

Lesson 7 10 December 2017

"Occupy Till I Come"

Lesson Scope: [Luke 19:1-27](#)

References in brackets refer to Luke 19 unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

Jesus was in the final days before His crucifixion. The cross was before Him, and He resolutely moved toward it (18:31). Jesus purposefully traveled through Jericho to minister to Zacchaeus, who was seeking Jesus (19:3) but found that Jesus was actually seeking him (19:10). Jesus' words "This day is salvation come to this house" gives hope to all men who are seeking salvation. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10).

The parable following this story shares the burden of our Saviour. Will His servants be faithful? Will they gain more from what was invested in them? Man begins his life unwilling to "have this man to reign over us" (19:14); but by repentance, gains a servant attitude, willing to occupy for his Master.

Man is accountable to God for how he uses life's opportunities. Only those who receive Christ and serve Him acceptably will be rewarded for their labors.

Do not allow the familiarity of Zacchaeus' story to dampen your enthusiasm. This is a beautiful story that reveals Christ's power and forgiveness. The words seek, save, and lost depict Jesus' compassion shown upon man's desperate situation. Be sure to emphasize the accountability that Zacchaeus portrayed before Jesus forgave him. The Law commanded the amount of restitution one needed to pay for wrongdoing (Leviticus 6:1-5).

Once a sinner is saved by grace, he has received a "pound." This word carries the definition of "rough" or "severe." Not all Christians will be equally talented in witnessing or in other areas of service, but Jesus' call here was that we should serve to the best to our ability. All the faithful servants received a blessing from God even though they gained varying amounts for their lord.

Lesson Aim: To help us understand man's accountability to the Lord.

Theme Verse: Luke 19:13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Lesson Text

"This Day Is Salvation Come"

Luke 19:1-10 And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. ²And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. ³And he sought to see *Jesus* who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. ⁴And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. ⁵And when *Jesus* came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. ⁶And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. ⁸And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold. ⁹And *Jesus* said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

"Thou Hast Been Faithful"

Luke 19:11-19 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. ¹²He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. ¹³And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. ¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. ¹⁵And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. ¹⁷And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a

very little, have thou authority over ten cities. ¹⁸And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. ¹⁹And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

"Thou Wicked Servant"

Luke 19:20-27 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: ²¹For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. ²²And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: ²³Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? ²⁴And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. ²⁵(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) ²⁶For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. ²⁷But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

Questions for Study

"This Day Is Salvation Come"

1. What background or social status did Jesus overlook to save Zacchaeus?
2. At what point did Jesus grant salvation to Zacchaeus?
3. Why is restitution an important factor in salvation?

"Thou Hast Been Faithful"

4. What attitudes are implied in the statement "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds"?
5. What factors may have enabled one servant to gain ten pounds while another gained only five?
6. How should we fulfill the Lord's command "Occupy till I come"?

"Thou Wicked Servant"

7. What was the true reason the wicked servant hid his pound?
8. How can we be guilty of protecting and yet losing the "pound"?

Analyzing the Passage

The publicans were tax collectors, hired by the Romans. They were highly disliked by the Jews for their work and for their extortion. Zacchaeus's urge to know "who he was" suggests more than a mere glimpse of Jesus. Zacchaeus had a deep longing in his soul. When Jesus asked to come to his house, Zacchaeus, with no hesitation, "received him joyfully." Salvation could only come after confession was made.

The misconception that Jesus would initiate a political deliverance from Roman oppression (19:11) blinded the eyes of His listeners.

Pounds in the parable (19:12-27) represents the spiritual stewardship that comes with the privilege of salvation. Each servant received one pound. For the servants to occupy meant they were to trade or earn usury for their lord. The citizens (19:14) and the servants (19:13) are two different groups of people in the nobleman's kingdom. Although not all the servants performed as desired, the citizens did worse in that they outright rejected their master's lordship.

Principles and Applications

"This Day Is Salvation Come"

1. Regardless of man's background or social standing, he is accountable to God (19:2). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Our social standing outside of God's provision through Christ's blood can never merit salvation. Nor is there anyone so depraved that God's grace cannot find him and save him if he will but open his heart as Zacchaeus did.

2. A desire to see and know Jesus precedes finding acceptance with God (19:3). By nature, the lost sinner does not seek the Saviour (Romans 3:11). When Adam and Eve sinned, their response was to hide from God, but God in mercy sought for them. Jesus knew what would unfold at Jericho, but His response and, finally, God's acceptance of Zacchaeus hinged on Zacchaeus's faith and obedience.

3. A true seeker will not allow obstacles to hinder him from seeing and knowing Jesus (19:4). It was not Zacchaeus's fault that he was "little of stature." But how he responded to that obstacle showed his level of determination. All mankind will experience some level of obstacles, but how we respond will be the key to how God can work in our lives.

4. A wise man will gladly and quickly heed the call of God (19:5-6).

God mercifully provides opportunities to which man must respond. At times His call is through death, natural disaster, sickness, or the still small voice of conviction. But ultimately, it is man who decides if he will heed or reject God's call.

5. In acknowledging his accountability before God, a man makes restitution for past wrongs (19:8-10). Jesus stood and commanded Zacchaeus to come down; then Zacchaeus stood to make restitution for his wrongs. Restitution needs to follow repentance; otherwise, full salvation cannot be experienced. Restitution must be made directly for the wrong that was committed even though years have elapsed or the wrong is unknown to the opposite party.

