

I must stay with you

I must stay with you. (Luke 19:1-27)

Today we are going to study the first half of Cp 19 of the gospel of Luke. We can see that the story of Zacchaeus and the parable of a man who returned after he was appointed king. These two are in contrast. And there is another contrast in the parable, faithful servants and an unfaithful servant.

While you are listening, you may think about the contrast.

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¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

¹¹ While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹² He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' ¹⁴ "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

¹⁵ "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. ¹⁶ "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' ¹⁷ " 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' ¹⁸ "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' ¹⁹ "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

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²⁰ "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. ²¹ I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.' ²² "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' ²⁴ "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' ²⁵ " 'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!' ²⁶ "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷ But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.' "

1. Contrasts

First of all, let's look at what kinds of contrasts are there.

Social status:

Zacchaeus is called a sinner. The people are king's citizens. Servants are the noble man's servants.

Relationship with the lord:

Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. The citizens hated the man. Servants served the master.

The suggestion from the lord:

For Zacchaeus, Jesus wanted to stay with him. For the citizens, the man would return as their king. For servants, the man gave each of them the same amount of money.

Response:

Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully. The citizens rejected to receive the man as their king. For servants, there were two responses. One was faithful and the other was unfaithful.

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New position:

Zacchaeus was willing to give half of his property to the poor and make up for his cheating. He made Jesus' heart his. His sonship of Abraham was restored. The citizens became the enemy of the king. The faithful servants became the rulers of the master's cities. The unfaithful servant had to return what he received from the master.

Result:

For Zacchaeus, salvation has come to his house. The citizens were killed. The faithful servants were given more. The unfaithful servant had even what he had taken away.

	Zacchaeus	People	Servants	
Social status	Sinner	Citizens	Servants	
Relationship with the lord	Want to see	Hate	Serve	
Suggestion from the lord	Stay with him	Return as their king	Gave 1 each	
Response	Received	Rejected	Faithful	Unfaithful
New Position	Son of Abraham	Enemy of the king	Rulers	
Result	Salvation	Killed	Given more	Taken away

2. What is important in the kingdom of God?

Very good. Now we know what kinds of contrast are there. These contrasts don't talk about two different matters separately, but emphasize on one thing. So, the important part is from here. What does Luke want to communicate with us through these contrasts?

I think what Luke wants to tell us is this. What is important in the kingdom

of God is our attitude toward the Lord.

Even though a person may be a sinner who cannot escape from the judgment of the Holy God, if he receives Jesus into his life, God can save him. Even though he may be discriminated, looked down and ostracized in the society, if he wants to receive Jesus, Jesus will become his friend. He will be given the heart of Jesus and become the blessing of God for the society.

Even if he thinks he is useless for the kingdom of God, if he is faithful in what God has entrusted to him no matter how small that may be, He will use him for the great thing for His kingdom.

On the other hand, even if a person thinks he belongs to the kingdom of God and lives like the citizen, if he rejects Jesus the king of God's kingdom, he will become the enemy of the Lord and will be destroyed. He can't stay in God's kingdom if he doesn't accept Jesus as his Lord because Jesus is the king of the kingdom.

Our attitude toward the Lord is important in the kingdom of God. What matters is not our past, but rather it is our relationship with him from now on.

3. Thoughts

Now let's look at some points more closely.

(1) Would you give up coming closer to Jesus because of others?

Zacchaeus wanted to see how Jesus was. But he couldn't see him because of the others.

"It is impossible that no offenses [stumbling blocks] should come." (Luke 17:1 NKJ) Unfortunately, we cannot avoid people who hinder and waver our walks of faith.

Sometimes people give up coming closer to Jesus because of others. For example, by looking at the behavior, words and actions of those who come to church and Bible studies, some people conclude faith in Jesus doesn't have any value. And others might give up studying the Bible or joining church, when their family or friends gave them negative comments about Christianity.

Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus because of the crowd, but he didn't give up. He did what he could do. And he met Jesus.

It is possible that God allows that situation on purpose so that He might

examine our heart to see if we really want to come close to Jesus and to know Him.

"Come near to God and he will come near to you." (James 4:8) Coming to God and knowing him: That is not by our human effort nor by religious discipline. It is not until God reveals himself that we can know him. What is impossible with man is possible with God.

(2) Was Zacchaeus saved because of his giving and making up for his cheating?

Zacchaeus received Jesus. He said he would give half of his property to the poor and make up for his cheating. Then Jesus said that salvation has come to his house. Was Zacchaeus saved because of his giving and making up for his cheating?

Giving and making up for his cheating is the expression of his salvation, showing he started a new life. It is the fruit of repentance and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not the means for salvation. He was not saved because he gave nor made up for his cheating.

Zacchaeus received Jesus. It is the new beginning of his life. When we receive Jesus as our savior, we accept him as our Lord. We can't separate those two. (Acts 2:36) Zacchaeus' giving and making up for his cheating show now Jesus is his Lord. He made Jesus' heart his heart. Human cannot change man's heart, but God can do it.

(3) The citizens hated the man. Was it because the man was bad? In fact he killed those who were against him.

This is a parable, so if we are concerned about too much detail, we may slip off from the point of the parable. Having this in mind, let's think about the question.

Citizens hated a man. They didn't want him to be their king. That was because he was a bad person. In this world, we may see cases like this. There are selfish leaders, violent monarchs. If a person like that becomes a king over a whole nation, the citizens will suffer. Surely they don't want to have such a king.

Here, we must think about this. For what purpose, did Jesus tell this

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parable? He wanted to teach about the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God is God's sovereign act."¹ What is the character of Jesus like? He is full of grace and truth. (John 1:14) He rules the kingdom with grace and truth.

