



## **Grace Trumps**

Text: Luke 19: 1-10

Bible Teacher Duffy Robbins

1. We don't seek and run after Jesus without Him transforming and seeing deep into our hearts. Jesus walked the earth alongside us. He knows human weakness and the darkness of sin. Can you think about and share that moment in your life when you knew you could no longer hide from Jesus?
2. Zacchaeus immediately accepted Jesus' invitation and warmly welcomes Jesus into his home. Yet, many of us might struggle to do the same, asking ourselves, what if Jesus knew me – brokenness and all – would he still love and accept me?
  - a. Many of us can become frozen in the fear that if Jesus really knew me then he wouldn't accept or love me. In what ways does Zacchaeus's story paint a different picture of how Jesus responds to "sinners?"
  - b. Read Romans 5: 6-8. How does this assure us that our salvation is not based on our righteousness?
  - c. Are your aims at obedience stemming from an attempt to earn God's love or a response to God's love? What is the difference?
3. What's the difference between giving something to receive grace and giving something out of a response to grace? Why is the first in opposition to the message of the Gospel? What do these passages teach us about this:
  - a. Matthew 13:44
  - b. Ephesians 3:7-14
4. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Genuine Christian obedience comes as a result of an encounter with God's love and grace. Are your aims at obedience stemming from an attempt to earn God's love or a response to God's love? What is the difference?
5. Have you ever felt that a certain person would never turn to Jesus and be saved, and then were amazed when that person converted to Christ?

- a. Are their people in your life right now that you are praying will turn and trust in Jesus?
- b. Are their people in your life that your cynicism or skepticism about them have kept you from presenting Christ to them?

**Challenge:** Be honest with yourself. Do you come to church services, your Grow Group, your personal devotional time, etc. with a true willingness to be changed? If not, how can you start to cultivate this approach to your encounters with God and his word?

**Prayer:**

## STUDY DEEPER

### Dismembering an Idol

In Luke 19, Zacchaeus the tax collector was converted. He vowed to give back fourfold to anyone he had defrauded. Imagine a conversation he might have had when returning the money.

\* \* \*

"Dad, there's a man at the door. He said his name is Zacchaeus."

"Zacchaeus!" Judah's face flushed with sudden anger. "What does *he* want?" Under his breath he muttered, "The little vermin." His young daughter didn't need to hear that.

"I don't know."

Judah moved brusquely past his daughter, clenching his jaw. If the little weasel even hints at more money, I swear... a thunderstorm of violent thoughts broke in his mind.

When he saw Zacchaeus he exploded, "WHAT?" Zacchaeus reeled slightly from the verbal blow. "I'm here to return something to you, Judah."

"What do you mean?" The words sounded more like "Get out of my sight!"

Zacchaeus held out a small moneybag. Judah was suspiciously confused. This man had robbed half of Jericho collecting taxes for Tiberius. No one was more conniving and slippery with words. Fearing some kind of set-up, Judah didn't move.

"What are you doing, Zacchaeus?" The cynicism hissed through Judah's teeth.

"I'm dismembering my idol."

Judah's fiery glare turned to stony bewilderment. "What are you talking about?"

"Judah, I know how strange this must sound. And you have every reason not to trust me. I'm here because I've defrauded you. I've charged you more taxes than Rome required and kept them for my wicked little self. I know that you and everyone else knows that. But now I've come to ask your forgiveness for sinning against you like that, and to make restitution. That's what's in this bag."

Zacchaeus held it out again. This time Judah tentatively took it. He looked inside. "There's a lot in here. It's got to be more than you overcharged me."

"Yes. It's four times what I overcharged you. I've got all the records, you know." Zacchaeus smiled.

"Why are you giving me four times what you owe me?" Judah's distrust was not dispelled.

"I'm keeping a vow. I promised Jesus that I would repay everyone I defrauded fourfold."

"You mean the Rabbi Jesus? You know him?"

"I do now. He's in town, as you know. And the other day I wanted to get a glimpse of him. But being, ah, short-legged, I figured the only way I'd see him was from a tree! Wouldn't you know, as Jesus passes by he stops, looks up at silly me in the sycamore and says, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.'"

Judah gave him a puzzled look.

Zacchaeus said, "I know, I know! I was as shocked as anyone! How did he know my name, right? So Jesus and his disciples come to my house and in a matter of minutes my world falls apart and comes together."

"Falls apart and comes together."

"Judah, when I was a boy I was in awe of what I thought money did for people. It seemed to open all the doors to power and pleasure. So I vowed to myself that whatever it took I was going to be rich. And I kept that vow. Back then I had no idea how empty being rich would be. But up till two days ago, I figured it was still better than the alternative.

"But as I sat in my home with Jesus and his disciples, who have *nothing*, nothing but *God*—Judah, I've never seen happier people in my life! And as Jesus spoke, it was like his words were alive. My heart burned with a longing for God I had never felt before! And a deep shame that I traded him for *money*.

"Then it hit me like a cedar beam: *I'm poor, not rich!* They had God; I had a dead idol: money. They were rich; I was no more than a beggar. They were free. But the only doors money ever opened for me led to dungeons. My world, as I had known it, fell apart.

"And there sat Jesus, looking at me as if he could read me like a scroll. Everything in me just wanted to follow him. I wanted the forgiveness and salvation he's been preaching about. For the first time in my life I wanted God more than... *anything!* Suddenly, it was like life never made more sense. Before I knew it I was on my feet vowing in front of everyone that, well, that I would dismember my idol."

"Give away your money."

"Right. Well, some of it is *your* money."

This time Judah smiled.

Later, Judah's wife found him staring at a small moneybag on the table.

"What's that?"

"A tax refund."

"A what?"

"I think we need to go hear Rabbi Jesus."

"Rabbi Jesus? Why?"

"I think we're poor."

\* \* \*

Some of our idols need to be dismembered for us to be free of them. Jesus knows what they are and how to help us see them. It may feel like we are losing our world to lose them. That's okay. Jesus said, "whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose" ([Jim Elliot](#), October 28, 1949).

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/dismembering-an-idol>