

Found | Luke 19:1-10

Jesus comes to seek and save the lost so that sinners may enter joyfully into God's kingdom.

Self-made

For most of us a large portion of our lives goes into being self-made. There's always someone, or something, telling us we should be smarter, richer, fitter, free-er, more popular, more beautiful, more successful, or just...more!

For me, it's not the latest iphone, or skills around the home. Reality TV shows where ordinary people become heroes don't do it for me.

But I will take a look at the shiny set of wheels driving past. The Audi A5 3 litre turbo with 18" 5 spoke alloys. The driver who looks like they've done alright for themselves. I'm jealous for a moment that they're about 30 years younger than me and already appear self-made.

We've all read the jacket covers on motivational books that promise we can be more than we currently are.

And then we come to the bible. It's not silent either. Full of appeals to take action in our lives which, which it must be admitted, are about improvement.

And we call this God's making. But sometimes it's hard to know the difference.

What happens when a self-made man meets the man who can make of people what God wants them to be? That's the question Luke 19 raises for us today.

What happens when self-made man meets the man who can make of people who God wants them to be? Salvation comes to their house.

Let me summarise this passage in two parts. The seeking Jesus. Vv 1-7. The saving Jesus. Vv 8-10.

The Seeking Jesus (vv 1-7)

I was tempted to call this first point 'The Seeking Zacchaeus'. I think that would be true, but the text suggests that it's Jesus' seeking we are meant to note.

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In v 1 Jesus is the one passing through Jericho. He's on the way to Jerusalem, the destiny set before him according to God's divine purpose. Luke 9:51.

In V 5 Jesus is the one who looks up and addresses Zacchaeus. As if he knew he was there all along. He may be passing through Jericho, but he 'must' stay at Zacchaeus' house today. There is divine purpose in the stop along his journey.

The surprise in this passage is that the self-made Zacchaeus is not self-absorbed.

Self-made. V 2: a tax-collector. Wealthy. Despised by others because of his occupation and dealings. V 8 tells us cheating. Achieving for himself at the expense of others. Nothing much has changed since Zacchaeus' day.

Being self-made carries at least two risks. Firstly, it makes us self-righteous.

It's possibly on the same page in your bible, Jesus shares the parable of the praying Pharisee. Verse 11 of Luke 18:

“The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

This self-promotion of this prayer seems almost comic. Thank goodness it's just a parable. We'd never be like that!

Being self-made is not just a private activity. It makes you self-righteous. If only everyone else in the world was a little more like me, things would be much better.

Luke is clearly wanting to unsettle us on this question of being self-made.

Because here is the second thing being self-made does to us. It makes us blind to the grace of God.

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The account of the rich ruler follows that of the praying Pharisee. Look at how religious he is. The rich ruler keeps the commandments. Apparently since he was a boy.

Jesus says one thing he still lacks. He should sell all he has and give it to the poor. This is a man who needs radical spiritual surgery.

He goes away, verse 23, very sad. He is a man of great wealth. The self-made man. Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter God's kingdom.

Are you blind to the grace of God in Jesus Christ? The seeking Jesus.

The crowd prevents Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus. Then in v 7 they mutter and question why he would want to have a meal with a "sinner".

That's what self-made people do. Stop others from seeing Jesus. They have decided "in their own eyes" who does and doesn't receive approval before God.

Note the seeking Jesus. Luke says in chapter 18 and v 16 he welcomes us into his kingdom as little children. Not as if we are to be childish. But because the little children haven't had the chance to be self-makers.

They're not going to come to God with their qualifications and careers and competencies, as if he will be impressed. They must live by grace. Usually the grace of their parents above all else.

Are you blind to the grace of God? Jesus grants mercy to the blind man, v 42, of Luke 18, because even without his sight, he's recognized who he should look for.

The not-so-self-absorbed Zacchaeus climbs a tree to look over the crowds.

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.

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How's Jesus' form? He's not self-made, just self-inviting? This visit is one of great necessity. 'I 'must' stay at your house today.'

Jesus is seeking 'today'. 'Today' is mentioned two other important times in Luke's Gospel. The angels declare "Today, in the town of David, a Saviour has been born to you" in chapter 2.

