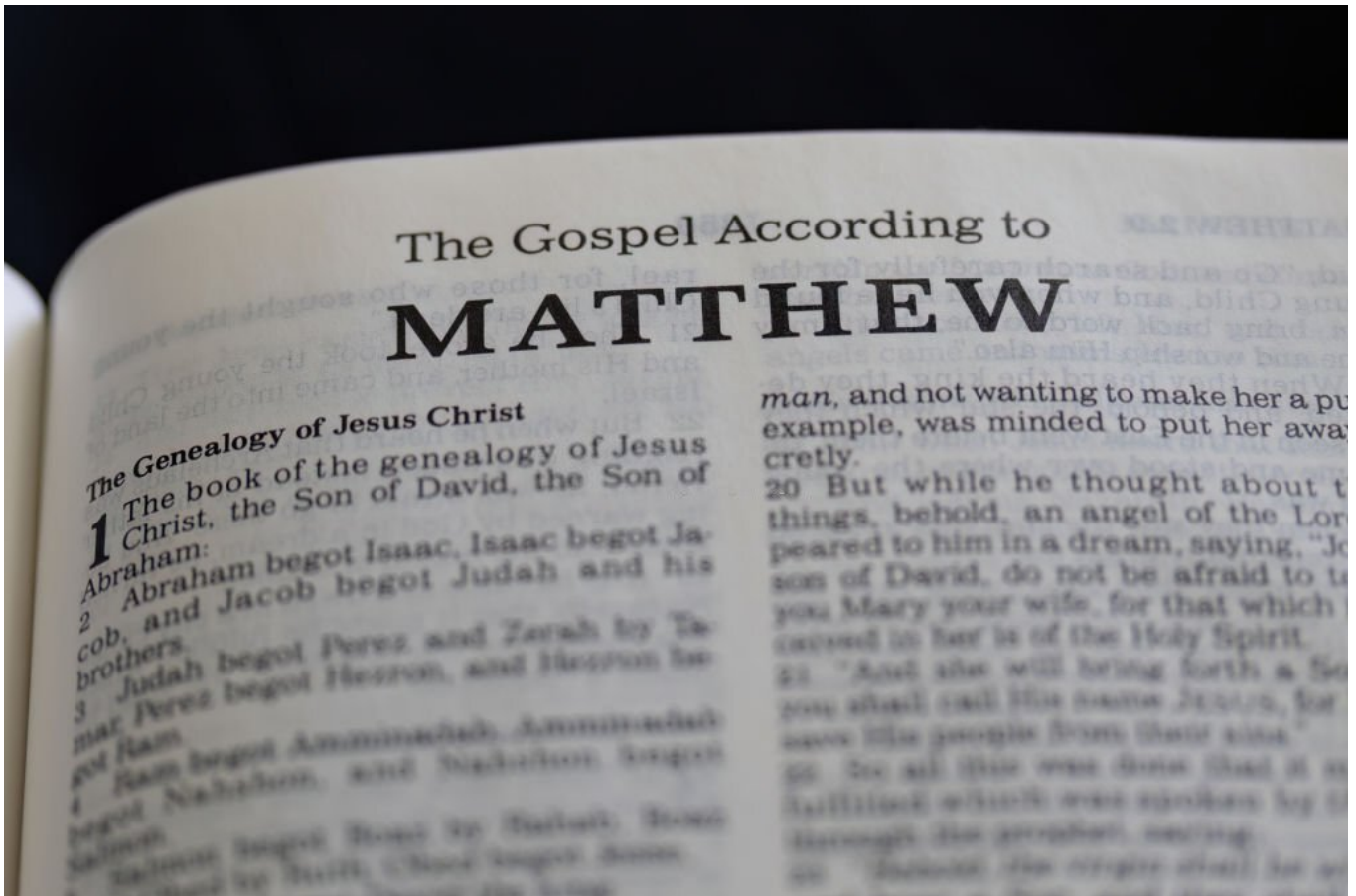




5 lessons from Zacchaeus for becoming a VIP



Luke 19:1-10

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. 6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. 8 And Zacchaeus 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. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

1) About Jericho

My friends, Jesus was passing through Jericho, a very important city in the Bible. You recall the parable of the Good Samaritan where someone was descending from Jerusalem to Jericho. In the Old Testament, Jericho was the very first city that was conquered by the people of Israel after the manna ceased falling from heaven. In the book of Joshua chapter 5, we are told that one day after the people have eaten the corn of the land, the manna stopped falling from heaven, and it is at that time that they were facing the city of Jericho, which was protected by great walls. Every other territory which they conquered before Jericho, they were empowered in their bodies by food that came from heaven. Now, for the first time, they ate something that grew on the promised land, and Jericho would be the very first territory they would conquer with that strength. I can only picture at this moment a mother who stops breastfeeding her baby, and now the child can walk after having eaten food that grew on the earth. It is as if something self-sustainable is starting, and the city of Jericho represents the beginning of it. At the end of the siege of Jericho, Joshua will say, "cursed is whoever would build this city again, it is at the price of his first-born that he would build its foundations." This is how the great men of the past approached things. When some walls are down, they are not to be ever rebuilt again. When some victories are acquired, they are acquired forever. Curse is whoever tries to bring me back to a stage where I have to conquer again areas where God gave me the victory already. Now many years later, Jesus was passing through this city of Jericho, which was conquered not by might, not by power, but by the spirit of the living God through the faith of the people that circled

the city seven days, making sounds of praise. Seven days of resounding trumpet, among the conquerors were people carrying the ark of the covenant. This reminds us that one week in the presence of God makes a change which many generations will see. Because many years later, Jesus would enter Jericho and was passing through, freely. No walls, no fortress, no pain. As I heard the sound of praise this morning, I knew that fortress and walls were being broken to establish a realm of freedom which many generations after us are going to enjoy. Much can be said about the city of Jericho, but it's not the purpose of our message this morning, because Jesus was just passing through, so let's pass through.

