

A Publican Who Drew Near to Jesus

(Luke 15:1)

Introduction:

1. Many people drew near to Jesus -- they wanted to hear the Lord.
2. "Publicans" [tax collectors] were among those who drew near to Jesus.
 - a. They were Jews who collected taxes from the Jews for the Romans.
 - b. The Jews despised them because of their involvement with Rome.
 - c. Unfortunately, some publicans took advantage of their fellow Jews.
3. In our lesson we are concentrating on one particular publican who drew near to the Lord -- Zacchaeus [we read about him in Luke 19:1-10].
4. Let us begin by looking at . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE SETTING FOR WHAT HAPPENED ON THIS OCCASION
 - A. We learn from Luke 18:31-33 that Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem.
 - B. Before reaching Jerusalem, Jesus passed through Jericho.
 - C. Luke tells about the Lord's dealings with 2 men as He passed through Jericho.
 1. (Luke 18:35-43) Jesus gave sight to a blind man.
 2. (Luke 19:1-10) Jesus met Zacchaeus.
 - D. Let us turn our attention to . . .
- II. THE LORD'S ENCOUNTER WITH ZACCHAEUS
 - A. Zacchaeus is introduced in vs.2.
 1. He was a publican.
 2. Not only was he a publican, but he "*was the chief among the publicans.*"
 3. Luke informs us that Zacchaeus "*was rich.*"
 - B. (vs.3-4) Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus as He passed through Jericho.
 1. Perhaps he had heard about the Lord's dealings with publicans.
 - a. Jesus had chosen a publican [Matthew] to be an apostle.
 - b. Jesus ate with publicans.
 - c. Jesus said in Matthew 11:19 that He was known as "*a friend of publicans.*"
 2. Although Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, he could not because he was too short.
 3. To see Jesus he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up into a tree.
 - C. (vs.5) As Jesus passed by He saw Zacchaeus in the tree, Jesus called Zacchaeus by name, and Jesus invited Himself to his home.
 - D. Notice the joy in vs.6 as Zacchaeus received Jesus -- out of all the people present, the Lord chose to be a guest at the home of a chief publican.

- E. Unfortunately, the other people present murmured (vs.7).
1. They saw Zacchaeus as "*a sinner.*"
 2. Publicans are grouped with "sinners" (Matthew 9:11), "heathens" (Matthew 18:17), and "harlots" (Matthew 21:31).
 3. It is true that some publicans took advantage of people, but other publicans had some commendable qualities.
 - a. They went to John to be baptized (Luke 3:12-13).
 - b. They listened to the Lord's teaching while the Pharisees and lawyers rejected it (Luke 7:29-30).
 4. Zacchaeus was not one of the evil publicans.
- F. (vs.8) Zacchaeus defended himself.
1. He was generous -- he gave half of his goods to the poor.
 2. He restored fourfold anything he had taken wrongfully [the law only required a fifth part -- Numbers 5:7].
- G. (vs.9) Jesus identified Zacchaeus as "*a son of Abraham,*" and Jesus brought salvation to his home.
- H. Jesus stated in vs.10 that He had come for this purpose.

Conclusion:

1. We know where Jesus was going, and we know why He was going there.
2. Jesus took time from His schedule to meet with Zacchaeus and brought salvation to his house.
3. Jesus fulfilled His mission to the end (Luke 19:10).
4. Through Christ we can become sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:26-29).