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Jesus Encounters; Luke 18:18-23, 19:1-10

GPBC

2.5.23

Introduction – The past few weeks have been a sweet season for me in my walk with the Lord. God has been working on my heart, speaking truth, exposing my sin, and revealing Himself – and it’s been painful, it’s been humbling, but it’s all been good. I’ve been preaching lately not just out of the study, but out of the overflow. It’s good to preach out of the study – you better know what you’re talking about if you claim to speak for God. It’s good to preach out of the study; it’s better to preach out of the overflow. Anytime you look at Jesus in the Bible you’re going to have something to say, but when Jesus opens the door of your heart and steps in, you’ve got so much to say that you don’t know what to say.

It's been almost like the perfect storm over the past few weeks as several things have worked together to lay my heart open for Jesus to step in and sit down. I started listening to worship songs and the lyrics just began to hit home and I thought boy that’s good – God is good. Summer and I took 4 of our college/singles to Passion and every worship set and every speaker just pushed open the door of my heart. Three truths stuck in my heart like arrows and I’ve been chewing on those for the past month. Then I read AW Tozer’s *The Knowledge of God*. Tozer was known by his life, preaching, and writing as a man who walked with God. When you read him it’s like you quietly walk into a room where he’s talking with God and you leave hungry to know God like he did. The fourth part of this perfect storm over the past few weeks is that I’ve been listening to sermons from one of my past heroes who is now with the Lord, and the insights and gut-wrenching honest preaching have been a refreshing, cool spring to my tired and dry soul.

On the weeknights, I’m usually in the bed by 10. I usually get up around 5:30 or 6, so I need to be going to sleep around 10. A few weeks ago I had read a chapter from Tozer and watched a sermon, and I laid down at 10. And it was like God picked up a 55 gallon drum and just started pouring truth and grace. I tossed and turned and prayed and meditated and worshipped and tossed and turned and prayed and meditated and worshipped. Finally about 12:30 I said Lord, I can’t sleep what do you want me to do? And it was like He said, “I know you can’t sleep. I haven’t finished talking to you yet!” I got up and went back to my chair in the living room. I couldn’t pray because I was there to listen not to speak. I

couldn't read because it was too late to concentrate. So I watched another sermon. I sat there for an hour and a half and listened to God speak through his servant. And I just sat there and worshipped. And it was good.

You know what I re-learned that night in a very fresh way at around 1:30? I don't have to preach. Now I love to preach and I believe God has called me to preach. But I don't have to preach, but I do have to worship! You see I was called to preach, but I was made to worship. One day preaching will end but worship never will! What my soul needs and craves – what truly satisfies the thirst in me – is worship. Psalm 34:8, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!" The Lord just let me taste and see a little that night – and it was good. I didn't encounter Jesus; He encountered me. He stepped into my heart, exposed my heart, revealed Himself and reminded me He is all I need! We're going to briefly look at two men today, who both worshipped the same false god, and had an encounter with Jesus. One encountered Jesus and one was encountered by Jesus. One was offered to taste and see, and one tasted and saw!

- I. The Rich Ruler Encounters Jesus
  - a. Vv18-19 – now we see he had the right question. There is no better question, no greater question, no more urgent question we could ever ask. And he even asked the right person – the only person who not only knew the answer but would make it possible. The problem the rich ruler had was that he had the wrong view of Jesus.
    - i. To him, Jesus was just a good teacher, a good man. That's why Jesus answers as He does. If I'm nothing more than a good teacher, I really can't help you with that question. The rich ruler considered himself to be a good man as we see in v21. If you're a good man and your goodness won't suffice for eternal life, and I'm just a good man, my good answers won't suffice either. But if I'm not only good, but also God, then you've come to the right place for an answer! Ps 34:8.
  - b. Vv20-21 – So Jesus gives him 5 commandments out of the 10 Commandments that address the horizontal relationships with one another. And in his heart, he puts a check mark by each one.
  - c. V22 – one thing you still lack. You've got an idol in your life, and it's a pretty big one. You may have a handle on the horizontal commandments but you've blown the vertical commandments. You

worship another god. Let's dethrone that false god and put the true God, Me, on the throne on your heart.

