

Luke Chapter 19

Luke 19:1 "And [Jesus] entered and passed through Jericho."

Jericho was a town with much history.

When Joshua was headed for the Promised Land, this city's fortified walls fell down before them.

Jericho has been remembered for that event.

Some historians must remember Jericho for the miracles Jesus did here, as well.

Luke 19:2 "And, behold, [there was] a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich."

“Chief among the publicans”:

Zaccheus probably oversaw a large tax district, and had other tax collectors working for him.

Jericho alone was a prosperous trading center, so it is certain that Zaccheus was wealthy man.

It is striking to note that only a chapter earlier, Luke records the account of the rich young ruler, and Jesus’ statement about “how hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God” (18:24).

Here Jesus demonstrates that with God, nothing is impossible (18:27).

Luke is the only one of the writers that does tell us of this rich, little man who had been a collector of taxes.

Tax collectors were hated among the Israelites.

He had gained great wealth perhaps from tax collecting.

Luke 19:3 "And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature."

“The press”:

Christ was probably traveling with a large entourage of pilgrims to the Passover in Jerusalem.

But “the crowd” (press), apparently refers to people in Jericho who lined the street to see Him pass through.

They had undoubtedly heard about the recent raising of Lazarus in Bethany, less than 15 miles away (John 11).

That, combined with His fame as a healer and teacher, stirred the entire city when word arrived that He was coming.

It seems the multitude that followed Jesus prevented this small man from seeing Jesus.

He had heard of His fame and wanted to see Him.

Luke 19:4 "And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that [way]."

“Sycamore tree”:

A sturdy tree with low, spreading branches.

A small person could get out on a limb and hang over the road.

This was an undignified position for someone of Zaccheus’ rank, but he was just that desperate to see Christ.

This does not sound like something a rich man would do.

Zacchaeus would not be denied.

He was going to see Jesus, one way or the other.

Luke 19:5 "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house."

“I must abide at thy house”:

This was worded as a mandate, not a request.

It is the only place in all the gospels where Jesus invited Himself to be someone’s guest (see Isaiah 65:1).

Jesus was pleased that Zacchaeus would go to that much trouble to be able to see Him.

Zacchaeus being a rich man would have ordinarily kept him from climbing a tree.

It seemed this rich man was not full of pride.

Jesus knows his heart and tells Zacchaeus that He is going home with him.

Luke 19:6 "And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."

“Joyfully”:

Such a despicable sinner as a typical tax collector might have been distressed at the prospect of a visit from the perfect, sinless Son of God.

But Zaccheus’ heart was prepared.

This was beyond his greatest expectations that Jesus could want to stay with him.

He was overjoyed.

Luke 19:7 "And when they saw [it], they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."

“They all murmured”:

Both the religious elite and the common people hated Zaccheus.

They did not understand, and in their blind pride refused to see, what possible righteous purpose Jesus had in visiting such a notorious sinner.

But He had come to seek and to save the lost (verse 10).

Remember that the Hebrews hated publicans because they were tax collectors.

They classified Zacchaeus as unfit to fellowship with.

God never did like murmuring, not in the wilderness journeying and not here either.

Luke 19:8 "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold."

“I restore him fourfold”:

Zaccheus’ willingness to make restitution was proof that his conversion was genuine.

It was the fruit, not the condition, of his salvation.

The law required a penalty of one-fifth as restitution for money acquired by fraud (Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:6-7), so Zaccheus was doing more than was required.

The law required 4-fold restitution only when an animal was stolen and killed (Exodus 22:1).

If the animal was found alive, only two-fold restitution was required (Exodus 22:4).

But Zaccheus judged his own crime severely, acknowledging that he was as guilty as the lower common robber.

Since much of his wealth had probably been acquired fraudulently, so this was a really very costly commitment.

On top of that, he gave half his goods to the poor.

But Zaccheus had just found incomprehensible spiritual riches and did not mind the loss of material wealth (Matt. 13:44-46).

He stands in stark contrast with the rich young ruler (in 18:18-24).

This man truly has a repentant heart.

He does not wait for Jesus to tell him this; he volunteers.

He wants nothing to stand between him and Jesus.

