



OHBC MEMORY VERSE – WEEK #44

THIS WEEK'S VERSE: ACTS 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Why Acts 1:8?

Because it is such a power-packed statement of our Lord concerning our salvation and the scope of our mission!

As always, let's first identify the context. Verse 3 lets us know that our Lord's statement was made after "His passion" (referring specifically to His death, but obviously, also after His subsequent burial and resurrection) during the 40 day period when He taught His disciples about the Kingdom of God (the spiritual kingdom entered by a spiritual birth). Though Acts 1:8 has specific application to us, it does have somewhat of a different twist to us now than it did to those to whom our Lord spoke it historically in this passage. When our Lord made the statement of verse 8, He had not yet ascended to the Father, and the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15) had not yet been fulfilled. Jesus had spent 3 1/2 years immersed in life together with His disciples, but they had never experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within them. In Acts 1:8, Jesus was explaining to them what it would actually mean to their lives after the Holy Spirit came to take up residence within them.

The difference for us is that when we call upon the Lord Jesus Christ and have imparted to us the gift of salvation, at that very moment we are "born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-6); we receive the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; 6:19; Rom. 8:9); and are sealed by the Spirit (Eph. 1:10-14). We receive all of Him at that very moment. Being filled with the Spirit isn't you getting more of Him, but Him having all of you (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16)!

But the result of receiving the Holy Spirit is the same for us as it was for those to whom Jesus was speaking in Acts 1:8. First of all, we receive POWER. It is the same power that opened our blind eyes to the gospel (Acts 26:18; II Cor. 4:4), "turned us from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18; I Pet. 2:9) and turned us from Satan's power to God's (Acts 26:18; II Tim. 2:26). That power is now inside of every one of us who have ever been born-again.

Secondly, we became WITNESSES. Because of the unleashing of His power in and on our lives, we now have a story to tell. We have a testimony. We may not have yet learned all of the "ins and outs" of presenting the gospel, but we do know what happened to us! That's what a witness does. They simply tell the story the way it happened from their vantage point.

Thirdly, notice the full SCOPE of how far the power of our testimony is to reach. Jesus said, "Both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." In other words, to all regions and all peoples. In terms of regions, our Jerusalem would be Bartow County, our Judaea – the state of Georgia, our Samaria – the United States, and the uttermost – anywhere and everywhere outside of the United States. In terms of people, to those who were listening to Jesus in Acts 1:8, Jerusalem would have represented Orthodox Jews, Judaea – the Jews, Samaria – 1/2 Jews 1/2 Gentiles, and the uttermost – Gentiles. To us, it simply represents every tribe, tongue, people and nation.

And notice that the scope of our mission is not "EITHER/OR" – but "BOTH/AND!" It's not that we will be empowered to witness "EITHER in Jerusalem OR Judaea, OR in Samaria, OR unto the uttermost part of the earth," BUT! "BOTH in Jerusalem, AND in all Judaea, AND in Samaria, AND unto the uttermost part of the earth." Our responsibility is to all peoples and nations, and all at the same time!

Have you allowed God's power through His Holy Spirit to be unleashed in you? Are you allowing Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit? Are you daily walking in the Spirit?

Is He using you as a witness? How far have you allowed His power to take you in terms of witnessing? Throughout your Jerusalem? Into your Judaea? Into your Samaria? To the uttermost part of the earth?

A new year of mission trips is on the horizon. Be praying about where God's power wants to take you to fulfill Acts 1:8!

DAY 216

TODAY'S READING: LUKE 7-9

OVERVIEW: Jesus' response to the faith of the centurion (7:1-10); Jesus' response to the sorrow of the widow (7:11-17); Jesus' response to the doubt of John the Baptist (7:18-35); Jesus' response to the love of a woman with a sordid past (7:36-50); Jesus teaches His disciples about receiving God's Word (8:1-21); Jesus tests His disciples concerning applying God's Word (8:22-56); Jesus sends out His 12 disciples (9:1-11); Jesus feeds the 5000 (9:12-17); Jesus teaches His disciples about His person, His sacrifice and His kingdom (9:18-36); Jesus endures His disciples lack of power, love, and surrender (9:37-62).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As has been mentioned several times since beginning the Gospels, because they are the record of actual events, for the most part, they are easily understood. Though each event is power-packed full of practical application, the nature of the 365 Days of Pursuit does not lend itself to commenting everywhere the passage is screaming for it. Make as much practical application as you possibly can as you make your way through today's reading, but let's do something a little different today, and "camp out" in the story of "The Pharisee and the Prostitute" in Luke 7:36-50. It provides some incredible lessons in contrast.

