

October 15, 2023
God's Good News Story
The Ministry of Jesus
A Man Called Zaccheus

In our year long series ‘*God’s Good News Story*’ we have traced the work of God to bring mankind into a right relationship with Him. It has been a story of obedience and disobedience of light and darkness.

The past few weeks we have been learning from the parables of Jesus. Today, we have another story from Jesus’ ministry, but it is not a parable. It is an actual event, a real encounter that Jesus has with *A Man Called Zaccheus*.

This is one of the most well known and taught stories in the New Testament. Because it is so well known I want to take a little different angle of this story today. Let’s look down deep into the man Zaccheus and see who he was and what we can learn about dealing with others and also coming to grips with who we are. In this story Zaccheus was called a lot of things. If we read between the line and do a deeper spiritual and emotional dive into this *Man Called Zaccheus* we can discover some sad, troubling and interesting things.

This story is set in the midst of Jesus’ previous parables where He is dealing with the spiritual pride and elitism of the Scribes & Pharisees. These *Religious Elites* a

major problem in the ministry of Jesus as they were always looking for ways to put Jesus down and build themselves up. This encounter with *A Man Called Zaccheus* gives Jesus an opportunity to confront these Religious Elites once again and try to get them to open their blinded spiritual eyes and to see things from God’s viewpoint, rather than mans.

First let’s review the story as found in Luke 19....

Luke 19:1-10...¹Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. ³Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable due to the crowd, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree in order to see Him, because He was about to pass through that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” ⁶And he hurried and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷When the people saw this, they all began to complain, saying, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!” ⁸But Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I am giving to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I am giving back four times as much.” ⁹And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

This final verse 10... ***For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.***” Was one I used last Sunday when talking about Jesus parables of the Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. The key point was that Jesus’s mission, which is the same as God’s mission is to “seek & save the lost”. Jesus is trying to get the people who call themselves the followers of God, to adopt that as their mission and passion as well.

In this story of Zaccheus we see Jesus putting into practice this mission passion.

Zaccheus, which was the name by which he was called, is only a surface picture of who he really was.

Let’s start with to obvious, his name... Zaccheus comes from Greek *Zakkhaïos*, which comes from the Hebrew *zakkay*, literally "pure, innocent, clean,"

Wow, what a strange and almost cruel situation we find Zaccheus in. His name would be in the “Top 10 Names for Hebrews Boys” in his day. It was a name that means one who is pure, innocent and clean. That is the name that his parents called him at birth. It is a name that shows their love for their son, a name that they gave with the hope that they could invoke God’s blessing and forgiveness upon this by and a bright hope for his future. What a great name to be called to start out life.

Sadly, something went wrong. Why do I say that, you make ask? Well let’s look at some other things this boy turned man was called as he grew up...

He was called...

1. A Chief Tax Collector – Traitor
2. A Rich Man - Cheat
3. A Short Man – Inadequate
4. A Sinner – Outcast, Failure
5. A Son of Abraham - Accepted, Loved, Forgiven

➤ **A Chief Tax Collector** – Traitor

To be called a tax collector in those days was worse than being an IRS Agent or a RepoMan today. These were Jewish men who worked for the Roman government and thus were considered TRAITORS.

➤ **A Rich Man** – Cheat

Being rich in of itself would not justify being called a CHEAT. The reason that Zaccheus would be considered a CHEAT is the WAY he got his wealth. By overcharging and gouging the poor Jewish residents through overcharging on taxes.

➤ **A Short Man** – Inadequate

Again, being short is not equated with inadequacy normally. The reason for this descriptor is the way it was used in this context. Everyone was short in those days, compared to the present, so to use this term was to belittle him for his stature but also a slam against his character.

➤ **A Sinner** – Outcast, Failure

The ‘Religious Elites’ loved to look down on others who were not as religiously and legalistically zealous as they were. This term was a belittling and demeaning term to show that he was unforgiven and unacceptable.

➤ **A Son of Abraham** - Accepted, Loved, Forgiven

Finally, a name worth being called. This is a term used by Jesus to show Zaccheus that he was accepted, forgiven, and valuable both to God as a person and spiritually connected to the Family of God.

Zaccheus, like people everywhere, come into this world with the hope of a good life of happiness and blessing. But this fallen world, full of fallen and hurt people, soon begins to judge us, berate us, and call us names that are not helpful or hopeful. Are you one of those people? Are you still struggling with what the ‘world’ calls you? Maybe you have experienced this ‘name calling’ in your past. Maybe you have overcome it, maybe not! But I want to remind you what God says about you... You are loved, valuable, special and He wants to give you a name that reveals His love for you and the value He places on you. He also wants us as His followers to go into a ‘name calling’ world and share with those who have been hurt and living under the burden of hurtful names, that there is hope... There is a God who loves them and wants to give them a new name...

Let’s watch this video of a woman aptly named Hosanna Wong as she shares a hopeful message in a style of delivery called ‘Spoken Word’ called “*I Have A New Name*” At the end of this sermon is a YouTube transcript of the video.

To watch the video...go to this site and watch it on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L3dF3WrsZs&list=PLfG2ppp8CQGwynwEwMlM9TLrI_QWx6khe&index=1

Conclusion:

Who are you going to listen to? God says you are loved, wanted and valuable. Listen to Him, return to Him, confess your sins to Him, be found, be saved, be made whole.

Then, go into a hurtful ‘name-calling’ world and share the Good News that they can have a New Name, New Life, New Future and New Hope.