For this reason, in this parable it is not valid that the people hated the man and they didn't want him to be their king because he was bad.

We stop here and move on to the next.

(4) Isn't it contradiction that he said he came to seek and save the lost, but destroyed the people?

John 3:17-19

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Man is sinner by birth. Jesus came to this sinful world as the light. He lights up our hearts with the light of the truth. When the light comes in, we see our sinful nature inside us. Humans fear the sinful nature to be shown, so try to avoid the light and stay in the darkness. But the light of the truth also shows the Holy God, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, grace and salvation. When we accept the light and follow it and believe in Jesus, we are saved.

Jesus is the only way to come to the Father. (John 14:6) Other than believe in Jesus, there is no other way to be born again, saved from eternal punishment, and live eternal life in heaven with God. (Acts 4:12) There is no better sign than the cross and resurrection, for those who have not yet believed in him. Father sent Jesus to save all humans from eternal death. Jesus came to save us who have no ability to turn away from sin nor restore the relationship with the Holy God.

To deny Jesus is to close the door of salvation by ourselves. If someone closes the door by himself, he has no way to be saved. That is his choice. He will have to accept the eternal punishment for his sin.

¹ David Watson, *I believe in the church*, Hodder and Stoughton 1978, p53

(5) What we received because the Lord has left.

Jesus told a parable that a master entrusted money to servants. This parable teaches us to be faithful in what we are entrusted. Now having this in mind, let's think: What were given to disciples because Jesus left them?

John 16:7

⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Jesus promised that by his going away, the disciples would receive the Holy Spirit. Now that Jesus is risen, after the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been given generously to all who believe. (Acts 2:17, Titus 3:6)

The Spirit makes the church the church: the dwelling place of God, the body of Christ, and the family of God. The Spirit inspires the church in worship, leads the church to holiness, and equips the church for ministry.²

We are called to be faithful in what we were given. Now, let's think about using the gift of the Spirit faithfully.

"Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Spirit to every believer for the building up of the church."³

"The ultimate purpose of all the gifts ... is to help the community of God's people to serve one another more effectively and thus grow into maturity, and, as a result, draw unbelievers to Christ. The church will grow as every believer discovers, uses and develops his or her spiritual gift."⁴

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Cor 3:17) This is not the license to do whatever we like nor whatever we think good. "Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial." (1 Cor 6:12) "God is not a God of disorder." "God wants everything to be done in order." (1 Cor 14:33, CEV) He rejoices to see our good order. (Col 2:5) When he or she carefully follows the

² Ivan Satyavrata, *The Holy Spirit: Lord and life-giver*, Inter Varsity Press, 2009, pp.134-149

³ *Ibid.* p.147

⁴ *Ibid.* p.148

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Spirit, he keeps godly order and creates godly peace in the community of God's people. His relationship with other Christians will be deepened, and the church will be strengthened and grow. (Eph 4:16)

Gal 5:13

¹³ You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

We are given freedom. Using our freedom, we choose to serve one another in love. We choose to keep godly order and create godly peace in our fellowship. That attitude gives strength to his church.

1 Peter 4:10

¹⁰ Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

We are given freedom. Using our freedom, we can serve each other, not being restricted by nationality, gender and status. That is how his grace is demonstrated, how his church grows, how people will be drawn to the church and added to the church.

When Jesus left disciples, he promised to send the Holy Spirit. Since the Pentecost, the Spirit has been given generously to all who believe. We are called to be faithful in what we are given. If we use it, it will grow and bear fruit. Those who have something will be given more. But for those who put it away, even what they have will be taken away from them.

(6) Hate God?

In the parable, the citizens present the people of Israel, the chosen people. Today we can apply this to Christians, the people of God.

It is possible for us to love God in our head, but hate Him in our heart. In many cases, the past experiences cause this problem. Some people experienced a very sad incident, very tough time. They might feel, "Why did God allow it?" "If God is love, how could he not protect me or stop me?" When we

tuck away those feelings deep in our mind, they may appear as hatred against Jesus.

Some people grew up in unhappy family. They received extremely strict discipline. Parents were always not at home. When they tried to share their thoughts or feelings, they were scolded, they were hit. They were ridiculed for their mistakes, childish action, or something they couldn't do. Those experiences may hinder them from receiving love of Jesus. They can't trust him from their heart. Even when they want to love him, hatred springs up from somewhere.

It is very difficult or impossible to trust someone you hate.

A person might have believed in Jesus and trusted him, accepted him as his Lord in his head. But it is possible that his heart doesn't follow his head. Somewhere in his heart, he hates him and fears to let him be his Lord. He can't fully accept that Jesus loves him.

If you are like Zacchaeus, you want to come close to Jesus but you cannot. You have a conflict in your heart. You want to come to Jesus but you see there is no way for you to come to him. Hatred, fear and pain block your way. You might think, "I should better just look at him from afar. If I come close to him, I might get hurt." You might feel, "Jesus doesn't really love me. He doesn't care for me. For him, I'm nothing. Perhaps he just wants to use me..."

Dear friend, it's not true. Jesus has decided to be your best friend. He will never lose sight of you even if you think you are very far from him.

How can you know his love for you is surely true? He sees you as his friend?

"Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13)

He knows you, he knows your name because he regards you as his friend. And he died on the cross for you because he loves you with his greatest love.

It is impossible with man to take away hatred, fear and pain from your heart. But it is possible with God.

1 John 4:9-10

⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into

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the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

God is love. (1 John 4:16) Love comes from God. (1 John 4:7) When we receive Jesus, we truly understand what it means to be loved. When we receive the true love, we can love God, others and ourselves. "Experiencing the Life, changing lives."

He is calling you by name and says "Come down quickly. Don't hide. Don't be afraid. I must stay with you."