Lesson #1 –

The Pharisee was willing to interrupt his SCHEDULE to have JESUS in his PRESENCE.

The Prostitute was willing for the PRESENCE of JESUS to interrupt her LIFE! (7:36)

Examination:

Do I want Jesus in MY presence? Or, do I want JESUS' presence in me?

Do I want to have HIM? Or, do I want Him to have ME?

Lesson #2 –

The Pharisee wanted Jesus in HIS presence, but was seeking to SAVE face.

The Prostitute wanted the presence of Jesus in HER, and was seeking HIS face. (7:36-38, 44-46)

Examination:

What am I seeking to HOLD on to, while I'm telling Jesus I want His PRESENCE in me?

Do I want as much of the presence of Jesus in me as I can HAVE?

Or, do I want as much of the presence of Jesus in me as I can HAVE and not lose my IDENTITY?

Lesson #3 –

Jesus heard what the Pharisee was saying in HIS heart;
and Jesus heard what the Prostitute was saying in HER heart. (7:39, 44-47)

Examination:

What does Jesus HEAR when He listens to MY heart?

Would Jesus HEAR my worship if it weren't expressed with WORDS?

Lesson #4 –

The Prostitute was 10 times the sinner the Pharisee was, but our sinfulness is not determined by the amount of sin-debt we incurred, but by the amount we had to pay on the debt. (7:40-42)

Note: We all had absolutely NOTHING to pay on the debt!

Examination:

Do I really understand my SINFULNESS before God?

Do I fully comprehend the significance of the fact that regardless of the amount of my sin, I had “nothing to pay” on the debt?

Lesson #5 –

The Pharisee’s blindness to his own sinfulness DIMINISHED his capacity to love Jesus.

The Prostitute’s overwhelming awareness of her own sinfulness ENLARGED her capacity to love Jesus. (7:40-43, 47)

Note: How you view your own sinfulness affects your ability to love Jesus!

Examination:

Do I fully comprehend the significance of my own sin when I view the price Jesus paid for sin in His crucifixion?

Lesson #6 –

The Pharisee was so BLIND to his own sin; it OPENED his eyes to the Prostitute’s sinfulness.

The Prostitute’s eyes were so OPEN to her own sinfulness; she was BLINDED to everyone else’s. (7:36-39)

Note: How you view your own sinfulness affects your ability to see!

Examination:

Has pride BLINDED my eyes to my OWN sin, and OPENED my eyes to the sin of OTHERS?

Lesson #7 –

The Pharisee’s “worship” in the presence of Christ was based on his OWN WORTHINESS.

The Prostitute’s worship in presence of Christ was based on CHRIST’S WORTHINESS. (7:40-50)

Note Jesus’ explanation of the Pharisee’s “worship”:

1. You didn’t THINK enough of Me to even provide water to wash my feet.
2. You weren’t EXCITED enough about receiving Me into your presence to even provide an affectionate greeting.
3. You weren’t CONSIDERATE enough of Me to go out of your way to provide for My head to be anointed with oil.

Note the demonstration of the Prostitute’s worship:

1. She broke open the box of her most prized treasure to release the fragrance of true worship.
2. She expressed a broken and contrite heart through her tears used to wash Jesus’ feet.
3. She dismantled HER glory (I Cor. 11:15) to give HIM glory.
4. She overflowed in her affection and exaltation of Christ by ceaselessly kissing His feet.

Examination:

What is the “box” of your most prized treasure Jesus is waiting for you to break open to release the fragrance of your true worship?

Has my heart become calloused and cold, unable to be broken into tears to wash Jesus’ feet?

Have I become so consumed with my ego and self-glory that I’m unwilling to dismantle it for His glory?