Hosanna Wong Transcript from "I Have A New Name"

God Spends A Lot Of Time In The Bible
Telling Us Who We Are
It's Almost As If He Knew That We Would
Doubt Who That Was From Time To Time
It's As If He Saw It Coming That We'd
Spend Our Whole Lives Searching For What
Our Identity What Our Real Name Was And
That There'd Be Many Moments In Our
Lives Where We Let Different Kinds Of
Names Define Us When We've Looked In The
Mirror Compared Ourselves To Pictures
And Heard The Name Ugly
When We've Been Left By Loved Ones
People We Trusted Once And Heard The Name Unworthy
When We've Been Drowning In
Discouragement Living In A Seemingly
Never-Ending Crisis And Heard The Name
Forgotten When We've Had Our Hopes Up
And Our Hearts Open Only To Be Brought
Down By Closed Doors And We've Heard
Rejected When We've Looked For Infinite
Affirming Love Through Lesser Physical
Fleshly Versions When We Gave It Away Or
When It Was Stolen And We Heard Impure
We Heard Garbage When We Go To Other
Vices To Ease Our Pain And We Hear
Addict We Hear Forever Broken When We
Feel Like We're Living In The Shadow Of
Someone Else's Calling And We Hear
Second Place When Our Pain Cripples Us
To A Point Where We Don't Even Know How
To Let Others In And We Hear Lonely When
Our Past Seems Too Gross For Others To

Forgive And We Hear Disgusting It's
Overwhelming These Voices Were
Constantly Hearing It's Suffocating
This Air Of Constant Critique And
Comparing And It's Sort Of Amazing The
People Whose Voices I've Allowed To Name Me
The Power I've Given To My Past To My
Mirror And To My Surroundings And
Enabled Them To Identify Me The Amount
Of Years I've Spent Living Up To
Whatever Others Say About Me But God
Says Something Else About Me
It's Like He Knew There Would Be Other
Voices So He Wrote His Voice Down In A
Timeless Book Of Truths That Would
Remind Us Over And Over Again In The
Moments When Lies Would Block His Truth
And Somehow Make Us Forget So I'm Going
Back To The Source Not The People I've
Allowed To Represent God To Me But The
Actual Literal Tangible Words That He
Has Written Down For Me And There's
Some Other Names He's Given To Me
John 15 15 He Calls Me Friend
First Thessalonians 1 4 He Calls Me
Chosen He Calls Me His Masterpiece
He Calls Me His Art He Calls Me Handmade
He Calls Me Purpose And Fashion For Good Things
First Corinthians 6 19 He Calls My Body A Temple
He Calls It The Residence Of The Holy Spirit
Acts 1 8 He Calls Me His Messenger To The World
Galatians 3 26 He Calls Me His Child
Romans 5 8 He Calls Me Greatly Loved
John 8 36 He Calls Me Free Free Indeed

Second Corinthians 5 17 He Calls Me Brand New And
It's Amazing How Different These Names Are From The
Names I'm Used To Listening To And In My
Journey To Discover Who I Really Am In
My Battle To Uncover The Truths Of Myself
I've Learned Something New About My Name
And Now This Is What I Am Certain Of My
Name Is Not The Name The World Calls Me
My Name Is Not The Name My Past Calls Me
My Name Is Not Even The Name My Own
Mirror Calls Me But My Name My Name Is
The Name I Choose To Answer To And I Can
Choose Today From This Moment Forward To
Answer To A New Name When I Hear Lonely
That's Not Me When I Hear Disgusting
That's Not Me When I Hear Unworthy I
Don't Even Look Over My Shoulder When I
Hear Broken They Must Have Confused Me
Please Look Elsewhere When I Hear Ugly
Abandoned Useless Forgotten I Figure
Someone Just Has To Remind Them Maybe
Those Were My Old Names But They're No
Longer The Names That I Will Respond To
My Name Is The Name I Have Chosen To
Spend My Days Living Up To And If These
Other Voices Are Not Saying The Same
Thing That The Truth Is I Look In My
Mirror And I Repeat This They Have No
Right To Be Speaking To You
When You Stop Answering To All Your Old
Names They Will Stop Having Power Over You
The Names That My Father
Eternity's Author The World's Creator
Has Called Me Are The Only Names That I

Answer To So When I Hear A Friend Of God
That's My Name Chosen That's My Name
Loved Wanted Created With A Purpose
That's My Name God's A Messenger That's
My Name God's Masterpiece That's My Name
Child Of God You Must Be Looking For Me
Greatly Loves You Must Be Calling For Me
Brand New That Is My Name So That Is A
Name That I Will Respond To Because The
Enemy Has No Power Here Perfect Love
Cast Out All Our Fears And Perfect Love
Has A Name To Me And You So What Is Your
New Name What Is Stirring Up Inside Of
You When You Hear These Words That His
Word That The Word Has Proclaimed What
Do You Know Is The Name God Is Calling
You Maybe It's Not The Name You Grew Up
With Maybe It's Not The Name Your Old
Friends Associate You With Maybe It's
Not The Name That Your Whole Life You
Were Used To Identifying With But It's
The Name You Now Answered To So When The
Enemy Tries To Get To You It's Just The Name You
Introduce Yourself With As For Me My Name Is Forgiven
My Name Is
Free My Name Is Brand New Loved Wanted Child Of God
Created With A Purpose And It's Been A Pleasure To Meet
You.

Hosanna Wong Transcript from "I Have A New Name"