2) There was a man named Zacchaeus

The Bible says: 2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. So Zacchaeus was a rich man living in the city of Jericho. He was a city man who had been blessed with wealth, rich among the rich. It seems sometimes as if life had blessed some people with everything. When you start counting among the city men, Zacchaeus checks the box. You go on counting among the people with great wealth, he checks the box. You move on counting among people with great influence in Jericho, Zacchaeus checks the box. Then you say forget about the good stuff, count among the people with the power to make other people's life miserable, here again he checks the box again. Zacchaeus was the man in town.

3) Seeing the opportunities

Yet, despite being rich, despite being a chief among the publicans, Zacchaeus was of little stature. Most people would look down onto him. He was powerful, but his greatest challenge was that he had to look up at people. In verse three we see something very important on Zacchaeus' character, probably his secret for success. Jesus was to pass through Jericho. Zacchaeus had the chance to see the Christ, the Savior of the world with his own eyes. And here comes out the character of the man; he would not let the circumstances of life that were beyond his control limit him. Zacchaeus was the man in town, and he respected himself like the man in town. Can you imagine the records would say that Jesus, the Savior of the world, passed in Jericho during the time of Zacchaeus, but Zacchaeus didn't see him? I wonder if Jesus was to pass in our church today and perform miracles among us, who are those that will take the first seats, no matter what it takes to see God's glory. Zacchaeus didn't allow that his stature decides whether he sees Jesus or not, he looked around, and whatever means that could be at his disposal which didn't break the law were good enough. Do we see the means that are at our disposal? Do you see the tree on which you can climb to see the glory of God in

your life? Do you see the people that God has brought into your life to guide you through the height of their experience, or are you still complaining about the little stature of your experience in life? Do you see the opportunities which God has provided to make you see His glory in your life, or are you still complaining about the opportunities which life had not granted to you?

4) Planning and taking action with the opportunities

Zacchaeus did not want to miss the passage of Christ in Jericho; therefore, he took the means that were at his disposal; he climbed the tree. So Zacchaeus did not only see the tree but he climbed it. The Bible says that Jesus would pass that way. How come he knew that Jesus would pass that way? The Bible does not present us Zacchaeus as a magician who could predict the future. So for him to know that Jesus will pass that way, there is only one explanation: he did his homework well, to know in advance where Jesus would pass, and he picked his spot, the spot that suited with his height. Zacchaeus climbed the tree before Jesus would pass there, yet we are allowing ourselves to be taken by surprise by many events today, because we don't take the effort to think into the future and take the spot long in advance that will enable us to see Jesus passing in glory. We got surprised by Corona, now we get surprised by inflation, what is the next thing to catch us by surprise? But Zacchaeus anticipated, and he climbed the tree, he took the necessary action. Whether in God's service or professionally, the difference is made by those that can anticipate and take the necessary actions. Because some opportunities do not come twice, though there will always be opportunities, but some are unique. The encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus changed Zacchaeus forever.

5) Jesus looked up at Zacchaeus

Verse 5 of the verse: And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. My friends, Jesus came to the place just as he was expected. The Lord will come to the place. It might take time, but wait on the Lord; He never missed any of his appointments. And Jesus looked up to this man whom everybody always looked down. What a moment for Zacchaeus! Before this moment, he had always looked up at other people. And now, within a moment, Jesus is showing him "I know the feeling, I know what you've been going through." And he adds, come down, and today I will even stay at your place. Be yourself; it's ok to be just you, and it's so great that I would even be your guest. Now remember Jesus was only passing through Jericho, but the encounter with Zacchaeus is such that Jesus must honor this man and be his guest. Jesus will honor the people that pay attention to where he moves, that open their eyes to the opportunities he has brought and that act upon those opportunities.

6) Being the guest of a man who is a sinner

But you see not everyone was happy that Jesus would go and be the guest of Zacchaeus. They criticized the Lord that he is going to be the guest of a Sinner. Religious people -sometimes we have to deal with people that are so pure, so religious, so good that they could even criticize God himself. Note that Jesus will label Zacchaeus as a son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of faith. Where they saw a Sinner, Jesus saw a son of Abraham. People might put you sometimes into a category which you do not belong to, even religious people. But you know what – Zacchaeus responded to Jesus, and that is what matters. They might call you a sinner, a publican, but if Jesus calls you a son of Abraham, that is what matters the most. And at the end, Zacchaeus is really, really the man in town. He checks another box, the guy who hosted the Saviour of the World in the city of Jericho. Here I'm summarizing the 5 lessons from Zacchaeus for becoming a VIP:

1. Know your limitations but do not take them as a sign of defeat.
2. See and seize the opportunities that help you deal with your limitations.
3. Plan with Jesus and take action on the plans.
4. Remember Jesus will honor his part of the deal.
5. Talk with Jesus because what matters is the transformation of your life through him.

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