

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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The Words, Works, and Person of Christ

The Gospel of Luke

The Free Gift that Costs
Everything (Pt 9)

Seeking and Saving the Lost

November 13, 2022

Sermon Text: Luke 19:9-10;

Scripture Reading:

In our series of selections from the Gospel of Luke, we have been focusing on those scriptures in which the Lord Jesus sets out the *cost* of following Him. Salvation is a free gift, but it costs everything. The Rich Young Ruler was not willing to give up that which Jesus called him to give – and he lost eternal life as a result.

Zacchaeus, in contrast, was sought by Christ and when he came down out of that tree at Christ's command, he was changed from corrupt sinner to saint. *Although this salvation was free, it cost Zacchaeus everything, BUT NOTE: this price was a cost he joyfully and willingly paid!* The cost of following Christ is everything and yet the person who is made into a new creation by Christ understands what the Apostle Paul realized:

Php 3:7-11 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which

comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

To the new creation Christian, this world's treasure becomes rubbish and Christ is seen as true treasure.

Mat 13:44-46 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (45) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

One of the clearest signs that a person is still dead in their sins is that of *clinging to this present world and the reluctance to give up its counterfeit riches*. All of this changes when such a person is born

again, and that is how it was with Zacchaeus.

Now, you remember that when Jesus told Zacchaeus in the presence of the crowd in Jericho that He must come to Zacchaeus' house, the crowds grumbled:

Luk 19:5-7 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” (6) So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. (7) And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.”

And then we saw that in response to Zacchaeus' announced repentance, Jesus said this in the hearing of the grumblers-

Luk 19:9-10 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

These are the two verses I would

like us to look more closely at this morning. Specifically,

- Who is a child of Abraham?
- Who are the Lost?

He Also is a Son of Abraham

Long centuries ago, the Lord appeared to a man called Abram and He made Abram a promise. It is really the most important promise ever vowed because in this promise our salvation is announced and effected:

Gen 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, **and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Gen 15:5-6 And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if

you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “**So shall your offspring be.**” (6) And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

Abraham was counted righteous *by faith in God's Promise*. He didn't know as much about this Promise as we do but He did know something about this Seed who would one day be born as his descendant:

Joh 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”

Abraham knew that ONE descendant of his would be this Seed Promised:

Gal 3:16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.

And Hebrews:

Heb 6:13-15 For when God made

a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, (14) saying, “Surely I will bless you and multiply you.” (15) And thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.

Paul elaborates on this Promise as well in his letter to the Romans:

Rom 4:13-25 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. (14) For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. (15) For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

(16) That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law **but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,** (17) as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the

God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

(18) In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “**So shall your offspring be.**”

(19) He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. (20) No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, (21) fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

(22) That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”

(23) **But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone,** (24) **but for ours also.** It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, (25) who was delivered up for our

trespasses and raised for our justification.

Do you begin to see it? *In order to be saved, WE must believe the Promise made to Abraham which is the Promise that God provides a Seed, and Offspring of Abraham, and when we believe this good news about Christ, WE become children of Abraham who is the father of all who are of this faith.*

A Christian is a son or daughter of Abraham because by faith in Christ we are born again and joined to Christ so that like Christ, we are children (descendants) of Abraham.

And what does this mean? *That the Promise made to Abraham is made to US. WE become heirs of this great salvation in Christ which God promised to Abraham. And this is why Jesus announced that Zacchaeus had become a child of Abraham.*

You see it elsewhere:

Luk 13:16 And ought not this

woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

The Jews boasted to Jesus (John 8:44) that they were the children of Abraham, but He admonished them and told them that in fact their father was the devil! They did not understand this:

Rom 9:7 and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named."

Nor this:

Rom 2:28-29 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. (29) But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

This is why Paul talks about the Gentiles being grafted into the tree from which the Jews had been lopped off for unbelief (Romans

11) and the root of that tree is Abraham. The tree is the elect of God, the true Israel.

You see then why Jesus announced that Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham and the implication was that the grumbling crowd around Him *were not true Jews*. Some commentators suggest, in fact, that Zacchaeus was a Gentile. But that remains an unknown.