Is my affection and exaltation of Christ apparent by my humility toward Him? (i.e. kissing His feet)

Will you be a box-breaking, oil-pouring, tear-washing, glory-sacrificing, foot-kissing, face-seeking worshipper of the Lord Jesus Christ today? Go for it!

TODAY'S READING: LUKE 10-12

OVERVIEW: Jesus sends out "the 70" (10:1-24); Jesus teaches about who are neighbor is (10:25-37); Jesus teaches us the importance of worship (10:38-42); Jesus models the importance of prayer (11:1); Jesus provides a pattern for prayer (11:2-4); Jesus teaches about persistence in prayer (11:5-8); Jesus offers promises concerning prayer (11:9-13); Jesus teaches about the devil (11:14-28); Jesus' illustrations concerning the crowds (11:29-36—Jonah – 11:29-30,32; Solomon – 11:31; Light – 11:33-36); Jesus teaches about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (11:37-54); Jesus warns about hypocrisy (12:1-12); Jesus warns about covetousness (12:13-21); Jesus warns about worrying (12:22-34); Jesus warns about carelessness (12:35-53); Jesus warns about lack of discernment and lack of diligence in spiritual matters (12:54-59).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we continue to make our way through the Gospel of Luke, note the fact that there is a phrase that appears more times in this Book than any other Book in the New Testament. That phrase is "the Kingdom of God." As we came through Matthew's Gospel, we talked quite a bit about the distinction between the two phrases, the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God." It is interesting that the phrase the "kingdom of heaven" is found 33 times in 32 verses in Matthew, and the phrase the "kingdom of God" is found 33 times in 32 verses in Luke.

Do you remember the difference between these two kingdoms? The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom promised to the Jews all through the Old Testament, and is sometimes referred to as the Kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6; Hosea 1:4). It is a literal, physical, earthly, governmental, messianic, Davidic kingdom over which Jesus rules as King from His throne in Jerusalem. The Kingdom of God on the other hand, is a spiritual kingdom that cannot be seen or touched, where Jesus rules as King on the throne of men's hearts by way of a spiritual birth (Luke 17:20-21; Rom 14:17; I Cor. 4:20; 15:50; John 3:3). Keep in mind as you are reading this Gospel that the reason Luke emphasizes the kingdom of God is because God's goal through him in this Gospel is to present the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of man who came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

It is interesting to note that the Jews of Jesus' day were totally preoccupied with the "kingdom of heaven," and therefore, were totally oblivious to their need to be born into the "kingdom of God," It made them blind, selfish, and self-serving. Just as interesting is the fact that the Christians of our day are totally preoccupied with the "kingdom of God," and therefore, are totally oblivious to the "kingdom of heaven." It likewise, makes us blind, selfish and self-serving (Rev. 3:14-22; II Tim. 3:1-2). We end up claiming the promise of eternal life, while we go about our lives seeking to build our own literal, physical kingdom on the earth. God's intention is that now that we have been born into His spiritual kingdom, that we "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," and that we "set [our] affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2), while we pray for the "kingdom to come" (Matt. 6:10) — that literal, physical kingdom in which our Lord Jesus Christ finally receives the "glory due unto his name" (I Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 96:8). As you can see, keeping these two kingdoms straight not only has key doctrinal implications, but key practical implications as well.

Perhaps it is because of this emphasis in Luke's Gospel that he is the only Gospel writer that includes the sending out of the 70 found in today's reading (10:1-24). Why 70, and not 7, 17, or 67? Just as "the 12" apostles are associated with the 12 sons of Jacob, it seems that "the 70" must also have some significant association. Though it is more difficult an association to determine than with "the 12," it seems apparent that "the 70" are associated with the 70 nations found in Genesis 10. Because Luke focuses on the universality of the "kingdom of God" to all peoples and all nations, it is very fitting that his Gospel would include "the 70" being sent to spread the message to all nations.

Other little "tid-bits" to glean along the way in today's reading:

10:1-42 – Notice in this chapter the three places that are described, and the three things we are to do in each:

1. The harvest field (10:1-24): Represent Him.
2. The highway (10:25-37): Model Him.
3. The home (10:38-42): Worship Him.

10:23-24 – I hope this is the way you feel about the things the Lord has graciously allowed you to see in His Word and be a part of in His kingdom.