He has made Jesus Lord of his life; he even calls Him Lord.

This was a very wealthy man and 1/2 was a tremendous amount to give away.

Luke 19:9 "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

“Is a son of Abraham”:

A Jew by race for whom Christ came as Savior (Matt. 1:21; 10:6; 15:24; John 4:22).

When Jesus calls Zaccheus the son of Abraham, He was speaking of Zaccheus' faith, just as all believers in Christ are sons of Abraham because of their faith.

Galatians 3:7, "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

Zaccheus received salvation because of his faith.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

“Son of man”:

This is the name Jesus used for Himself more than any other.

It is used 83 times in the gospels, always by Jesus Himself. It was a messianic title (Dan 7:13-14), with an obvious reference to the humanity and the humility of Christ.

Yet, it also speaks of His everlasting glory, as (Dan. 7:13-14 shows; Matt. 24:27; Acts 7:56).

“To seek and to save that which was lost”:

So this was the main theme of Luke’s gospel (5:31-32; 15:4-7, 32).

Jesus came to save sinners.

Just as in the parable where the shepherd went to find the lost sheep, Jesus left the security of heaven and came to earth to save the lost.

The wonderful thing is that He would have come if there had been just one.

Luke 19:11 "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

“They thought”:

All of the disciples were still mistakenly assuming that Christ would establish his kingdom on earth at Jerusalem.

Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified, but those traveling with Him thought that He would overthrow the Romans and set up His kingdom at this time.

They still did not understand how the victory would come.

Luke 19:12 "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

“A far country”:

Many Kings in Roman provinces like Galilee and Perea actually went to Rome so that they could receive their kingdoms.

The entire Herodian dynasty was dependent on Rome for ruling power, and Herod the Great himself had gone to Rome to be given his kingdom.

This parable illustrates Christ, who would soon depart to receive His kingdom, and will one day return to rule.

It is similar to the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), but there are significant differences.

That parable was told during the Olivet Discourse; this one was told on the road from Jericho up to Jerusalem (verse 28).

This parable here, is similar to the parable about the ten talents in Matthew, but there are marked differences as well.

I believe this is a spiritual parable about Jesus leaving His apostles to take care of His followers while He goes away into heaven to build us a home.

Jesus is the nobleman.

Luke 19:13 "And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come."

“Pounds”: (same as mina).

Which is a Greek measure of money equal to slightly more than 3 month’s salary.

The mina was one-sixtieth of a talent, meaning that the ten servants in this parable had been given a considerably smaller sum to account for than any of the 3 servants in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30).

We see here that Jesus has equipped the disciples to take care of His followers until He returns.

Jesus told all believers in Christ to occupy until He comes.

Luke 19:14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this [man] to reign over us."

“Sent a message after him”:

This was precisely what had happened to Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, when he went to Rome to be made tetrarch of Judea.

A delegation of Jews traveled to Rome with a protest to Caesar Augustus.

He refused their complaint and made Archelaus king anyway.

Archelaus subsequently built his palace in Jericho not far from where Jesus told this parable.

Archelaus’ rule was so inept and despotic that Rome quickly replaced him with a succession of procurators, of who Pontius Pilate was the fifth.

With this parable Jesus warned that the Jews were about to do the same thing, in a spiritual sense, to their true Messiah.

I can see in this the rejection by the people of the gospel message.

The world rejected Jesus as Savior and Lord; the Hebrews in particular, but really this covers all who reject Him.

Luke 19:15 "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

“When he was returned”:

This pictured Christ’s return to earth.

The full manifestation of His kingdom on earth waits that time.

The Lord has given each of us a measure of faith.

He has entrusted to us what we can handle.

Some of us have a little more money than some of the others, but to whom much is given, much is required.

This reminds me so much of the parable of the seed which fell on good ground.

Some brought forth a hundred fold, some sixty fold and some thirty fold.

You can read about it in Matthew chapter 13.

This is the same thing in verse 15 above.

We are to work until Jesus comes back with His kingdom to set up here on the earth for His 1,000 year reign.

**Luke 19:16-17 "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds."
"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."**

“Been faithful in a very little”:

Those with relatively small gifts and opportunities are just as responsible to use them faithfully as those who are given much more.