Understand this then? *To be saved, WE must be made Jews. We must become true Israelites, members of the true Israel which is the real household of God, and the way this happens is that by His Spirit, through faith in Christ, we are regenerated and circumcised in heart so that being joined to Christ, we too become children of Abraham and heirs according to the Promise.* The new heavens and earth and all the treasures of Christ become ours. Forgiveness of sins. Redemption from slavery to the devil. Eternal life. Justification before God. Sanctification and glorification so that we are freed even from the sin of our old flesh. The right to see the face of Jesus.

Seeking and Saving the Lost

Who are the “lost” who Jesus said He came to save? Everyone? He didn’t die on the cross for everyone – He died for His elect (see John 17 for proof of that). Who is it then that He came to seek out? Zacchaeus obviously was one but who are the rest?

Mat 10:5-6 These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, (6) but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

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Luk 15:4-6 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? (5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his

shoulders, rejoicing. (6) And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

Luk 15:24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

Let's see what we can find in the Old Testament:

Psa 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.

Jer 50:6 "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold.

Eze 34:12-16 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where

they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. (13) And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

(14) I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel.

(15) I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. (16) I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

The Lord seeks:

- His lost sheep (which begins

with Israel, then with the apostle Paul the search extends to the Gentiles)

- Sheep of His flock who have strayed away and become lost from the Lord
- Like a father seeking out his lost son
- He seeks his servant
- He seeks His people
- He seeks His flock which has been scattered

In other words, when Jesus says “for I have come to seek and to save that which was lost,” He is declaring that His seeking and saving has a specific target people – among whom Zacchaeus was one. Christ came into this world to seek out and to effect the salvation *of His people, of His flock, of His elect.*

When you seek out something, you have a specific target in mind. Seeking has an object.

“Hey, Fred, I see you are searching.”

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“Yep, I’m searching.”

“Ok then, happy searching, I wish you luck. And by the way, what are you searching for?”

“Nothing in particular. I’m just searching.”

You see how ridiculous that is and yet it seems this is the very idea so many Christians have of the saving work of Christ. He isn’t seeking anyone in particular – He is just seeking and saving. Who? They don’t know.

But Jesus came into this world to ACCOMPLISH the salvation of HIS sheep! He comes into Jericho that day, He stops at “the place,” He looks up and sets His gaze on Zacchaeus, He calls him by name and calls him to come to him. And then Jesus tells the crowd:

Luk 19:9-10 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
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Just like the false shepherds of Jeremiah and Ezekiel’s day, the

false shepherds in Israel when Christ came had caused the flock of God to be scattered. They prevented people from finding the Messiah. They led them down wrong paths, just as Mr. Worldly Wiseman turned Christian aside from the Narrow Way. But Jesus, the Good Shepherd came to seek AND to save His lost flock. HIS flock. HIS sheep.

Joh 10:25-27 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, (26) but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. (27) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Think about being lost in literal terms. Who is a lost person? They are someone who has strayed away FROM someplace where they BELONG. A lost coin belongs in a purse. Your lost iPhone belongs on your person. When someone is lost in the forest (we call that the "woods" here), they are lost FROM home or from camp. They are lost

from a place of safety and they are in a dangerous place. So when rescue teams go out – *they go out to seek and to save that which is lost*. To bring them home where they belong and where they are safe.

This is exactly what Jesus does for His people whom the Father has given Him. They are lost. They are separated from the Father and from the life and light that is in Him. They are in danger. So Christ came into this world to find them and to rescue them and to bring them home.

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree, he was racing around trying to get a glimpse of Jesus, because even though he didn't realize it – he was lost. He was not where He belonged. He was not in his proper home. And when Jesus spoke to him, Zacchaeus recognized His voice and responded immediately. He recognized home and the One who would take him there.

If you do not know Christ, if you are not born again, then you are lost, and you are in terrible peril.

You cannot remain where you are and live. Broadway ends in hell. Unless you hear Christ's voice calling you – there is no hope. He is ready to give you ears to hear Him and to recognize Him, if you will just admit your need and ask:

Rom 10:13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”