11:1 – It is interesting that the disciples heard Jesus preach the greatest sermons that have ever been preached, but they never said, “Lord, teach us to preach.” They saw Him perform the most incredible miracles that have ever been performed, but they never said, “Lord, teach us to do miracles.” But they heard Him pray, and couldn’t help but ask, “Lord, teach us to pray.” What a connection He must have had. What an intimacy they must have witnessed. May we learn what it really is to pray.

11:24-26 – The application of these verses to us is to constantly realize that it is not enough that we be set apart FROM the world, but that we be set apart UNTO God (John 17:11-17). It is not enough that we put OFF the OLD man, but that we put ON the NEW man (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:8-14). It is not enough that we no longer SERVE SIN, but that we SERVE RIGHTEOUSNESS (Rom. 6:17-18).

DAY 218

TODAY’S READING: LUKE 13-15

OVERVIEW:

Jesus provides pertinent answers to pertinent questions (13:1-35); Jesus addresses the guests in a Pharisee’s house on the Sabbath day (14:1-35); Jesus gives three illustrations to reveal God’s heart for the lost (15:1-32).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we move into chapter 13, Jesus continues His journey toward Jerusalem (see 9:51; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11, 28).

As He makes His way, He is faced with four questions that provide a clean breakdown of the chapter. He is asked:

1. A POLITICAL question about JUSTICE (13:1-9). Jesus knows that anything He says about Pilate will certainly make it to Jerusalem before He gets there. Verses 3 and 4 teach us not to assume that human tragedies are divine punishments.
2. A LEGAL question about the SABBATH (13:10-21). It could only have been the pride and self-righteousness of the Pharisees that could cause them not to see that Jesus “loosing” this poor woman from Satan’s bond and her suffering on the Sabbath (13:12) was no different from them “loosing” their ox or donkey from the stall to get water on the Sabbath (13:15). Pride and self-righteousness still cause that same blindness and that same hideous judgmental spirit.
3. A THEOLOGICAL question about SALVATION (13:22-30). Notice that Jesus turned the man’s general question about how many would be saved, to a personal question about whether or not HE would be saved. It is amazing how many ask great spiritual, theological questions that they have no intention of obeying or practicing.
4. A PERSONAL question about DANGER (13:31-35). Though there is not a specific question asked in these verse, Jesus’ response to the statement in verse 31 is as if asked a question about whether he was concerned about Herod’s desire to kill Him. Jesus responds by saying, in effect, that His life was on God’s timetable, not man’s. (See John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 13:1; 17:1) Recognize today (and every day), that your life is on that same time schedule!

In chapter 14, Jesus is invited to come over to one of the chief Pharisee’s house for dinner after church, so to speak. (Many through the years have had the preacher for dinner :->) Jesus recognizes that He is intended to be the main entrée, so rather than be eaten alive; He takes command of the room, and faces all those in attendance with their own personal issues.

In 14:1-6, He begins with the Pharisees, making them face their false spirituality, by healing someone on the Sabbath.

In 14:7-11, Jesus then faces the other guests with their self-promotion, by pointing out that they had all sought to position themselves in the room to make themselves appear important.

In 14:12-14, Jesus faces the host with the fact that the people he had invited were actually invited to fulfill an obligation to them, or to impose a debt on them. Where are those who do not have an ulterior motive

behind their generosity? Even when we do something for nothing in return, the ulterior motive can be that we wanted to be viewed as someone who does things for nothing in return. Wow!

In 14:15-24, Jesus is facing the Jews with the fact that they were about to miss the invitation of their Messiah, and that He would then turn to the Gentiles. Notice that the more things change, the more the things remain the same. People miss Jesus for the same exact reasons in the 21st century that they did in the 1st century. They miss Him because they are:

1. Relishing in their riches (14:18).
2. Climbing in their career (14:19).
3. Focused on their family (14:20).

In 14:25-35, Jesus leaves the Pharisee's house, and then faces the multitudes with the fact that He wasn't looking for people who wanted to simply add Him on to their already cluttered life, He was looking for those who would see their relationship with Him as the most important relationship of life, and see Him as life itself! Jesus was never interested in self-seeking consumers, but self-denying disciples.