“Over 10 cities”:

The reward is incomparably greater than the 10 minas warranted.

Note also that the rewards were apportioned according to the servants' diligence: the one who gained 10 minas was given 10 cities, the one who gained 5 minas, 5 cities (verse 19), and so on.

This Scripture here, is saying this servant will rule over ten cities.

A nobleman in the flesh would not have ten cities to turn over to this man.

What this is really saying is, if we are faithful until the end, working to win as many souls for His kingdom as we can, then He will reward us in like manner as well.

**Luke 19:18-19 "And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds."
"And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities."**

We see again here, that this is obviously the Lord Jesus awarding to the faithful the rule over various cities.

Luke 19:20 "And another came, saying, Lord, behold, [here is] thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:"

Fear is not of God.

This servant was afraid of losing what he had.

Faith is the opposite of fear.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Luke 19:21 "For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow."

"For I feared thee":

A craven fear, not borne out of love or reverence, but tainted with contempt for the master.

Had he had any true regard for the master, a righteous "fear" would have provoked diligence rather than sloth.

This fear, this person was feeling was not like fear the Christian has of God which is reverence.

He knew the Lord reaped where He had not sown.

He will be punished, because he knew and didn't do what he knew to do.

Luke 19:22 "And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, [thou] wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:"

“Thou knewest”:

This did not suggest that what the man “knew” about the master was true.

However, even the knowledge he claimed to have was enough to condemn him.

Thus, will it be with the wicked in the day of judgment.

Luke 19:23 "Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

This servant condemned himself.

He knew the Lord multiplied without anything to start with.

This is just a flimsy excuse for not having worked until the Lord came.

Luke 19:24 "And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give [it] to him that hath ten pounds."

This seems unfair, but really all he is going to do is sit there and hold it.

The Lord wants it in the hands of someone who will work for Him.

When the Lord gives us a gift, He expects us to use it for Him.

Luke 19:25 "(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)"

The world does not understand this and complains, but the Lord has already tried this servant and he failed.

Luke 19:26 "For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

“That unto every one which hath shall be given”:

See Matthew 13:12.

The recipients of divine grace inherit immeasurable blessings in addition to eternal life and the favor of God (Rom. 8:32).

But those who despise the riches of God’s goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering (Rom. 2:4), burying them in the ground and clinging instead to the paltry and transient goods of this world, will ultimately lose everything they have (Matt. 6:19; John 12:25).

The Lord expects us to use what He gives, not to sit around whining about what we don't have

It is of no advantage to the Lord at all to put tools in the hands of those who will not use them.

Luke 19:27 "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay [them] before me."

“Those mine enemies”:

These illustrated the Jews who actively opposed him.

“Slay them before me”:

This spoke of harsh, violent judgment and may be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem.

This is speaking of a judgment for those who have totally rejected Jesus.

They will be destroyed.

Luke Chapter 19 Questions

1. What is the city of Jericho known for?
2. Who was Zacchaeus?
3. Why did the Hebrews hate him?
4. Why could Zacchaeus not see Jesus?
5. What did he do to make it possible to see?
6. What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus when He saw him?
7. How did Zacchaeus react to Jesus' request?
8. What was the crowd murmuring about?
9. What did Zacchaeus voluntarily say that he was going to do which pleased Jesus?
10. What did Jesus say had come to Zacchaeus' house that day?
11. What did Jesus mean when He called Zacchaeus, Abraham's son?
12. What had Jesus come to the earth for? (Verse 10)
13. The people thought what would immediately appear in Jerusalem?

14. Who is the nobleman symbolic of?
15. What did the nobleman tell the ten servants to do until he came back?
16. Who is this speaking of in verse 14?
17. After He had received what, he returned?
18. When the servant reported he had gained 10 for the 1 pound, what did his master say to him?
19. Why do we know for sure this symbolizes Jesus and His servants and not the nobleman?
20. Why was the Lord disappointed in the servant who hid the talent?
21. Why will he be punished?
22. How will the Lord judge him?
23. What happened to the 1 pound he hid?
24. What was the outcome of those enemies who did not want Him to reign over them?