

Getting A Heart Transplant

Luke 19:1-10

- I. Sometimes I think that the worst thing that can happen to a Bible story is that we make a children's song out of it.
 - a. We have a great Old Testament story about a man who leaves his home because God promises him he will be the father of many nations and we reduce it to ... "Father Abraham."
 - b. We have this great story in Luke 19 about someone so excited to see Jesus that he climbs a tree just to get a peak and it becomes ... "Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he."
 - c. Here's the story – Luke 19:1-10.
- II. I want you to hear this story again today through older eyes and through a younger heart.
 - a. Older eyes – hear this through the lens of your experience, with ears that can get behind the details and understand the motivations.
 - b. Younger heart – that part of you that hasn't given up on your lifelong dreams, that hasn't been completed hardened by life, that still yearns for something more.
- III. Both will tell you that what I'm about to say is true.
 - a. God has the power to touch your heart and turn your life around.
 - b. God can give you a new start, a new chance, a new you, a new lease on life.
 - c. It's like getting a brand new heart.
 - i. It happened for Zacchaeus, it's happened for me and for many others.
 - ii. It can happen for you!
- IV. And ... it's free. It won't cost you a thing. There's nothing you can do to earn it.
 - a. God's motivated by love – God wants us to be who we were created to be.
 - b. But in order for a heart transplant to happen, three things have to converge.
 - i. Seize the moment.
 - ii. Sense God's grace.
 - iii. Send God thanks.
- V. You must have the courage to seize the moment.
 - a. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus –
 - i. The crowd waiting to see Jesus pass as he walked through Jericho was huge.
 - ii. Everywhere Jesus went he attracted a lot of attention.
 1. People wanted to be healed.
 2. People wanted to see what all the noise was about.
 3. Then as now, people wanted a little entertainment.
 - b. Zacchaeus was a rich man – a wealthy tax collector.
 - i. Tax collection – a little for the Romans, a little for the tax collector.
 - ii. Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector – rich man.

- c. Here is a man of some social standing, some recognizable wealth who wanted to see Jesus so badly that he climbed a tree.
- d. This is seizing the moment.
 - i. He puts his station aside – he puts his wealth aside.
 - ii. He knows he’s going to get one shot – and he takes it.
 - iii. He was determined, no matter what, to see Jesus.
- e. As a result, Zacchaeus came out of the tree transformed.
 - i. He went up the tree a chief tax collector – a man lost to himself.
 - ii. He came down ready to pay back any one he had cheated and to give half his money to the poor.
- f. What about you – ready for a heart transplant?
 - i. Are you ready to say “Lord, I want a heart transplant?”
 - 1. Have you always known there was something missing, but weren’t sure where to look for it?
 - 2. Look no more, you’ve found it. This is the place ...
 - 3. Accept no substitutes .. There’s a lot of substitutes.
 - ii. Are you at the place where you recognize this was not the destination you had in mind?
 - 1. Can you give Jesus the wheel?
 - 2. Can you admit that someone else might have a better plan than yours?
 - iii. Don’t put it off – seize the moment.
 - 1. Get your heart transplant today.

VI. You must be able to sense God’s grace.

- a. You find it in Jesus ...
 - i. 1 John 4:9-10 puts it better than I can ... “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: Not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”
 - ii. In Ephesians 2:8-9 ... “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not of works so that no one can boast.”
- b. Love like that is hard to understand.
 - i. A love that gives and keeps on giving – regardless of whether the one that is “loved” deserves it.
 - ii. It’s a love that only God can give – it’s a love that God has perfected.
- c. And its’ this kind of love that has life-changing power.
 - i. It changed Zacchaeus’ life – turned him from a greedy, corrupt politician into a repentant servant of the poor.
 - ii. He invited Jesus into his house.
- d. In the early days of the Salvation Army, a young man named Alexander was made treasurer of the Army. William Booth, who was the founder, and his wife Catherine, dearly loved Alexander. They trusted him and treated him like a son. Little by little, Alexander began taking money from the treasury. He took more and more until finally he was caught, arrested, and sent to jail. The Booths still loved Alexander. They visited him in prison, wrote him

letters weekly, and prayed for him every day. He was so touched by their gracious spirit that he became penitent and remorseful, and he asked for their forgiveness. On the morning Alexander was released from jail, Mrs. Booth was waiting outside the front gate of the prison with a little thermos of tea. She invited Alexander to sit down on a nearby bench, and poured him a cup of tea. "Alexander," she said, "I have something here more than tea." She reached into her purse and pulled out a moneybag. "General Booth and I want you to come back to the Salvation Army and help us," she said to him. "And we want you to begin your duties as our treasurer this very morning."

- e. Can you love like that? God can and does. We call it grace.
 - i. That's the way God forgives us!
 - ii. God's offering that kind of love and forgiveness to you and I right now, but we have to sense it at work and accept it.
 - iii. We have to seize the moment and sense God's grace.
- VII. You will spend the rest of your life sending God thanks.
 - a. For apprentices to Jesus, thanksgiving becomes a way of life.
 - b. Thanksgiving pervades everything you do, day in and day out.
 - i. Thanksgiving is powered by gratitude.
 - 1. Gratitude is the ongoing recognition of God's love for us.
 - 2. Gratitude is the ongoing awareness of God's generosity with us.
 - ii. Can you imagine how Zacchaeus reacted when Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."
 - 1. He knew his name.
 - 2. "I must ..."
 - c. In those two statements, Zacchaeus felt valued, accepted, and needed.
 - d. God wants you to feel that we too.
 - i. We have a God who loves us and cares for us.
 - ii. That is cause for a lifetime of thanksgiving.
- VIII. If you're like Zacchaeus and you're curious, you'd like to see Jesus.
 - a. I have good news; he's coming through Frederick today.
 - b. I'm asking you to seize this moment and come find him.
 - i. He wants to be found.
 - ii. He already knows your name.
 - c. I'm asking you to sense his presence at work.
 - i. That pull that you're feeling in your heart – that's God telling you he's here.
 - ii. That yearning that's suddenly grown stronger – for something better, something more valuable, something more beautiful – that's God showing you that you have a purpose.
 - d. You can sense his presence. So seize the moment.
 - i. You'll spend the rest of your life thanking God that you did.