As has been pointed out repeatedly throughout the 365 Days of Pursuit, in contrast to the consumer driven messages that are preached in the Laodicean Church Period, true, biblical, Spirit-anointed preaching is at least two-thirds negative! Facing people's issues as Jesus has just done in chapters 13 and 14 wouldn't fly too well today. If someone preached like that today, you might expect to hear questions and comments like:

- "Why does our message need to be so negative?"
- "People don't want to come to church and have to feel bad."
- "I'm afraid to bring visitors to church because the high calling may push them away."
- "I'm just not being fed."
- "I'm looking for something that has a better 'ministry' to my kids."

But the good news is, Jesus wasn't all negative! In chapter 15 He pulls out three illustrations that reveal the heart of God for His lost creation. Jesus shows us that our Heavenly Father is like a tender shepherd (15:1-3), a diligent housewife (15:8-10), and a longing dad (15:11-32). He searches, and seeks, and longs, and sacrifices to see that which was lost returned to its rightful place. Praise the Lord, our rightful place is with Him!

DAY 219

TODAY'S READING: LUKE 16-18

OVERVIEW:

Jesus teaches about stewardship (16:1-13); Jesus teaches about covetousness (16:14-31); Jesus teaches about forgiveness (17:1-6); Jesus teaches about faithfulness (17:7-10); Jesus teaches about thankfulness (17:11-19); Jesus teaches about preparedness (17:20-37); a lesson to be learned from a persistent widow (18:1-8); a lesson to be learned from a proud Pharisee (18:9-17); a lesson to be learned from a disprioritized ruler (18:18-34); a lesson to be learned from a pressing beggar (18:35-43).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

There is a tremendous amount of action and pertinent information in today's reading. Certainly more than there is space in this venue to comment concerning. Our thoughts today will center around key subjects that are addressed in these chapters that have particular and significant application for believers living in these last days.

Subject #1 – STEWARDSHIP. (16:1-13)

Though the circumstances were somewhat different for the steward mentioned in this passage, each of us are quickly moving toward the ultimate accounting of our stewardship at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10, 12). Just as this steward in 16:2, you will "give an account of thy stewardship." The key on that day will be the answer to the simple question, "What did we do with what He entrusted to us?" The New Testament is clear that we will give an account of our stewardship of:

- The LIFE of God. (Gen. 2:7; Rom 5:12; Col. 1:26-27; I John 5:11) We have been given the ability to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY.

- The LOVE of God. (Rom. 5:5; Mark 12:28-31; I John 4:14-17,19; I Thess. 4:9) We have been given the ability to LOVE DIVINELY.
- The GOSPEL of God. (I Thess. 2:4; I Tim. 1:11; 6:20) We have been given the ability to impact SOULS ETERNALLY.
- The GIFTS of God. (I Peter 4:10-11; I Cor. 3:10) We have been given the ability to be USED MIGHTILY.
- The RESOURCES of God. (Money – Luke 16:11; Time – Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5; Talents – Matt. 25:14-27; People – II Tim. 1:5; 3:15) We have been given the ability to manage RESOURCES WISELY.

Verse 11 is a doozy. I am convinced that many Laodiceans never reach anybody with the gospel and never are truly able to minister effectively because God is unwilling to entrust to them what He truly treasures, simply because of their unfaithfulness to Him with money.

If verse 11 is a doozy, then verse 13 is a blockbuster for our generation of believers! We have convinced ourselves that this verse was true for everybody but us, and that we have the ability to do both. What part of “CANNOT” do we not understand? When God looks at our lives, does He think we love Him and hate money, or hate Him and love money? Does He think we hold to Him and despise money, or hold money and despise Him? We certainly want to love money and love God at the same time, but Jesus said it simply “CANNOT” be done! And all God’s people said, “Oh, me!”

Subject #2 – HELL. (16:19-31)

It is clear that prior to Christ’s resurrection, saints who died were held in a place of paradise called Abraham’s bosom. It was obviously close to the place of punishment called Hell where all unbelievers were located, being separated by a great gulf, or gaping opening (16:26). Notice that Hell is a real place, where real people go, and experience real suffering and torment. Notice that in Hell, the rich man had eyes and could see (16:23a); had a body and could feel (16:23b); had a tongue and experienced thirst (16:24); had a mouth and could talk (16:27); and evidently, had a mind and could reason (16:28).