Towards the end of Luke's Gospel Jesus promises the criminal on the cross, "Today, you will be with me in Paradise."

In our passage today Jesus mentions 'today' twice. V 5, and again in v 10.

Today, I must come to your house. Because, today, salvation will come to this house. The age of salvation has come into the world, into this house, into the life of this man.

'Today' is the age of salvation. Have you met the seeking Jesus?

The Saving Jesus (vv 8-10)

Because, secondly, the seeking Jesus is the saving Jesus.

Zacchaeus gives his testimony in v 8. *"I recognize that Jesus' death was for me, and as a sinner in need of forgiveness I repent and accept that God's Son has taken the punishment I deserve, so that I might no longer be under God's judgment."*

No he doesn't, does he? What does he say?

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."

Some say this means that real Christians are only known by their good deeds. And they would be half right.

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This is a life-changing transformation that only God's grace could deliver. Half his possessions to the poor. Four-times back to those he has cheated. Not too many people get that these days!

The point of the passage is not what Zacchaeus does, though that is the fruit of God's transforming work in his life.

The point of the passage is v 10. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. The Son of Man comes to save self-making man. The seeking Jesus is the saving Jesus.

What happens when self-made man meets the man who can make of people who God wants them to be? Salvation comes to their house.

And whether you recognize this, or are still resisting, the offer is the same. Today, salvation can come to your house!

A salvation dates back to God's promises to Abraham. V 9. As old as the hills yet as fresh as the fruit of the vine. Zacchaeus was gifted the life promised to all peoples through God's servant Abraham, as we heard about in our previous series in Genesis.

Life doesn't come through being self-made. It's comes through God keeping his promises.

Everything written about the Son of Man will be fulfilled, says Luke in v 31 of chapter 18. He will be delivered over to be crucified. Mocked. Insulted. Spat upon. Flogged and killed. And on the third day he will rise again.

If you truly want to discover the self-made life look at Jesus. He had everything. Philippians 2 even tells us he was 'actually' equal with God. Whereas we just think we are.

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Yet he gave up all that he had and humbled himself to death on a cross. And God raised him up and made him the Lord of Heaven and Earth. The exalted Son of God and Son of Man now seated on the throne.

Jesus makes you into the person God wants you to be. By his forgiveness and restoration. He enters your life to invite you into his home. For eternity.

That's when all you have made of your life gives way to the gift of salvation God generously grants you. A child of God. An inheritor with God's people of the Kingdom of God. V 10:

For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost.

Shouldn't it be 'who' was lost? Luke uses the collective. The self-made are a common group. That we all belong to. Our plans and purposes are at odds with what the Lord of Heaven and earth has in mind.

We've become blind to the grace of God. Jesus says I must come to your house today.

Has he come to yours? If you haven't seen Jesus for who he is, then this is a great day to see what he wants you to see. His salvation.

Perhaps you're worried about what other people will think when they find out Jesus has come to your house? This does not compare with the joy that is life with him.

God grants life-changing and life-lasting mercy. Lasting fellowship and eternal friendship.

If you're a son or daughter of Abraham here today, here are two things I have learnt from these ten verses – there probably should be ten, but here are two.

Firstly, no one is more entitled to entry into God's kingdom than anyone else. All of us are there by grace, and it will always be by grace. Beware the mutterers of

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v 7. They blocked Zacchaeus' view. Make sure you're not impairing others' view of Jesus through a self-made life.

Secondly, rejoice in the fruit of repentance. In the changes you have seen in your life that only God could bring about.

The reminder that wealth won't do it for you. Knowing and keeping all the commandments is not enough. Even self-pointing prayers can be a risk.

It's very easy for us to look at others and complain that they should change. Because that requires no change for us.

Jesus should always be the honoured guest we desire to serve. Let him keep making us. By His Spirit let him keep rescuing us from the desire to be self-made.

We don't have to climb trees to meet Jesus. We don't have to cry out from the crowd. We aren't required to stand on street corners and pray out loud.

Today, Jesus comes to seek and save the lost so that by God's making, sinners may joyfully enter into life in God's kingdom.

Today, capture the joy.