

Being with Jesus:

A Devotional From the Book of Mark

Scripture

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "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." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." — Luke 19:1-9

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for coming down to lift me up. You died for me while I was a sinner and separated from God. You sought me out and found me. Help me to be examples of this to others. Show me people who need it, and give me the courage and heart to serve. Amen.

Reflection

The story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19 is remarkable. Everyone wants to see Jesus. They are crowding around Him so much that Zacchaeus, who was short, didn't have a chance of seeing Him. So, he climbed a tree to get a glimpse. Zacchaeus was not well liked. He was a tax collector, he worked for an oppressive government against his own people, and he was regarded as an outcast. He is at the bottom of the social ladder, and Jesus was at the top.

Then, some unexpected things begin to happen. Jesus looks up, sees Zacchaeus in the tree, and tells him he wants to eat with him at his house. Both the people watching and Zacchaeus are probably shocked. The one in the highest social standing wants to eat with the person in the lowest social standing! The crowd comments, "Look who He's going to eat with!" Jesus loses some popularity and social clout, and Zacchaeus is incredibly honored. It changes his life!

Zacchaeus decides to take his wealth and use it to help the poor. He then says that if he has ever cheated anyone, he will pay them back four times over. Talk about a turn around! Jesus comes into his life, lifts him up, and Zacchaeus in turn wants to help people who are down. Jesus came to seek and save those who are lost. When He finds the lost, He uses them to find others.

Are there people in your life who are down and need a hand? There are probably people who are unpopular and need a friend to love them. Others may be literally poor and need help getting on their feet financially. Maybe someone you know is feeling empty, searching for answers to life's big questions, and needs you to tell them about Jesus. Look for opportunities in your world to work with God to seek and save those who are lost.

Questions

Who do you know that might be a little like Zacchaeus?

Is God putting anyone on your heart to spend time with?

How can you use your life to seek and save the lost in your community?