The passage also teaches us that there are actually no unbelievers in Hell. Unbelief may have gotten them there, but as soon as they open their eyes in Hell, they become believers! Sadly, it is eternally too late.

The passage also teaches that people in Hell have compassion for the lost (16:28). Would to God that believers would have the same passion and compassion for souls that this lost rich man had.

Sometimes we think that if God would just do some miraculous thing, our lost family and friends would come to Christ. The passage teaches us that if they refuse to believe the Bible, they wouldn’t believe even if someone rose from the dead to speak to them. They already proved that by not believing in the resurrected Christ!

Subject #3 – FORGIVENESS. (17:1-6)

In this passage the Lord teaches us about the importance of forgiveness. When someone offends us, immediately God’s grace kicks in to be more than sufficient to help us to bear it (II Cor. 12:9; I Cor. 10:13). Hebrews 12:15 teaches us, however, that we have the ability to “fail the grace of God” (i.e. refuse to apply His grace). If we refuse to apply that grace, Hebrews 12:15 says that our unforgiving spirit will cause a “root of bitterness” to spring up in us and “trouble” us, and impact (“defile”) “many” people around us, even leading us into sexual sin (Heb. 12:16)! Don’t ever underestimate the importance of forgiveness!

Subject #4 – THANKFULNESS. (17:11-19)

As you read this story about these 10 lepers, recognize that, generally speaking, believers in our day are characterized by “the nine” rather than the “one.” Jesus’ question is a good one in the Laodicean Age, “where are the nine?” (17:17)

A couple of cross references to keep in mind:

- II Timothy 3:2 says that being “unthankful” is as characteristic of believers in our day as being “lovers of our own selves”!

- Romans 1:21 reveals that being “unthankful” is one of the first steps toward a “reprobate mind” (Romans 1:28). Hey, this is serious stuff!
- I Thessalonians 5:18 teaches us that it is impossible to be in the perfect will of God and not be thankful! Again, pretty serious stuff!

Subject #5 – RIGHTEOUSNESS. (18:9-14)

Any way you slice it, we who hold to “fundamentalism” run the greatest risk of becoming the modern day Pharisees. Have you become Pharisaical? Verse 9 of chapter 18 lets us know that there are two tell-tale signs:

1. Trusting in your own righteous (i.e. what you “do” FOR Christ, rather than who you “are” IN Christ)
2. Thinking you’re more spiritual than others.

What do you trust as the true source of your righteousness? Paul talked about those who are “ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). God’s righteousness could never (on either side of salvation!) be ACHIEVED! It can only be RECEIVED! Paul cried out in Philippians 3:9 to “be found in him, NOT HAVING MINE OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, which is of the law (i.e. what I do for God), but that which is through the faith of Christ (i.e. what Christ does for me), the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

And, what do you honestly think when you look at others? Do you secretly think that you are on a higher plane than they are because of what you do or do not do?

DAY 220

TODAY’S READING: LUKE 19-21

OVERVIEW: Jesus as the Saviour Who seeks the lost (19:1-10); Jesus as the Master Who rewards the faithful (19:11-27); Jesus as the King Who offers peace (19:28-48); a question concerning John the Baptist (20:1-19); a question concerning Moses (20:27-40); a question concerning David (20:41-44); a warning concerning the Scribes (20:45-47); a teaching concerning giving (21:1-4); the revealing of the first half of the Tribulation (21:5-19); the revealing of the middle of the Tribulation (21:20-24); the revealing of the last half of the Tribulation (21:25-27); the closing admonitions (21:28-36).

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we move into chapter 19 in Luke’s Gospel, keep in mind that we are also moving into the last week of Jesus’ earthly life. He is getting closer and closer to Jerusalem where two groups of people passionately await His arrival. Some are passionately preparing to exalt a King, while others are passionately preparing to execute a fraud.

