repent more thoroughly, to help you hear and respond to Christ’s invitation to walk beside him toward Jerusalem and into eternal life with his Father.