- i. Here's what you can do to inherit eternal life. He answers his question! Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor – get rid of your idol. And do something worthwhile with it – give it to the poor. It's just money, it's just stuff. You can't take it with you when you die anyway, and don't leave it for your kids to fight over it when you're gone. Do something good with it. Get rid of your idol.
  - ii. And you will have treasure in heaven – I know your idol is big, but I can top it! Don't let your earthly treasure keep you from tasting and seeing heavenly treasure. If you'll just taste and see. I'm not only good; I'm God. You're trying to cure your thirst by drinking little drips of water – I'm the Fountain of Life. Let go of the drip and quench your thirst at the Fountain!
  - iii. Come, follow Me. It's Me. I'm what's lacking in your life. I'm the answer to your question. Come. Taste and See!
- d. V23 – he was extremely rich – he had a really big idol that ruined the tastebuds of his heart and blinded the eyes of his soul.
  - e. The rich ruler encountered Jesus but he didn't taste and see, and so he left Jesus the same way he came – rich and empty. But now let's look at another rich man who was encountered by Jesus.

## II. Jesus Encountered Zacchaeus

- a. Vv1-2 – he was rich and empty too like the ruler but unlike the ruler, who appeared to be good, Zacchaeus was not good and knew it. Nobody liked Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector and he would run up your tax bill and put the extra in his pocket, and you knew it and there wasn't anything you could do about it. He was probably lonely and tried to comfort himself with his stolen money.
- b. Vv3-4 – he hears Jesus is coming and he wants to get a look at the man who changes people. But he was short. He couldn't see over the crowd, so he climbs up in a sycamore tree. (short) Zacchaeus had no friends, he was short, unwanted, rejected, unloved Zacchaeus. Plenty of money – empty. What happens next was totally unexpected.

- c. V5 – out of all the crowd, Jesus picked Zacchaeus. Nobody ever picked Zacchaeus! Notice 3 things Jesus does here when He encounters the most unloved, most overlooked man in the town.
  - i. He knew his name. (song) They had never met before. Zacchaeus had never introduced himself to Jesus. He knew his name. He got really personal with Zacchaeus really quick. He knew who he was. He knew his history, his idol, his robbery.
    - 1. Can I tell you some really good news this morning. Jesus knows your name. He knows exactly who you are and everything about you, even all the bad and wrong and sin. And He won't just pass by and leave you hanging in a tree. He will call out to you. He knows your name. You're not overlooked. You're not unwanted.
  - ii. He knew his address. I'm going to stay at your house today! Jesus not only knew his name, He knew where he lived. Zacchaeus was a greedy, bitter thief. And Jesus knew it. And He knows where we live too. He knows where we are at, what's going on in our lives. Jesus hasn't forgotten your address!
  - iii. Vv6-7 He knew his name, his address, and He stepped right into the middle of his mess and was a guest in his home.
    - 1. The religious crowd and the townspeople couldn't stand it. What in the world is He doing in the home of a sinner. But you see that's precisely where Jesus wants to be – right in the middle of our mess.
    - 2. The town wasn't the only ones taken back. Zacchaeus was overwhelmed. Jesus knew his name, knew his address, and in front of all who hated him, Jesus stepped right into his home. Jesus encountered Zacchaeus.
- d. V8 – unwanted and unliked Zacchaeus was overwhelmed to know he was known by Jesus and yet still wanted and loved, and all of a sudden he was transformed into a new man – he stood up and declared – Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor and whatever I have wrongfully taken from anyone I restore 4fold!
  - i. Now he did in an instant what the rich ruler was unwilling to do. He got rid of his idol of greed and revenge and wealth!
  - ii. What took a lifetime to accumulate, he let go of in an instant!

- e. You know why? He tasted something better! And it was good!
- f. Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today! There's no denying that!" You don't get rid of your idols unless you find something better!

Conclusion – have you tasted? Have you seen that the Lord He is good? Has Jesus encountered you? Has your life changed? Or are you the same after Jesus as you were when you encountered Him – still clinging to that idol?