

Title: The Change Grace Makes

Text: Luke 19: 1-10

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Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I was very tempted this week to preach on the sad condition of our nation: we are legislating sodomy, legislating murder, even attempting to legislate the love and mercy that only God's grace can produce.

Socialism and communism is depraved mans' failed attempt at producing love and mercy which God produces by his sovereign grace by the new birth by his divine call of grace. God showed us on the day of Pentecost when he gave his saints a heart to have all things common. Only grace makes sinners willingly provide for their needy brother; only grace makes the needy brother thank God, not take advantage but seek to get a job because he himself delights to provide for the needy as his Savior did for him; only grace makes a sinner merciful. Sin creates takers who feel entitled. Grace creates givers.

Man tries to do what only sovereign grace does by using the law by force. Legal, morality preachers are the hucksters that are the number ones to blame. Preaching against sodomites only creates a nation of self-righteous, hateful sodomites. Free-will, man-exalting, works preachers are the worst sodomites there are. And civil governments corrupted by the love of money are almost as bad.

But the only one who can create sinners anew is the sovereign, successful King of redemption, Jesus Christ. So instead of preaching about the problem I decided instead to stay the course and preach Christ who does by grace what no fallen sinner can do.

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Salvation is a gift.

When we give a gift we give it to whomsoever we will. God gives eternal life to whomsoever he will. There is nothing in man to cause God to give it.

When we give a gift, we purchase it ourselves then give it. God sent his Son who paid the purchase price which was his own blood and purchased those given him from sin and death.

When we give a gift, usually the person to whom we give it has the ability to receive it from us. But those to whom God gives salvation do not even have the ability to receive it. So God even gives us life and faith to receive this gift in his Son.

When we receive a gift we are thankful and express our gratitude. When God gives faith to receive the gift of eternal life in his Son he creates a heart which delights in mercy.

Proposition: The effectual grace of God alone is able to make a believer delight in mercy, and that, out of gratitude to God for the unspeakable gift of his Son and free salvation in him. Our text shows us an example in a man named Zacchaeus.

Luke 19: 1 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.*

Obstacles in our path often discourage us. Just look at the obstacle this man Zacchaeus was to himself and we see the obstacle we are by nature.

He was the chief among the publicans. The publicans were tax collectors for the Roman government. Some were Jews others Gentiles and we are not told which Zaccaeus was. They were known for extortion. They were such known sinners that the self-righteous Pharisee would have nothing to do with them. Zacchaeus was not only a publican, but a chief. In other words, he was the chief of sinners. And he was rich. The Lord had just watched the rich, young ruler walk away from the Lord sorrowful because the Lord in exposing that he had not kept the law told him to sell all, give it to the poor and follow him. Then the Lord said this to his disciples,

Luke 18: 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? 27: And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

No obstacles are insurmountable to our great sovereign Savior.

Luke 19: 3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

This may have only been curiosity on Zaccheus' part. The Lord was on his way to the cross—the word of Christ's miracles had spread. There was a crowd following him. Zaccheus was probably just curious to see who this person was. But Zaccheus was too short to see over the crowd.

Luke 19: 4: And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

We have many sycamore trees—natural earthy things—by which we think we can climb up to see Christ. Remember the tower of Babel? Use the means God has provided you, but look not to the means, but to Christ alone.

BUT WHEN GOD IS SEEKING HIS CHILD, AS CHRIST WAS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THIS LOST, ELECT CHILD ZACCHEUS, THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, IT IS GOD WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER ACCORDING TO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GRACE. When we look back on God's gracious dealing with us we realize some of the minute details God worked to draw us to Christ.

God created Zaccheus a short man—"Thus saith the LORD God, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?"

God the Son, Christ Jesus, was the sole cause of all the fame that had spread abroad by which he grabbed Zaccheus' attention. God is even able to give us the curiosity. And I don't doubt that part of the reason Christ allowed this great crowd to follow him was so this short man would have to climb that tree.

And God even grew the sycamore tree right there just so this short little man would have it to climb up—just so all the people could see him on display when Christ effectually created this divine change in Zacchaeus by the power of his gracious call. God works all things just that precisely for those he has everlastingly loved!