As Jesus comes into Jericho in chapter 19, Luke’s account centers around a man whose name is Zacchaeus. His name means, “righteous one.” Actually, he was anything but! He was the top-dog tax-collector (“chief among the publicans” – 19:2) in Jericho, which in and of itself was bad enough. For a Jew to have sold out to the Romans to extract taxes from fellow Jews was despicable in this culture. They were viewed as ruthless, heart-less, conniving, lying, traitors, and those would have been their good qualities!

And evidently, Zacchaeus had made quite a reputation for himself! (See 19:7). It seems apparent that Zacchaeus was a guy sporting a major “short-man complex,” and found he could be “taller,” not by beating up bigger guys, but by making them submit to him as he gouged them out of money through their taxes.

But, oh the difference one day can make in a person’s life! when Zacchaeus lifted his head up off his pillow to begin his day, he had no idea what would take place in his life by the time his head would hit the pillow again, but in that one day, he was turned:

- From darkness to light. (Col. 1:13; Acts 16:18a)
- From the power of Satan to the power of God. (II Tim. 2:26; Acts 26:18b)
- From guilt to forgiveness. (Acts 16:18c)

- From serving sin to serving righteousness. (Rom. 6:17-18)
- From separation from God to a relationship with Him. (Eph. 2:1; Gal. 4:5-7)
- From spiritual death to spiritual life. (Eph. 2:1; Rom 8:2)

And in this story, this was that one day that would forever change Zacchaeus' life! He hears word that Jesus is coming to town, and desperately wants to lay his eyes on this One for whom there had been so much hype. He goes out to catch a glimpse, but because of his short stature, he can't see Him. He decides to run ahead and climb a tree so he can at least see Him, and much to his surprise, as Jesus passes under the tree, not only does He see him, and not only does He speak to him, but He invites Himself over to Zacchaeus' house! Can you imagine?

Zacchaeus was stoked (19:6)! He received Jesus into His home as a guest, and in just a matter of minutes, Jesus had become its Master! Zacchaeus acknowledged Christ's lordship, and was saved (19:9)!

Do note in verses 8 and 9, that Jesus wasn't saying that Zacchaeus was saved because of his pledge to give to the poor and to make right the wrong he had done by gouging people of their money. His willingness to do those things was just the visible PROOF of his salvation. Anyone can talk a big talk about their salvation, but when God has a man's wallet, it's usually a pretty good indicator that He has all of him (Matt. 6:21), and visa-versa. In this one afternoon, Jesus caused this "sinner" (19:9) to live up to his name ("righteous one"), as he became a true "son of Abraham" (19:9) by faith (Rom. 4:12; Gal. 3:7).

It might be interesting to note that in reality, we all have a "short-man complex" that only Jesus can help us overcome: "For all have sinned, and come SHORT of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). In our lost state we tried to make ourselves not appear to be so "short" through our religiousness, our good works, and our external righteousness, but it only made us "shorter" (Rom. 10:3; Isa. 64:6).

The good news about Zacchaeus, is that not only did everybody else know he was a sinner (19:7), but he knew it too, and was willing to deal with it! HE is the only one in the story who received "salvation" (19:9)! The self-righteous, religious crowd who got their "wig bent" in verse 7 about Jesus hanging with Zacchaeus probably ultimately went to Hell. That scenario continues to repeat itself right up to this present hour.

A couple of other comments about today's reading:

19:10 – Zacchaeus ran up the road seeking to see Jesus, at the same time Jesus was walking up the road seeking to save Zacchaeus.

19:14-15 – Recognize that we are living right now in the very last hours in that time between verses 14 and 15, between the Master's absence and His promise to return!

19:41-44 – This is only the second time that Jesus wept publicly (John 11:35). Notice that while the crowd is rejoicing (19:37), Jesus is weeping. Sounds a whole lot like Laodicea.

20:1-47 – Chapter 20 can be broken down by the four questions Jesus asks:

- A question concerning John the Baptist. (20:1-19)
- A question concerning Caesar. (20:20-26)
- A question concerning Moses. (20:27-40)
- A question concerning David. (20:41-44)

21: 1-4 – Jesus isn't impressed with the size of our gift, but the size of our sacrifice.

21:5-38 – The remainder of chapter 21 lines up with the things we covered in Matt. 24 and Mark 13.