

## Christmas With Zacchaeus

KSBC 12/21/08

Luke 19:1-10

**INTRO** Where does joy come from? A synonym of joy is 'merry'. What makes a person or holiday 'merry?'

What a day for Mary and us when God sent the angel Gabriel to her town to announce to her that she was greatly favored by God to become the mother of the Christ child. After the exchange of details regarding the name, what he will do and how it will happen with her being a virgin, Mary assured Gabriel that she was a willing and obedient participant in this wonderful initiative of seeking and saving lost people. Scripture records that the first thing she did was to hurry to a neighboring town to a family member's house – Elizabeth. Moved by the Holy Spirit, they worship and encourage each other about the blessings of God in their lives. Mary writes a song reflecting the humble thoughts of her heart as she begins to grasp her role in the divine mission of seeking and saving lost people. She sings . . .

*My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.* L1:46-48

More than 30 years later as Jesus, all grown up now, is traveling to Jerusalem for his appointment with death, he looks up in a tree and connects with a lost man, changing his life forever. You can hear and see a 'Mary like joy' in the man in the tree as he turns to follow Christ. A joyful and generous response, evidence that the message of Christmas has been received. Jesus came to seek and to save lost people. Let's look at the story of the man who met Jesus in a tree for the purpose of tuning our hearts to celebrate God's power to save lost people.

Where does joy come from? It comes from understanding, reviewing, remembering and experiencing the loving ways of God in saving lost people.

### Read Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus introduction	1-4
Jesus and Zacchaeus meet	5-6
Responses and explanation	7-9
Jesus stated mission	10

Joy is produced in the soul of the person who begins to grasp the ways of God in reaching out to and delivering people in darkness. God takes the initiative to make himself known to people desperate for help. Joy comes from knowing you have been found by God and he has given you a new life, clean and free, in Christ. Consider Zacchaeus's story as a joy explaining and joy producing example of God's being mindful of the humble state of people and doing something about it.

### Rejoice . . .

#### 1. God prepares lost people to meet Jesus. 1-4

Note the evidences that appear in Zacchaeus's life that God is at work preparing him for an encounter with Jesus. What does God taking the initiative in someone's life look like? How do you know that God is in fact at work to draw you or someone to saving faith?

- An unexplainable desire to know more about Jesus.
- A strong curiosity to check out Jesus.
- A scripture focused messenger that points to Jesus.

Cmp signs accompanying announcement of Jesus birth; L8 parable of soils

## **2. God connects lost people to Jesus. 5**

Note the initiatives of Jesus in stopping, looking, and speaking with Zacchaeus. Jesus commands him to come down as there is a divinely necessary meeting they must have. God led both Zacchaeus and Jesus to the tree to set up the necessary meeting of the two.

Note two passages in John's gospel that reveal the heart of God towards connecting lost people to Jesus . . .

John 3:16 God so loved . . . he sent

John 6:35-40 God so wills . . . he gives

Illus. Acts 13:47-49

## **3. God changes lost people through Jesus. 6-9**

Note the responses of Zacchaeus compared to the response of the crowd. Jesus summarized and interpreted Zacchaeus's responses as salvation having come to his house. God's power to save the lost is evident in the new directions in Zacchaeus's life.

- Joyful obedience.
- Generous repentance.

## **Have a Merry Christmas!**

1. Identify and address the obstacles keeping you from gladly following Jesus.
2. Write out and tell someone your story of how God sought, found and saved you.
3. Radically and generously repent of that sin that you and God have been fighting about for a long time.
4. Joyfully respond to God's loving patience by turning your life over to Christ by faith.