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Luke 19: 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him,...

Christ knew right where Zaccheus was and came to the place and saw him! What a comfort for every believer! If that dear loved one is his, Christ knows right where they are. The time of love is set for all his redeemed when he shall come to them in the power of his grace through God the Holy Spirit.

Luke 19: 5 5: and said unto him, Zacchaeus...

How did Christ know his name? Zacchaeus' name was written in the Lamb's book of life before the world began.

The names of God's elect are not being written in his book when they believe, Christ comes and calls them because their names were written in his book by God when he elected them unto salvation and blessed them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ before the foundation of the world. He saw Nathaniel before Nathaniel saw him. He told the woman at the well all about her. The Lord knows them that are his and knows right where he has led them by the secret working of his omnipotent hand.

Christ has been the Surety of those given him since before the world was made, that is why he is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and that is why he call all that are his. God the Father has always looked only to his Son who promised in the everlasting covenant of grace to present all the elect to the Father without spot and blameless and that is why Christ came into the earth—"because the children were flesh and blood he likewise took part of the same."

Christ purged the sins of each one for whom he died. It is God that justifies; it is Christ that died. It is Christ even now at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. The reason God preserves us during all our days of rebellion is because of Christ's intercession for us.

God, who determined the end from the beginning, predestinated his elect to the adoption of children, that is how Christ knew the name of this man when he walked up to him for the first time. And Christ shall seek and save each one given him of the Father.

Picture the scene. I picture Zaccheus busy climbing that tree—like some of us were busy trying to climb up some other way to God—when all of sudden he hears his name called, "Zaccheus!" And he looks down and Christ is standing at the base of the tree looking up at him.

Luke 19: 5 ...and said unto him, Zacchaeus make haste, and come down;...

When Christ calls one of his own, he does not make a suggestion, he gives the command, "make haste, and come down." Christ's command is the only word that will make a rich, haughty, pride-filled thieving sinner come down. Sinner, the way up with God is to come down...down to Christ's feet!

Luke 19: 5...for to day I must abide at thy house.

Silly hucksters appeal to the sinner's pride. They make God out to be a beggar, telling sinners things like, "Invite God into your heart." But Christ invited himself into Zaccheus' house. He told him there was no possibility that Christ was not coming in, "for today I MUST abide at thy house." Why was it a must? "For whom he did predestinate them he also called."

The Holy Spirit enters into his child, making his child the house of the living God, "for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they

shall be my people.” Is Christ’s call effectual? Is his call irresistible? Does it get the job done? Every time! Read the next verse.

Luke 19: 6: And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

With this call went power from the GodMan into his heart. Christ became King of him. He was unshackled from being the slave of his own sinful nature and converted to a willing servant of Christ his Righteousness. Christ abode not only in his house but in his heart. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power?”

He received Christ “joyfully.” Scripture shows this repeatedly. The converted Eunuch went on his way rejoicing. The Philippian jailer rejoiced along with all those in his house who God called. Zacchaeus received Christ joyfully

When Christ speaks the gospel into your heart saying, “You have heard that I bore the stripes of divine justice for all the elect given me of my Father, I bore them in my own body on the tree. Now hear me child, you are one. God the Father has laid all your iniquities on me. Behold how I have loved you! Behold my hands and my feet! Reach hither your hand into my side, and believe on me! Make haste, come down, salvation has come, I must abide at your house today and forever!’ then Christ reveals himself in the beauty of holiness in the new heart, the believer rejoices to receive Jesus Christ. We are overcome with his goodness: Christ is made to us our Righteousness of perfect obedience and justification from all our sins, then Christ is made to us our Sanctification into Light and Holiness; then Christ is made unto us our eternal Redemption from sin, death, hell and the grave. He is our rejoicing! “The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rejoicing to a believer is not a duty it is as natural as grapes on a grapevine. But the joy of those whose rejoicing is in “perishing things of clay born but for one brief day” is the laughter of fools.

Illustration: Good-time Charlie and the preachers remark about eternity, ‘We were all having a good time, why do you want to talk about depressing things!’