"Thou Hast Been Faithful"

6. The responsible servant obeys Christ's command to be busy in the Lord's work (19:12-13). We must view the work seriously, for souls are at stake. This work includes being God's representatives to the unsaved in this world, witnessing of God's grace and mercy. Those who respond to God's call to salvation need to be taught the "all things" of the Word and to be nurtured in their Christian walk.

7. Every man gives personal account to God (19:15). We must remember the pound is "thy pound." We will need to answer for our words, our deeds, and our total influence upon others while serving in the kingdom. Christ, our nobleman, has invested in us resources, privileges, and opportunities to serve His cause in His kingdom. How are we discharging our responsibilities? "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

8. The Lord rewards according to faithfulness (19:16-19). The Lord blesses only those who "occupy" for His benefit. Individual abilities may vary, and no two people experience identical circumstances. The Lord will give eternal reward if, as the woman who ministered to Jesus in Simon's house, we have "done what [we] could."

"Thou Wicked Servant"

9. Neglect of duty is inexcusable and will bring eternal reaping (19:20-24). Failure to be occupied in kingdom work indicates that our interests are elsewhere. Our Master will not tolerate divided loyalty. Either we are filling our role in the kingdom with zeal or we are neglecting and hiding the "pound" that was invested in us. Not only will the "pound," or salvation, be taken from the unfaithful, but he will also experience

eternal punishment.

10. Those who reject the authority of Christ will ultimately be lost (19:26-27). We would not refuse our Lord's claim to our service as did the "citizens" in Jesus' parable. But a little disobedience or an unsundered will or reservation in even some small area of our life is a rejection of Christ's authority. Pride and self-sufficiency take to oneself what belongs to God.

Important Teachings

1. Regardless of man's background or social standing, he is accountable to God (19:2).
2. A desire to see and know Jesus precedes finding acceptance with God (19:3).
3. A true seeker will not allow obstacles to hinder him from seeing and knowing Jesus (19:4).
4. A wise man will gladly and quickly heed the call of God (19:5, 6).
5. In acknowledging his accountability before God, a man makes restitution for past wrongs (19:8-10).
6. The responsible servant obeys Christ's command to be busy in the Lord's work (19:12-13).
7. Every man gives personal account to God (19:15).
8. The Lord rewards according to faithfulness (19:16-19).
9. Neglect of duty is inexcusable and will bring eternal reaping (19:20-24).
10. Those who reject the authority of Christ will ultimately be lost (19:26-27).

Answers to Questions

1. What background or social status did Jesus overlook to save Zacchaeus?

Jesus knew Zacchaeus was a despised publican. He also knew his level of honesty. He was a Jew working for the "unclean" Gentiles. He was a friendless man and was disliked by many of the people of Jericho.

2. At what point did Jesus grant salvation to Zacchaeus?

Jesus began His ministry with Zacchaeus by seeking him and inviting Himself to his house. Zacchaeus needed to recognize who Jesus was and that He has saving power. But salvation was not granted until Zac-

chaeus had made his confession. At that point Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

3. Why is restitution an important factor in salvation?

Restitution is the outworking of a repentant heart. In order for man to have this attitude, humility and selflessness must dwell in his heart. An important factor of salvation is sanctification, which motivates a Christian to make restitution. Unforgiven sin hinders one from experiencing total cleansing.

4. What attitudes are implied in the statement "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds"?

The servant respected the nobleman for the authority he had. He viewed the pound as the Lord's and not his own. "Thy pound hath gained" implies that the servant, in humility, gave no credit to himself for the gaining.

5. What factors may have enabled one servant to gain ten pounds while another gained only five?

Perhaps he took his responsibility more seriously. His personality may have tended to be more industrious or outgoing, therefore gaining him more. The servant that gained five pounds may have thought he still had more time to occupy for his Lord. Neither servant filled his role for the reward; the reward was unknown. But both invested because they were commanded to occupy.

6. How should we fulfill the Lord's command "Occupy till I come"?

We must first be awed by the saving power of Christ in our personal lives. Growing from this, there extends a love and concern for other needy souls. For most, our families' spiritual needs should grip our aims and visions. Spiritual needs of neighbors, co-workers, relatives, and daily acquaintances should urge us to point them to Jesus Christ. Church work such as missions, literature distribution, street meetings, prayer services, and cottage meetings should be viewed as avenues through which we can invest our Lord's "pound."

7. What was the true reason the wicked servant hid his pound?

The main reason this servant was unfaithful was because his heart was not right toward his master. He viewed his master as a hard, demanding, and unfair man. Rather than lose the pound and incur his master's anger, he guarded it so he would at least have the one pound for his master when he returned.

8. How can we be guilty of protecting and yet losing the 'pound'?"
Not believing that the Gospel is for all men will affect our own personal salvation as well as thinking that somehow we have earned or deserved salvation. Receiving salvation but failing to be victorious or failing to avail ourselves of its power for daily life will cause us to lose it.

Summarizing the Lesson

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.... So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:7-8, 12).

Research Guide

Study Matthew 25 and compare the talents in this parable.