Luke 19: 7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

What they meant as a slur against Christ is the best news you will ever hear if you ever find yourself to be a sinner. Are you a sinner? Are YOU a sinner? Answer God now! Are you a sinner? If not you can’t have Christ, you are not fit for him! Christ came to call sinners.

Luke 5: 31: And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Yes, Christ went to be guest with a man that is a sinner and left the self-righteous alone to murmur amongst themselves. Christ tells us why down in verses 9 and 10.

Luke 19: 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.

Zacchaeus was a spiritual son of Abraham—a child of promise—an elect child of God. Christ came from heaven for he is God with us. He came to seek and to save that which was lost for he shall his people from our sins, his elect lost in the fall of Adam. He came to make us heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, so that one day we shall see the glory he had with the Father before the world began. He shall not fail! None shall be lost when the final trumpet blows!

Now I want you to see the change that grace makes. Back to verse 8.

Luke 19: 8: And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord;

Now notice this is what happened when Zacchaeus experienced the power of God's grace. Wrath did not do this, law did not do this, the preaching of morality did not do this but grace, mercy, and forgiveness of sins by the power of Christ's call did this! And notice what the grace of God produced immediately to this one who was before a rich thieving publican.

Luke 19: 8: 8: And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord...

He was no longer fearful of men but now he revered Christ before all owning Christ to be his Lord. The man born blind, stood before the rulers of the synagogue, even his own parents who would not stand with him:

John 9: 30: The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes....32: Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33: If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Grace makes a sinner no longer ashamed to confess Christ as his Lord before men.

Luke 19: 8: And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor.

He said he gave not the tenth, but half, not another's good's but that which was valuable to him, not with a motive of looking for return but to the poor who could give him nothing in return. He was no longer under the law but under grace. Grace creates a gracious giver who gives cheerfully and abundantly because the Lord has graciously given so abundantly to him. Law cannot do that, only grace!

Luke 19: 8:...and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

Before his conversion, he was a thief and thought nothing of it. Grace makes a believer confess his sins and willingly make restitution for his wrongs. He did not have to be given a court order to do it. He was willing to do so. Grace makes a man honest with God and with men, not because of the letter of the law, but by the constraint of God's love and mercy because those called of God behold that Christ, as the substitute of his people, was made sin for us and restored to God that which he took not away, but that which we robbed God of by our sin.

Any man who denies that Christ is able to produce good works in his vessels of mercy has never experienced the power by which God makes a sinner his workmanship. Being justified by faith alone, does not lead to licentiousness, it makes a man gracious. Faith works by love. The power of Christ's love constrains the believer to love mercy because of the riches of God's mercy and his great love wherewith he loved us. By grace are his people saved and this is the fruit his grace produces.

Man does not need to hear about certain sins that are wrong, it will make him self-righteous, he needs to hear he is a puddle of puke and not worthy of the least of God's mercies.

Men don't need to hear how they can make themselves accepted with lies about by works they can do, they need to be shut up to the sovereign grace of God's unconditional grace choosing whom he will. God uses the truth to make a man a mercy beggar.

Men don't need to be told the lie that their faith makes Christ's blood effectual, we need to hear the truth of Christ's successful particular redemption of his people which declares God is just and the Justifier of all who believe.

Men don't need to be soft-peddled the lie that they can make themselves born-again by an act of their will, they need to be told the truth of our need for the Spirit to regenerate and call effectually, irresistibly by his grace. Only the Spirit can make sinners alive to receive the things that are freely given to us of God.

Has Christ called you so as to make your heart rejoice in the great things he has freely done for you by his grace? Has his grace made you to come down? Has his grace made you no longer ashamed for others to know all your hope is Jesus Christ your righteousness? Does his love make you to love mercy for the needy? Has his grace made you honest?

If so, give all glory to God for he has freely given you eternal life in his Son. But, if not, be not deceived—God is not mocked. The natural man is so sick he thinks he's whole, so blind he thinks he sees, too lost to know he's lost, too dead to know he's dead.

If he ever speaks it will be effectual, that is the only way he speaks to his vessels of mercy—his word never returns to him void. I hope Christ is speaking this to your heart now because only Christ can give this word life within, in a true understanding. This is the sovereign Lord who saves and makes his people loving and merciful. Man only fails, God never does!

Amen!